



**OMEGA PHI ALPHA**

NATIONAL SERVICE SORORITY

## **Expansion Guide**

How to start a new chapter of Omega Phi Alpha

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# Omega Phi Alpha History and Values

## History

In 1953, a group of male college students in the Zeta Kappa Chapter of Alpha Phi Omega National Service Fraternity at Bowling Green State University decided they needed another organization to help them with projects on campus and in the city of Bowling Green, Ohio. The original thought was to establish another service fraternity at the university. However, after a number of women expressed interest, plans were made to organize a women's service sorority instead.

Since the objectives of the two organizations were the same: service, leadership and friendship, a similar name was chosen—Omega Phi Alpha. Membership was open to university women who had been Girl Scouts or Camp Fire Girls. (This rule changed in 1958.)

When Omega Phi Alpha first began in 1953, many people were interested in the sorority's activities. In 1958, Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Mich., contacted Bowling Green State University about forming an Omega Phi Alpha chapter. The women of Eastern Michigan's new Omega Phi Alpha chapter held their first meeting on April 22, 1958. They conducted several service and fundraising activities, and initiated their first pledge class the following fall.

The two groups communicated about the possibility of becoming a national organization, but the concept did not yet fully materialize.

In late 1962, a group of women at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut contacted the group in Ypsilanti about becoming an Omega Phi Alpha chapter. The Bridgeport and Ypsilanti groups continued communication, with the women in Ypsilanti acting as big sisters to the women in Bridgeport for an induction ceremony. The new group was designated Beta Chapter of Omega Phi Alpha. The Ypsilanti group called itself Alpha Chapter.

At Bowling Green, a lack of common ground in the requested projects and background of the members led to a great decline in the chapter. But in September 1964, a few remaining members: Carole Close, Bonnie Widder, Maureen Weldon, Joan DeMuth and others decided there was still a need for Omega Phi Alpha at Bowling Green State University. They met with Dr. Jacqueline E. Timm, the original adviser, to see what could be done to reorganize. In order to obtain active membership, they decided to pledge any interested women in good standing with the university.

The response was tremendous. The Fall 1964 pledge class had 105 women. Sixty-seven gained active status. Officers from the prior group remained in office to give the new members time to become acquainted with the organization.

In the spring of 1966, Bowling Green State University's dean of women, Fayette Paulsen, notified the chapter that they received a letter from the Omega Phi Alpha chapter in Ypsilanti. The letter said the Michigan chapter had combined with the Connecticut chapter and were now a national sorority. They wanted Bowling Green to affiliate with them. Bowling Green's chapter president, Pam Gabalac, immediately contacted the chapter's legal adviser and discovered that the chapters in Ypsilanti and Bridgeport were not legally registered as a national

sorority. As a result, Omega Phi Alpha in Bowling Green registered its information first, and then asked the other chapters to affiliate.

Thirteen months of hard work and organization began. A national organizing convention was scheduled at Bowling Green in June 1967. At the convention, the three groups discussed ideas and agreed to the formation of Omega Phi Alpha National Service Sorority. They decided that the Bowling Green group would be Alpha Chapter, since it had been in existence the longest and had first filed the proper papers to register the Omega Phi Alpha name nationally. Bridgeport retained the name of Beta Chapter, and Ypsilanti became Gamma Chapter.

The consolidation of the three groups became a reality on June 15, 1967, the official anniversary date of Omega Phi Alpha National Service Sorority.

## **The Purpose**

The purpose and goals of this sorority shall be to assemble its members in the fellowship of Omega Phi Alpha, to develop friendship, leadership, and cooperation by promoting service to the university community, to the community-at-large, to the members of the sorority, and to the nations of the world.

## **Core Values**

### **Promote a culture of SERVICE.**

We are committed to creating valuable, meaningful, and impactful opportunities for all Omega Phi Alpha chapters and members through six areas of service.

- **University Community** - Our active members are dedicated to giving back to the community that is preparing them for their post-college ambitions by recognizing the efforts and needs of the university, the faculty, the staff, and fellow students.
- **Community at Large** - Our members recognize the significance of their communities and strive to make a positive and meaningful impact.
- **Members of the Sorority** - Our members deeply value their sisterhood and strive to serve each other, both active and alumni, through meaningful, uplifting activities and sincere, steadfast support.
- **Nations of the World** - Our members take action through service on issues that impact humanity across the globe.
- **Mental Health** - Our members champion psychological and emotional well-being for all through partnerships with national organizations or projects that address underlying issues impacting a person's mental health.
- **President's Project** - Our members dedicate time and effort to support a focused area of service that is designated annually by the national president.

