

# THE VOICE FOUNDATION

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## How to start a Voice Foundation Chapter



Figure 1 - The China Chapter

**Table of Contents**

Introduction ..... 3

Benefits..... 3

The Organization of a Local Chapter ..... 4

TVF Growth..... 2

**How to start a Local Chapter..... 6**

Contact the TVF... 11

    The TVF Office..... 7

    The Chapters Committee ..... 7

Round up three to five volunteers... 7

Write a tentative plan for future chapter activities.....5

Create a petition to form a Local TVF Chapter... 8

    Petition to form a Local Chapter of TVF..... 12

Find Volunteers who will help develop the Chapter Bylaws..... 8

    The Review Process ..... 7

    The Finished Product ..... 7

Organize a constituting meeting..... 8

Sign the Charter..... 8

Submit everything for review and approval... 9

Create a Chapter Manual for Member.....9



Figure 2 - The Seattle/Northwest Chapter



### **Introduction**

You are about to embark on a challenging but exciting mission, that of forming a Local Chapter of The Voice Foundation. We commend you on your initiative and will do everything we can to help you succeed. The emphasis of a Local Chapter is on the word “local.” While any TVF member might encourage and support the creation of a new chapter, members in the area to be served must be the driving force behind the formation activities.

The goal of Local TVF Chapters is to offer people interested in the different disciplines of voice care and training the opportunity to come together regularly to share their experiences and to encourage each other in activities that conform to the Foundation’s goals and policies. The focus is on truly local activities connecting professionals with each other. Events and meetings with invited speakers, workshops, master classes and mini-symposia are some examples of what a Local Chapter may offer. Above all, it provides a handy and convenient network for everyday access. The purpose of this is to introduce the concept of Local Chapters and to encourage you to create one in your hometown.

### **Benefits**

A Local Chapter is a group of TVF members who live or work in a particular locality and who, as a matter of geographic convenience, organize themselves to promote the goals of the Foundation cooperatively. It serves as a focal point for its members to share their professional experiences and provide educational opportunities for themselves and their communities. Local TVF Chapters offer a number of benefits to its members.

#### **A Platform for Networking**

One of the greatest resources for professional and personal development is to meet with colleagues from *various* disciplines in the fields of voice care and training (ENT, SLP, Voice Pedagogy, Voice Coaching, and others). You gain new information on state-of-the-art technology, access to others’ perspectives, experiences, and knowledge; and you will get the chance to broaden your insights.



Figure 3 - S. California Chapter Meet & Greet

#### **Professional Development**

Your Chapter meetings and activities allow you to expand your knowledge of voice research/development. Chapters bring continuing education opportunities closer to home and provide a bridge between the annual TVF conferences. It is also possible to organize Mentor Programs as a way for members to grow in their professions.



Figure 4 - Houston Area Chapter

### **Exchange of Services and Contributing to TVF as an Organization**

The Local Chapters will give you the possibility to exchange both professional experiences and services, such as reviewing each other's papers and conference contributions. It will also act as a greenhouse for new ideas that can be implemented globally and provide TVF with potential new members of the Advisory Board.

### **The Organization of a Local Chapter**

The Chapter is a vital part of the TVF, and the officers, with its President, occupies the most prominent leadership position in the Chapter. The Officers can make important contributions to the success of its programs. Often, at the core of a successful chapter is a dedicated laryngologist (or ENT voice specialist), but members of all disciplines can be, and have been the primary driving forces behind thriving chapters. Most Chapters must have the following:

