



## **New Chapter Formation Manual**

**Amended and Restated as of November 25, 2024**

A MAsT Chapter functions as the local presence of Masters And slaves Together, International, Inc. (MAST or MAsT International) and is the primary means by which MAsT provides support and services to the Master/slave community in the geographical area served by that Chapter.

Each local MAsT Chapter must subscribe to and follow the purposes of MAsT and the MAsT Policy Manual, and annually pledge cooperation with the Executive Committee of Masters And slaves Together, International, Inc.

A copy of the MAsT Policy and Procedures Manual is included in the official MAsT documents file at [www.mast.net](http://www.mast.net) (tab: Start a Chapter). Please use it as the foundation for organizing and operating your local MAsT Chapter.

### **1. Plan the Scope of the Chapter. What will be the overarching principles of your chapter?**

A strong, viable organization requires both pre-planning and ongoing planning to survive and prosper. In your pre-planning consider and develop at least the following things.

- 1.1. What geographical area will your Chapter serve?** It is the goal of MAsT International to set up each chapter for long term success. This includes being mindful of how chapters overlap and the demographic they are aiming to serve. To see if your proposed chapter is near an established chapter visit the Locate a Chapter on [www.mast.net](http://www.mast.net). See also the [MAsT Policy & Procedure Manual](#) section 7.2.8 Multiple Chapters. In the New Chapter Formation Petition Form, you will provide your proposed area but the MAsT International board has the final vote on your actual geographical area of service.
- 1.2. What geographical area will your Chapter serve?** MAsT is officially pansexual, but the [MAsT Policy & Procedure Manual](#) section 7.3, provides for more limited local service. With the goal of longevity in mind, it is suggested that there be a Master/slave, Authority Transfer, Power Exchange and/or Authority Exchange community within your selected service population and geographical area that is large enough to provide a base for membership growth. What demographic study or thought has been given to the size of your selected service population and to the likelihood that they will join a MAsT Chapter?
- 1.3. What is the overall vision or goal of your Chapter?** MAsT International states its reason for existing in the [MAsT Policy & Procedure Manual](#) section 2, "Purpose." In the initial planning phase and during the first few meetings as a new chapter, establish your local

vision, values, and mission statement which can provide a clear path for the actions of leaders and members.

- 1.4. What name will your Chapter function under?** The basics of a MAsT Chapter name are identified in the [MAsT Policy & Procedure Manual](#) section 7.29. Your selected name must uniquely identify your MAsT Chapter with a name that identifies a notable city or town where the meetings will be conducted in the geographical area you have selected to serve. **It cannot be the name of a broader geographic area, region, or local nickname that encompasses several cities or towns.** The Executive Director, who has final jurisdiction over MAsT Chapter names, is normally represented by the Membership Director during this decision process.
- 1.5. What will the chapter leadership look like?** MAsT chapters can be led by one person or multiple people, regardless of their role in any power exchange. It is strongly encouraged to have at least two leaders to bear the long-term work load and promote collaboration. Should the chapter be led by one person, an alternate contact, who is not from the Chapter Director's bio, kink, or leather family or household, must be identified to serve as a backup when the Chapter Director is unavailable. In alignment with the previous rule, leadership cannot all be from the same leather, kink, or bio household or family; at least one additional member not a part of that house or family must be provided and consistently engage in all leadership activities. Some other possible leadership models include an executive committee or slate of officers elected by membership. Each MAsT Chapter must have a designated Chapter Director or main point of contact to communicate with the local chapter and other parts of MAsT, including the Board and your Regional Representative. This designee is responsible for submitting the New Chapter Formation Petition Form, monthly chapter reports, and yearly dues to renew the chapter charter. See [MAsT Policy & Procedure Manual](#) 7.3.1, "Chapter Leadership". It intentionally dictates little about the organizational structure of the local MAsT Chapter, recognizing that each founding group or leader will have different skills and abilities available to build on.
- 1.6. What will be the Membership Criteria and the Code of Conduct?** These are two important considerations that are often overlooked. Who should potential members contact for membership or more information? What steps might be required for membership? Would there be a probationary period for prospective members? Should dues or membership fees be collected? Where will the meetings be held; e.g., a public or private location? Will your Code of Conduct clearly outline the appropriate behaviors expected regarding communication, conflicts, decisions, and consequences.
- 1.7. Attachment 1, *Forming New MAsT Chapter Suggestions*,** at the end of this manual, provides a wide range of important factors that you can consider as you prepare to form your new Chapter.

- 2. What kind of activities will your Chapter offer?** To attract and retain members, your MAsT Chapter should provide valuable experiences that enrich their lives. For those living an M/s or authority/power exchange lifestyle, it's essential to offer opportunities for support and connection and help to combat feelings of isolation. Your programming could include education on relationship growth and development, featuring targeted discussions, presentations, and guest speakers. Demonstrations should be relevant to the M/s lifestyle and not BDSM-focused in nature. Additionally, consider incorporating social events such as parties, munches, bar nights, and other

special gatherings to strengthen bonds among members and maintain high levels of engagement and attendance.