## **Develop the LEADERSHIP potential of our members.**

Our members demonstrate personal leadership through integrity and value personal growth through service, chapter management, and national leadership opportunities. We are dedicated to fostering leadership among all members of the organization so that they are prepared to serve in leadership roles throughout life – in their profession, on community boards, and other opportunities of their choosing. We strive to provide a fair and equitable process to elect and appoint leaders at all levels to ensure all voices are heard.

## **Embrace the DIVERSITY of our members through a spirit of INCLUSION.**

We believe there is strength in diversity and we value the individual differences, experiences, and viewpoints that both make us unique and challenge us. We strive to create an accessible and welcoming space for people of all races, ethnicities, genders, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, physical abilities and appearances, religions, and other identities.

## **Foster a strong bond of SISTERHOOD.**

We are an organization that is bonded in friendship through a deep focus and commitment to service. We foster trust, respect, love, and support in our relationships with our sisters and carry that forward into the world through service to others.

## **Celebrate lifelong fellowship through TRADITION.**

Omega Phi Alpha has long-standing traditions that create, cultivate, and sustain lifelong bonds among all members regardless of chapter affiliation or location.

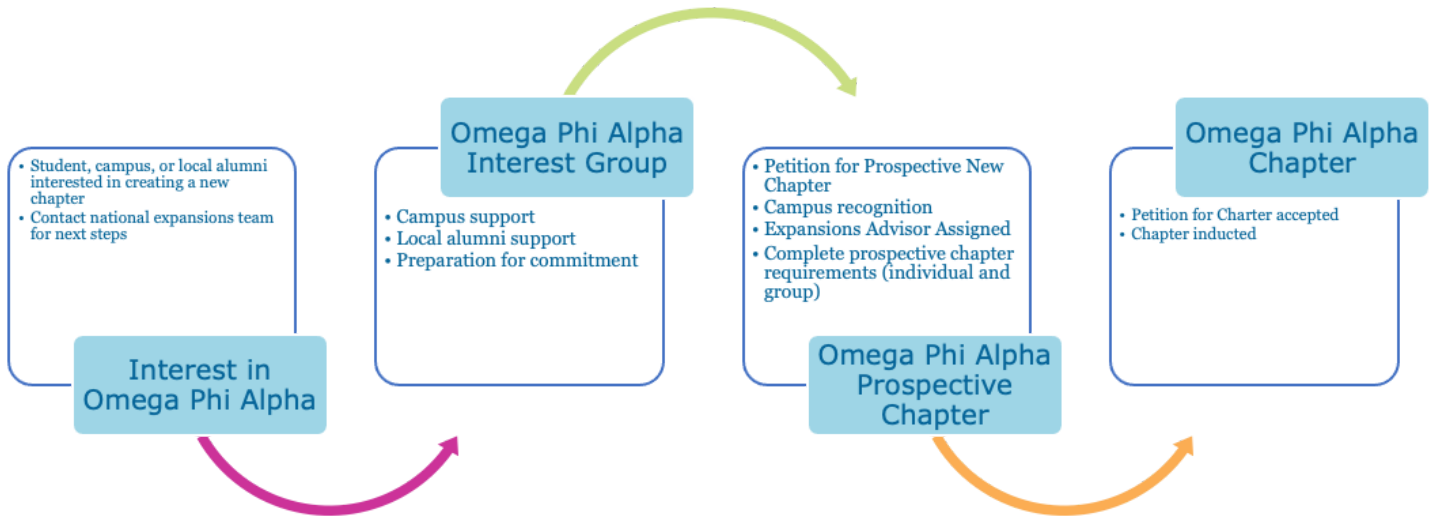
## **EDUCATION is the foundation that equips us to act on our values**

As lifelong learners, we strive to understand the challenges and needs around us and actively make a positive difference.

## **Motto**

Today's Friends, Tomorrow's Leaders, Forever in Service

# The Expansion Process



## Expansion Criteria

We use objective criteria to break down any opportunity for expansion. The criteria used is designed to predict the possibility of long term success of a chapter on that campus based on previous and current chapters.

### Specific Criteria

We currently have 10 statistics that we analyze and consider for each campus that expresses interest in starting a new chapter. Among these are campus size, freshman retention rate, on campus living percentage, proximity to active chapters, and local alumni presence.