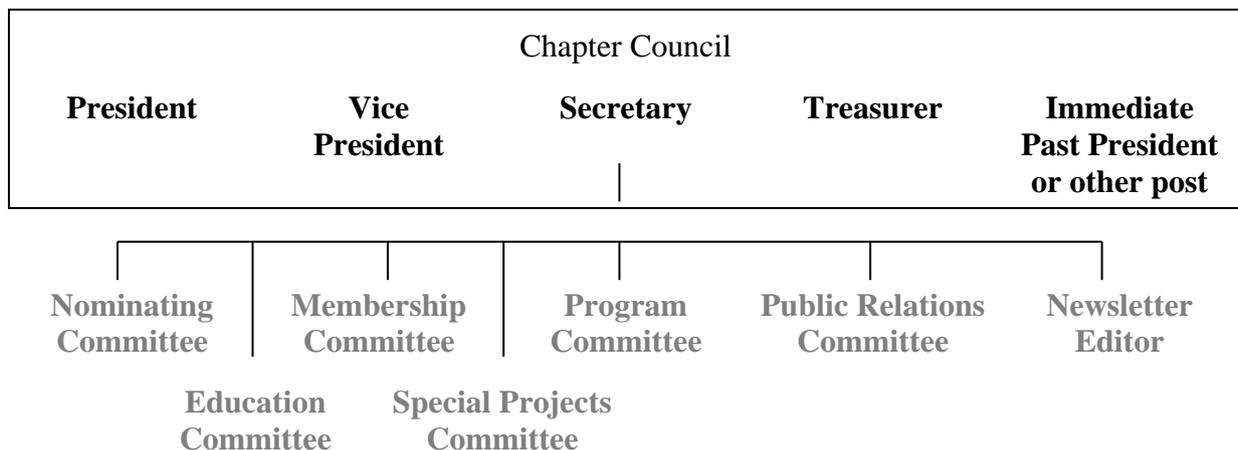


Figure 1: Possible organization of a mature Local Chapter

### **Chapter Finances**

A Local Chapter is part of the TVF organization, but it is responsible for its own finances. As a consequence, all members of a Local Chapter are required to also be members of TVF. We do give you time to create incentive for participants to become members.

- The TVF Office will open a bank account for the chapter at a local Wells Fargo (or other bank, if Wells Fargo is not in the area). The chapter treasurer will be added as a signatory to the account and given a card for the account.
  - *International Chapters financial arrangements on an individual chapter basis.*
- A chapter's first source of operating income is the support from TVF organization membership dues.
  - \$25 of that Chapter's Associate Member Dues are directed back to the Local Chapter.
  - Other levels, Sustaining and Professional give \$50 back.

## How to Start a Local Chapter

- Should there be a charitable donation earmarked for the chapter, you will get 90% back, with national keeping 10% for a processing fee.
- A chapter's second source of operating income can be chapter dues.
  - Chapters are responsible for collecting any supplementary dues, separate from TVF dues, and verifying that chapter member applicants are current TVF members before approving chapter membership applications. Most chapter activities are self-sustaining; that is, each activity pays for itself.
- A chapter's supplemental sources of income can be
  - Attendance fees for non-members at chapter events.
  - Fundraisers
  - Sponsors (ask exhibitors at meetings, for example)



Figure 5 - The Chicago Chapter

### **Chapter Growth**

The most central activity for a Local Chapter is the Chapter meeting. Chapter meetings and all that they can offer are the most tangible benefits of membership, and they are also the most important way of adding new members to the chapter.

In order to show potential new members what chapters are all about, all newcomers are allowed one free meeting, without joining or paying the door-fee for non-members. “Bring a friend” or “Bring a co-worker” theme nights are also successful ways of showcasing the Local Chapter.

TVF as an international organization helps strengthen chapter efforts. A larger organization carries more clout and also offers increased credibility to the members of the local organization on a global, national and local level.

### Seven Steps to Form a Chapter

**Contact** the TVF staff or a member of the TVF Chapters Committee. The TVF office will send you the Chapter Guidelines and other information that you need in order to start a local Chapter. They will also continue to help you create your Chapter bylaws and guide you through the process of getting approval from the TVF Board of Directors for Chapter status. *Done!*

- 1) **Round up three to five volunteers** in your area who are interested in starting a Local Chapter. This is the core team that will help you prepare the constituting meeting. It may also be smart to arrange one or more informal sessions prior to the constituting one to see if there is enough local interest to start a local chapter, and to see how many TVF members there are in the region (you need five members to petition for Chapter status).
- 2) **Write a tentative plan** for future meetings and other chapter activities to present at the constituting meeting.
- 3) **Create a petition (see page 12) to form a Local TVF Chapter.** Also include the suggested
  - a) Chapter name
  - b) Chapter boundaries
  - c) Interm Chapter officers. The list of officers shall include a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, or a Secretary/Treasurer, and additional officers as approved by the Chapter.
- 4) Find volunteers who will help develop the Chapter Bylaws in accordance with the suggested guidelines in the TVF Chapter Guidelines, or **decide to adopt the template Bylaws for Chapters.** Submit the Bylaws to the Chapter Council, Chapter Sponsor and Chapter membership for review.
- 5) **Organize a constituting meeting with about five to ten people that currently are, or are prepared to become, TVF members** and support the Local Chapter. The Petition should be signed at the meeting (with each name printed or typed next to the signature) by at least five members requesting to be recognized as a local Chapter of TVF. Have the chapter interm President sign the Charter.
- 6) **Submit the following** to the Executive Director and TVF Board of Directors for approval.
  - a) The Petition (found on page 12 of this document)
  - b) the Chapter Charter
  - c) the proposed name and boundaries of the Chapter
  - d) the proposed Bylaws



Figure 6: Mexico Chapter



**DONE. Your chapter is official.** These seven easy steps are all you really need to do, but to help you, we have included some more details and our experience on “what works.”