3. **How will your Chapter cover its expenses?** MAsT is a nonprofit organization and is not in the business of making money. But at the same time, each MAsT Chapter is faced with raising enough revenue to cover its operating expenses. During this initial formation phase some of these expenses may be coming out of your own pocket, but over the long haul the Chapter itself should be providing the funds to cover ongoing expenses. When planning how revenue will be generated for your MAsT Chapter, assess the nature of the selected population in your service area: What expenses will need to be covered? What can they reasonably provide? Are special fundraising event opportunities feasible? Review the [MAsT Policy & Procedure Manual](#) section 7.4.1, “Chapter Finances and Non-Profit Status” for ideas and for the MAsT statement on ethical and accountable behavior regarding Chapter funds. Please note that MAsT International’s 501c3 status does not carry over to its Chapters. Chapters may consider setting up their own structure (often as a 501(c)(7) organization, technically a “social club” without tax-exempt status, which is generally an easier organizational structure to create and maintain than a 501(c)(3) organization).

- 3.1. **Know your local laws regarding educational/social organizations.** The laws can affect your decisions regarding taxable or non-taxable status, type of bank accounts to use, and requirements for records and financial transactions. Note, as a matter of integrity, it is always important to keep detailed chapter and financial records.
- 3.2. **Submit a MAsT Chapter Formation Petition.** Now that you have completed planning for your new chapter, you can petition MAsT International for approval to form your chapter. This petition is located at [www.mast.net](http://www.mast.net), click on the Start a Chapter tab, and complete the “New Chapter Formation Petition Form.”

#### 4. **New Chapter Formation Petition timeline**

- 4.1. The Membership Director will contact you to confirm the receipt of your petition and explain the new petition process. This will include contacting your references and relevant MAsT leadership, conducting an interview, and a vote by the Board of Directors. Please note references cannot be from your Regional Representative or leaders of a MAsT chapter within 90 miles of your petitioning chapter as they will already be contacted as part of the petitioning process. We do recommend you speak with any other local chapter directors about forming yours before applying. Their wisdom and experiences can often be valuable to new directors.
- 4.2. The Membership Director will notify you when your chapter formation petition is processed. If your petition is approved, you will be sent an acceptance letter that will include an introduction to your Regional Representative, guidance for next steps, and instructions to submit the appropriate processing fee (currently \$25). You will then be issued a Provisional Charter.

5. **MAsT Provisional Charter** Your chapter's Provisional Charter is evidence that you are approved to form a MAsT Chapter. It indicates that you have agreed to conduct your chapter according to the following standards:

- 5.1. To operate your MAsT Chapter as a local representative of MAsT International, with the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

- 5.2. To operate your MAsT Chapter in accordance with the purposes of MAsT, in conformity with the [MAsT Policy & Procedure Manual](#), and in full cooperation with the MAsT International Board of Directors.
- 5.3. Once the petition and processing fee are received, your MAsT Provisional Chapter Charter will be emailed and available in the chapter reporting area no later than two weeks. The charter should be printed and displayed at all chapter functions to ensure that your general members are aware of your chapter's status. You will then be a proud part of the MAsT family as an official MAsT Chapter with the privilege and responsibility of using the MAsT Name and MAsT Logo, within the terms of the MAsT Brand Identification Manual. You will also be able to view, print and download a copy of your charter in the MAsT chapter reporting area under "My Chapter Documents".
- 5.4. Shortly after you receive approval to form your chapter, the Webmaster/IT Director will create graphics that may be used for business cards and letterheads, along with a template for your chapter Meeting sign-in sheets. These graphics will be available in the chapter reporting area under "My Chapter Documents". Do not create social media groups using the MAsT name or information. We will provide you with an official MAsT email address, FetLife group, and FetLife profile upon board approval. Should you desire any other MAsT Chapter presence on other social media accounts, they will also be created for you. All accounts using the MAsT name or information are legally required to be surrendered should a charter not be issued, the group become inactive, or any other reason deemed appropriate by MAsT International.
6. **Hold Provisional Chapter Meetings.** During this six-month provisional period, you will have time to promote and conduct monthly in-person or hybrid meetings, learn the best received types of meetings for your attendees, develop a positive reputation in your area, and show a growing attendance base. You must report each meeting as noted in paragraph c., below. Once you have received your approval to form a chapter, you should start promoting your chapter.
  - 6.1. During the first two or three Provisional meetings, focus on forming activities; e.g., meet and greets, stress a welcome and safe environment, provide M/s related topics with highly interactive formats, and start to build your local MAsT community. There are many excellent ideas to use during this important time located at the end of this document as Attachment One, Forming New MAsT Chapter Suggestions.
  - 6.2. During the remaining Provisional meetings, focus on normalizing your chapter meetings, continue growing your attendance, and with suggestions from your attendees, build a meeting plan for the next six months.
  - 6.3. **Important note:** At the top left of your dashboard is a Chapter Meeting Report Database. If you look under the Topic, Presenter, Location, Type column, you will have access to the list of topics that all MAsT Chapters have used over the years. It is a "gold mine" of potential topics for your meetings.
  - 6.4. During the six-month provisional period, your new MAsT Chapter will receive careful oversight from the Regional Representative Director through your Regional Representative team. Your Regional Representatives are dedicated to help you be

successful and be in compliance with MAsT policies. Submitting your meeting reports is one tool that they can use to understand your relative success. Help them help you by submitting your reports in a timely manner. The Meeting Report is located at [www.mast.net](http://www.mast.net), your Chapter Dashboard Reports tab. Many successful Chapter Directors find it easiest to report the meeting as a standard part of putting paperwork away after each meeting.