### Other Considerations

Beyond the data points above, we consider the number of people currently interested in committing to the expansion process. Omega Phi Alpha requires that an interested group has a **minimum of 25 people**. Once a group reaches this threshold, we will request that each interested person complete the Petition for Expansions and submit an expansions fee.

Perspective new chapter members must maintain a 2.5 GPA or above and demonstrate their alignment with our core values and self-motivation to excel within the expansion process.

## Expansion Support

Omega Phi Alpha National Service Sorority aggressively supports interest group development and will provide all materials needed to build a chapter. Once a Petition for Expansions has been accepted, OPhiA will give each prospective new member our New Member Education manual and a New Member Pin.

### Resources

Throughout the interest group and prospective new chapter phases, Omega Phi Alpha will provide goal setting timelines and the support and advice needed to appropriately navigate through each phase. Omega Phi Alpha will also guide you to additional resources that the sorority offers.

Each prospective new chapter will be assigned an Expansion Advisor that is local to the campus and is available to provide mentorship, advisement, and problem solving support. The prospective new chapter will have access to other national teams for training and support such as communications and marketing, recruitment, and finance. Various officer manuals and one on one support to train each prospective new chapter officer will also be provided.

### Leadership Development

Omega Phi Alpha believes that a prospective new chapter must develop skills in leadership and management to ensure health and steady growth as a chapter. We aim to focus our perspective new chapter activities around the development of these skills. These skills include service planning, sisterhood, financial stability, academic excellence, and professional development. It is our goal that the expansions program will prepare each prospective new chapter for their life as an active chapter.

There are educational opportunities available from the national organization throughout the year.

- **National Convention** - The sorority biennial convention is a great opportunity for prospective new chapter and chapter members. All chapters have delegates that vote on sorority legislation, the budget, and other substantive changes. It's a great opportunity to meet sisters from across the country and attend educational workshops.
- **District Summit** - a daylong leadership training and fellowship retreat at which members participate in icebreakers, group activities, think tanks, traditions, leadership training, and service projects.
- **Local Workshops** - Our volunteers and staff members routinely provide focused workshops for one or many chapters and prospective new members. These workshops can address topics such as recruitment, budgeting, values, chapter management, service planning, and programming.

### One-on-One Assistance

During the expansion period, your local Expansion Advisor will visit in person as needed and at least twice during the process. Representatives from the national organization will host a prospective new chapter retreat which marks the halfway point in the expansion period and provides a lot of opportunities for bonding and learning. After a prospective new chapter becomes a chapter, they are assigned a Chapter Success Coordinator which will become the main point of contact with the national organization.



The Expansion team's job is to cultivate interest groups into full prospective new chapters, help all interest groups meet pre-expansion criteria, target campuses that Omega Phi Alpha wants to expand to and find or create interest groups on those campuses. Support for these efforts will come through emails, phone calls, and personal on-site visits to work with groups and campuses.

# Interest Group - Phase One

Fulfill the requirements below to become an officially recognized Interest Group of Omega Phi Alpha.

## Membership

1. Minimum of **5 people** interested and actively recruiting others to join
2. Host regular interest meetings to increase membership

## Chapter Management

Interest groups should work to build infrastructure, establish communication channels, and get organized for life as an active chapter.

1. Complete expansion questionnaire via email
2. Schedule a phone call with Expansions Team to review all requirements
3. Meet with a campus representative to determine the process for establishing a new student organization on your campus\*
4. Bi-weekly meetings

\*Omega Phi Alpha does not affiliate with the National Panhellenic Council. On some campuses, our organization qualifies for the Professional Council within Greek Life. The office of student affairs or engagement on your campus can direct you to the appropriate department.

## Deliverables for Phase One

### To gain official recognition as an interest group

Task	Date Completed
Complete expansion questionnaire	
Phone call with Expansion Team	
Meet with office of student life	
Meeting minutes uploaded to OPAportal	

# Pre-Expansion - Phase Two

## Membership

1. Minimum of **25 members** in the interest group
2. All members complete and submit a Petition for Expansion
3. Create a roster and load info below into OPAportal
  - a. Name
  - b. Address
  - c. Phone Number
  - d. Email (non-school)
  - e. Class Rank
  - f. Anticipated graduation date

## Chapter Management

1. Weekly contact with the Expansion Team (phone and/or email)
2. On-campus advisor secured
3. Establish weekly meeting day and time
4. Process of becoming a recognized group on campus initiated
5. Collect grade reports from each member

## Financial Management

1. All members submit an expansion fee to the national organization

## Deliverables for Phase Two

Task	Date Completed
Petition for Expansion completed by all 25 members	
Expansion fee submitted by all members	
Roster submitted via OPAportal	
On-campus advisor	
Grade reports collected from each member	

## Expansion- Phase Three

Once pre-expansion information has been submitted to and approved by the Expansions Director, the interest group will be declared an official prospective new chapter of Omega Phi Alpha. Prospective new chapters have 1 year from that date to complete all the requirements to become a chapter. Below are next steps for chapter management and financial management as well as individual and group requirements.