**Now, here is a more detailed RECAP:**

### **The TVF Office**

TVF Office is the hub of all TVF activities. The staff will help you with information during the start-up and connect you with the Chapters committee. TVF Office will tell you if a local Chapter within your area already exists, and if so they will help you get in touch with a chapter representative. They also will register your interest in starting a Chapter so that they can refer future requests to you.

## **1. The Chapters Committee**

The Chapters Committee is responsible for the development and coordination of all TVF chapters. *The Chapters Committee Chair who is also a member of the TVF Advisory Board manages the committee.* Other members of the Chapters Committee are usually Local Chapter Presidents and Sponsors.

### **Round up three to five volunteers...**

A small group (3-5) of volunteers who prepare the first constituting meeting.

Ideally, the group should consist of volunteers representing several disciplines and institutions. It allows you to share the workload and minimizes the risk of the effort failing because of a single key person was diverted from the task.



**Figure 7 - The New England Chapter**

*Having the support of an institution or office usually also improves the possibility of support in the form of meeting facilities, access to computers and copiers and other useful items. Including representatives from more than one discipline also eliminates the risk of the chapter being seen as “too closely associated” with one person, discipline, or company. It allows the TVF chapter to become “neutral territory” for sharing a broad wealth of ideas and experiences.*

### **Find a Name**

It is also important to find a name for the Chapter that reflects the boundaries of the Chapter. The geographic boundaries are formally approved by the TVF Board of Directors and may be changed from what you initially propose in the petition. The name is usually constructed using a centrally located town or the name of the region. The formal name also should include a reference to TVF. A formal name would look something like “The Bay Area Chapter of The Voice Foundation” (BATVF) or “The London Chapter of The Voice Foundation.” Chapter names are often shortened for easier reference.

### **Write a tentative plan for future chapter activities...**

It is important that the Chapter get a good start, and that there are planned activities that will attract new members. Examples of activities that attract members are:

- Invited speakers to Chapter Meetings
- Master Classes and tutorials
- Tours of voice labs

This is an area where creativity counts. Invent your own activities and share them with other chapters or use their ideas to boost your membership.

### **Create a simple petition to form a Local TVF Chapter...**

The petition to form a Local TVF Chapter has to be signed by at least five current TVF members requesting to be recognized as a local Chapter of TVF. All officers have to be members of TVF at the time of signing. Chapter members also must be TVF members. So for those who attended the meeting but are not yet current TVF members, get them to sign up as TVF members as soon as possible. You could even take some membership applications to the constituting meeting.

## **Chapter officers must be members of TVF.**

### **Chapter Bylaws**

Chapter Bylaws are the rules by which a Chapter functions. Chapter Bylaws exist in harmony with the TVF Association Bylaws.

The group should begin its work by reviewing the Chapter organization, the TVF Bylaws and Chapter Bylaws Template.

Section on chapter dissolution. TVF Chapters are chartered by the TVF Board of Directors and thus can be dissolved by a two-thirds vote to dissolve the Chapter when the Board is satisfied that the Chapter is inactive and that there is no reasonable hope of its immediate revival, or when it is satisfied that such action is in the best interest of the Association. Your Chapter also has the right to terminate the Charter between the TVF Association and the Chapter, and thereby relinquish all association with TVF and cease to exist as a TVF Chapter.

### ***The Review Process***

**The bylaws developed by your Chapter Bylaws committee should be reviewed by the following groups:**

1. Your Chapter Council (the Chapter leaders.)  
Have your Chapter Council review the draft bylaws. Incorporate their comments and develop a second draft.
2. Your Chapter's membership.  
Send the formal draft of the Bylaws to your proposed Chapter members for review and approval. Be sure to give them ample time to review the Bylaws. If the vote for approval of the bylaws is taken at a Chapter meeting, make sure that absent members are given an opportunity to vote by absentee ballot.

### *The Finished Product*

**Once your Chapter Bylaws have been reviewed and approved** by the TVF Board of Directors and you've been granted Chapter status, follow this procedure:

1. Ask your Chapter Secretary to maintain the formal Bylaws with the Chapter's official records.
2. Have the Secretary maintain a supply for distribution to new members.

### **Here are some tips to help you avoid conflict with the TVF Bylaws:**

- When you refer to the TVF parent organization, do not refer to it as “the national.” The TVF Association is an international organization. Our headquarters should be referred to as *TVF office*.
- Consult the current version of TVF Bylaws to make sure that you do not make provisions for depositing Chapter funds in inappropriate financial institutions.
- Do not give your Chapter authority that it does not legitimately possess. For example, a TVF Chapter may suggest but not determine its own geographic boundaries.
- Do not identify Chapter services as being “for members only.” Because TVF is a not-for-profit educational and charitable organization, we must make our services available to members and non-members alike. However, *the local Chapter may charge non-members higher fees than charged to members for those services.*