7. **Promote Your Chapter.** Each MAsT Chapter is to have a functional, responsive email address for inquiries and a website, linked from the International website, to promote the Chapter. An official MAsT email and FetLife profile and group are provided to you by MAsT International. Requests or questions regarding other forms of social media can be emailed to [board@mast.net](mailto:board@mast.net). The Chapter's official MAsT email is set up to forward to your Chapter leadership team. Please contact the MAsT International webmaster your Regional Representative with any changes ([webmaster@mast.net](mailto:webmaster@mast.net)). See the [MAsT Policy & Procedure Manual](#) section 7.6.1, "Chapter PR Campaigns." A mail-list service for your members, such as Yahoo or MailChimp, may also be a valuable tool for keeping them informed and for facilitating discussion between meetings.
  - 7.1. You should also develop a list of local area and regional media that your members and potential members read, and then regularly submit press releases about upcoming events and follow-up stories about current events. Also get your meetings and events listed in the event calendars that many publications offer. Keep your MAsT Chapter in the news in a positive light. A story that seems very routine to you may speak to a potential member at just the moment he or she is ready to hear it.
  - 7.2. Promotional materials, especially pamphlets and brochures, should be coordinated with the Board of Directors through your Regional Representative to make sure they are approved and follow the MAsT policies.
  - 7.3. Please make sure that copies of all news articles, pamphlets, brochures, other PR materials, pictures of events, etc. are provided with the Board of Directors, through your Regional Representative, for the MAsT archives and for the MAsT collection at the Leather Archives and Museum.
8. **Becoming a MAsT Chapter in Good Standing.** After you have completed the six-month provisional period, conducted at least six meetings, submitted six meeting reports, submitted your \$25 charter fee and your chapter has conducted itself within the standards of MAsT International, the Treasurer/Financial Director will prepare and send to you via e-mail an electronic version of the MAsT Chapter Charter for your chapter. The charter should be printed and displayed at your chapter events. This charter is tangible evidence that your chapter is a MAsT Chapter in good standing. You can view the charter in the chapter reporting area under "My Chapter Documents".
9. **File for Annual Charter Renewal.** MAsT Chapter Charters are valid for one year, from January 1, year to December 31, year. Renewing your charter annually allows your MAsT Chapter to remain in good standing and to retain the privilege of using the MAsT Name and MAsT Logo. See the MAsT Policy Manual, Section VIII.C. and D.

- 10.** Applying for a MAsT Charter is an important business action for each Chapter Director to take. It represents the foundation for the relationship between the Chapter and MAsT International, Inc. Please take a minute to read the following and consider those two sentences:
- 10.1.** I/we desire to operate this MAsT Chapter as a local representation of MAsT International, Inc, with the privileges and responsibilities thereof,
  - 10.2.** I/we agree to operate this MAsT Chapter in accordance with the purposes of MAsT, in conformity with the MAsT Policy Manual, and in full cooperation with the Board of Directors of MAsT International, Inc.
  - 10.3.** These two sentences, when agreed upon, represent a contract between MAsT International, Inc. and the Chapter Director. The contract represents mutual trust between the parties; and an expectation of integrity and honesty between the parties that will support the purpose of MAsT International.
  - 10.4.** This contract is what you agree to when applying to form your chapter; and, with only a slight amendment, “to continue...” It represents your annual renewal contract to remain a MAsT Chapter.

## **Attachment One**

### **Forming New MAsT Chapter Suggestions**

The following core issues are examples of MAsT business issues that a new Chapter Director should consider when starting and nurturing a new MAsT Chapter through its formation phase.

#### **Overarching Principles**

- Whether they were going to adopt a centralized or collaborative Leadership model?
- How to develop an environment of ownership and involvement among attendees?
- How to integrate MAsT vision, values and mission statement into the Chapter purpose?

#### **Foundational Structures**

- Management structure
- Communication & Decision Making processes and structure
- Legal structure
- Membership structure
- Membership criteria
- Financial controls and practices

#### **Planning, Organizing, and Conduct of Meeting**

- Venue for meeting
- Agenda setting
- Meeting structures
- Meeting rituals and ceremonies
- Meeting timetable/topics
- Code of Conduct including expulsion of members
- Archiving history

#### **Review – What Worked and How to Keep it "Fresh and Rewarding"**

- Annual meeting dedicated to building "better"
- Regional rep coordination