### Next Steps

#### Chapter Management

1. Establish Officers
  - a. President, Vice President, Service Director, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Director
2. Form committees and hold committee meetings twice a month
3. Establish a campus mailing address

#### Financial Management

1. Obtain an IRS TIN
2. Open a checking account with President and Treasurer as account owners

### Requirements

#### Individual Prospective New Member Requirements

All petitioning members of the prospective new chapter are required to sign and submit the [Individual Expansion Agreement](#) to the Expansions Team. The agreement requires acknowledgement of all national policies and procedures as well as requirements to be a charter member of the prospective new chapter.

The individual requirements are as follows:

- Participation in at least five prospective new chapter-planned service projects, earning at least one hour of service in each of those five projects.
- Completion of at least ten hours of service through prospective new chapter-planned projects.
- Participation in at least one prospective new chapter fundraiser.
- Attendance at and participation in the prospective new chapter retreat.
- Completion of five membership quizzes with a combined average of at least 85%.
- Pass the national membership test with a score of at least 85%.
- Membership on at least one chapter planning committee.
- Attendance at weekly prospective new chapter meetings.
  - Prospective new members can miss up to 3 meetings per semester (excused or unexcused)
- Completion of all local and national financial requirements.
  - Expansion fee

- Local dues (to be determined by the prospective new chapter)
- Any additional fees as set by the prospective new chapter (retreat fees, etc.)

## Group Expansion Requirements

As a whole, the prospective new chapter is expected to meet certain requirements. These requirements are very similar to active chapter requirements and will prepare the prospective new chapter to function as an active chapter. Additionally, these requirements help build a stable foundation for the prospective new chapter.

The prospective new chapter requirements are as follows:

- The Executive Board must maintain weekly contact with the prospective new chapter Expansion Advisor.
- Hold weekly meetings and upload minutes from the meetings to OPAportal within 48 hours.
- Plan and implement at least six service projects, each of which must have a 75% participation rate among prospective new chapter members. There must be one service project in each of Omega Phi Alpha's areas of service (university community, community at large, members of the sorority, nations of the world, mental health, president's project)
- Conduct a minimum of two fundraisers.
  - Proceeds of one fundraiser should be added to the prospective new chapter budget.
  - Proceeds of the other should be used to offset convention attendance expenses.
- Create and submit a local constitution to the Expansions Director.
- Create and submit a written budget that includes all anticipated revenues and expenses and an addendum that specifies the amount of local dues per semester.
- Establish a Standards Board that is chaired by the prospective new chapter Vice President and must include at least two executive board members and two non-executive board members. The prospective new chapter President is not eligible to serve on the Standards Board.
- Participate (at least 5 members) in the District Summit of the district geographically closest to them, if held during the expansion period.
- Create and submit a detailed recruitment plan to the Expansions Director.
- Hold recruitment.
- Create and submit an action plan of all activities to be conducted for the first full year of the new chapter's life.
- Complete and submit the Petition for Charter.

## Induction as a Chapter

Once a prospective new chapter has completed all of the group requirements, they will complete and submit a Petition for Charter. This petition is a compilation of all activities, events, meetings, and projects that have occurred throughout the entire expansion period. Once the petition is reviewed and accepted by the Expansions Director, the prospective new members will be responsible for planning an induction weekend where they will be inducted as members of Omega Phi Alpha and receive their charter.

Each induction weekend varies by campus but it typically spans the entire weekend (Friday through Sunday) and is a great opportunity for alumni, bigs, and family members to get to celebrate the accomplishments and hard work of the prospective new members. Representatives of the national team including the National President and Expansions Director will attend induction ceremonies.

This is an example of a past induction weekend:

### Friday

- Sightseeing activity or campus tour
- Big/Little family dinners

### Saturday

- Service project
- Induction dinner and celebration
- Induction ceremony

### Sunday

- Brunch