### **Organize a constituting meeting**

You will need at least five people already are or who are prepared to become members and support the Local Chapter. Use all available means to **reach as many potential members as possible**. The most effective ways of doing this are:

- TVF Membership Directory: You can consult the current online Membership Directory. The directory can be searched by geographical areas in which you can find current members. Also contact the TVF office for members who joined after the directory was published or to verify current status of memberships.
- Ask the TVF office to advertise the formation of your chapter, giving contact information, on all social media.
- Contacts and networks: Go through your file of professional contacts and list all people whom you think might be interested in supporting the chapter. It is amazing how many names a group of three to five people can generate. Send them an e-mail explaining what you propose to do, and how they can help. Also, invite them to the meeting (and if they can not attend, offer to keep them informed.)
- Other professional organizations: The yellow pages of the local telephone directory, catalogs of local universities, and the local Chamber of Commerce will give you leads to sources of other potential members. Whenever possible, your first contact should be personal, if an appointment can be arranged. Otherwise, a telephone call, followed by a letter explaining the objectives and significance of your organization, may prove very useful. If you are successful with the leaders of these groups, you will be in a good position to enlist the support of the membership of their organizations. When contacting these people, remember to encourage them to join both the TVF and the local Chapter. TVF membership is required to join a local TVF Chapter.

## How to Start a Local Chapter

- Ads in Local newspapers, university bulletin boards, TVF facebook and Twitter pages (gladly posted by the TVF office) voice and medical blogs: With larger newspapers, you should contact the editor of the appropriate department, or perhaps the science writer, and explain your activities. The organization of a local group of professionals (in any field) is normally considered news, and your chances of getting into print are good. Remember that newspapers are interested in knowing who you are, what your organization represents, its relationship to their readers, and names, names, names. It is always necessary to include the time and place of your meetings and the person to contact for further information. It may be useful to provide TVF literature so that they understand that your chapter is part of an established, credible, international organization that you are bringing to the area. Materials can be obtained from the TVF office.
- Since you will be dealing with a limited number of newspapers, it will not be too difficult to talk with them by telephone (followed by a personal visit if possible) before delivering or mailing your information to them. Mention local names and business affiliations in your releases, if possible. This is especially helpful with the smaller daily newspaper and weeklies. If you have access to someone with professional experience in writing press releases, his/he input is likely to be helpful.
- Listings in trade press: Many of magazines that focus on usability have a section listing up-coming events. You should try to get all relevant Chapter activities (including the constituting meeting) into these listings. A short article in the magazine, describing your efforts is usually helpful.
- E-mail lists: There are several e-mail lists that would have prospective chapter members as subscribers.
- Company news lists or web sites: Some (larger) corporations may have news lists, web sites or other ways of distributing information. Use them with care, nobody likes spam, even if in this case it IS important spam.

The right to represent yourself as a recognized TVF chapter, and other rights associated with affiliation with TVF are available to you only after a charter has been granted.

### **Sign the Charter (Recap)**

The Charter is the 'contract' between the local Chapter and the TVF Association office and identifies the 'legal boundaries' of the relationship. The President of the Chapter should sign the Charter and identify the name of the Chapter.

- The petition, proposed bylaws, and Charter should be submitted to the TVF office. Once the petition for Chapter status is approved, the Chairman of TVF will sign the Charter and return a copy to the local Chapter.

### **Write a plan for future chapter activities.**

### **Submit everything for review and approval**

- Submit the Petition, Proposed Bylaws, and the Charter to the TVF Chapters Committee and TVF Board of Directors for approval.

When approval arrives, celebrate, and get to work to implement what you have suggested. Good luck, and remember to share your ideas!

### And then you could...

#### Create a Local Chapter Manual for Your Members if you want to.

- Purpose of the Chapter
- The purpose of the Chapter of TVF is to offer its members the following considerations and benefits:
- Eligibility
- Tentative Schedule
- Procedures and Requirements
- Membership and Fees

### Contact TVF...

These are the normal contact points when you want to start a Chapter:

Maria Russo, Executive Director: [office@voicefoundation.org](mailto:office@voicefoundation.org)

Katie Erikson, Executive Assistant: [journal@voicefoundation.org](mailto:journal@voicefoundation.org)

215-735-7999



*Petition to form a Local Chapter of TVF*

To: The Board of Directors of The Voice Foundation:

We the undersigned, who are Members in good standing of The Voice Foundation, do hereby request for recognition as charter members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of the TVF. We aim to serve members in the area of

The goals of this Chapter are:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We request recognition and approval as an official Local Chapter. Proposed Chapter Bylaws are attached to this document, along with a signed Charter.

Interim officers are as noted below:

Officer	Printed Name	Signature	TVF Member Yes/No
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President: \_\_\_\_\_

Vice-President: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_

TVF Members:

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