

“Building a community of educators helping people achieve education and workplace success.”

This is the mission statement of the ACT State Organizations, which have been crucial to ACT’s growth as a provider of solutions that promote education and workforce readiness for individuals around the world. ACT’s management and staff have relied heavily on the network for advice both for ensuring that ACT’s programs and services remain relevant to the needs of students, schools, and colleges, and for designing new services responsive to the ever-changing challenges faced by those charged with preparing the nation’s people for education and workplace success.

The ACT State Organizations, consisting primarily of individuals in secondary and postsecondary institutions, have been in existence since ACT was founded in 1959. The network is widely credited with providing an effective communication channel for ensuring the relevance of ACT’s services.

Building a Network

The State Organizations were at the heart of ACT’s initial organizational structure. In 1959, ACT founders E.F. Lindquist and Ted McCarrel began organizing their professional colleagues—full-time employees of colleges and universities—into a network that would lay the foundation for the State Organizations.

The 16 states that joined in 1959 were Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. By the end of the school year, they were joined by Alaska, Idaho, and North Dakota.

The first ACT state coordinators were paid advisors who had direct involvement with ACT’s organization and development. Among their duties were communicating with high schools and colleges in their states; distributing materials such as announcements, publicity pieces, and registration forms to secondary and postsecondary institutions in their states; securing test facilities; handling registration forms; collecting fees; and forwarding reports to high schools and colleges. They also organized state advisory committees that eventually evolved into the State Organizations.

Upon ACT’s founding, McCarrel appointed regional directors to help State Organizations promote the ACT® test. By the time the first ACT test administration occurred in November 1959, the company had successfully recruited colleges and universities across the country to use ACT scores for college admissions.

In 1961, state coordinators became unpaid volunteers, serving as the governing body of and providing guidance to the organization. In subsequent years, steering committees were created. The role of the state coordinator evolved into that of state representative, a position that was either elected or appointed. When ACT established a 15-member Board of Trustees in 1965, state representatives filled eight of the seats,

giving State Organizations representation on the board. Also, new guidelines were created to determine how states could participate in the State Organization network.

Broadening the Scope

In July 2003, a task force was established to redefine the role of the State Organizations following changes to ACT’s governing structure. Prior to that time, many of the State Organizations worked primarily with postsecondary institutions. While ACT’s college admissions and placement exam continued to gain in popularity, ACT had expanded its scope to incorporate new audiences, including secondary educators, workforce professionals, and government administrators at the state and federal levels. As a result, ACT needed to broaden the composition and the role of its State Organizations. In 2004, the ACT Board of Directors adopted the recommendations of the task force. They included:

- Adopting a common statement of purpose for the State Organizations
- Developing and implementing an annual plan of work based on strategic objectives
- Adopting a set of principles addressing the organizational structure and membership of the State Organizations
- Updating the role of the state representative to emphasize the position’s leadership responsibilities
- Designing and implementing a State Organization leadership development program

State Organizations Today

As of ACT’s 50th anniversary in 2009, all 50 states are represented through the 44 ACT state and regional organizations across the country. These organizations have more than 8,000 members, and nearly 6,000 individuals attend the annual conferences. Generally, ACT State Organizations are led by a Council and an Executive Committee consisting of a State Representative, Chairperson, Chair-Elect, Past Chair, and Secretary.

Today, members of State Organizations provide advice and support to ACT. Their duties include:

- Serving as a communication link between educational institutions and agencies and ACT
- Coordinating and facilitating statewide professional development activities related to ACT’s mission
- Providing feedback on the utility and effectiveness of ACT programs and services
- Assisting ACT regional staff in identifying state service needs
- Providing input and advice on future ACT programs and services
- Identifying exemplary applications of ACT programs and services

ACT STATE ORGANIZATIONS

MISSION

Building a community of educators helping people achieve education and workforce success

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

ACT state organizations support and promote informed decision making by:

- Individuals engaged in education and career planning, preparation for further education and work, and lifelong learning
- Parties who are making or influencing decisions by those individuals

The Colorado ACT State Organization

In 1959, ACT cofounder McCarrel appointed H. Dean Burdick, then director of admissions at the Colorado School of Mines, as the first Colorado state coordinator. During 1961–1962, a number of conferences were conducted to promote ACT within the state. In 1963, the Colorado ACT Advisory Board was organized with representation from educational organizations, secondary school systems, and the State Department of Education.

Today, the Colorado ACT State Organization is involved in many initiatives, including:

- Expanding the State Organization's network of Colorado professionals who are committed to preparing students for college and workforce success
- Hosting an annual professional development conference focused on Colorado's most critical college and workforce readiness issues
- Providing Colorado's education professionals with key informational resources to help them in their efforts to prepare students for college and workforce success
- Providing informational resources to state, district, and institutional policymakers to support data-driven decision making regarding college and workforce readiness

Past Colorado ACT State Representatives

1959	H. Dean Burdick, Director of Admissions, Colorado School of Mines
1963–1966	Lowell Heiny, Dean of the Faculties, Mesa College
1966–1987	Theodore Nelson, Professor of Psychology, University of Northern Colorado
1987–1992	George Burnham, Senior Planning Analyst, University of Colorado at Denver
1992–2003	Beth Lebsock, Dean of Students and Assistant to the Vice President for Administrative Services, Pikes Peak Community College
2003–2008	William Haid, Assistant Vice President, Enrollment and Access, Colorado State University
2008–2009	Jennifer Sengenberger, Director of Career Planning and Advising and Assistant Dean, Pikes Peak Community College

State Representatives are elected by the members of the State Organization to serve a term of three years, serving no more than three full consecutive terms.

State Representatives' duties and responsibilities include:

- Serving as a voting member of the Executive Committee and the Council
- Representing the views and interests of members of the State Organization
- Facilitating communications between ACT staff in its regional and national office and the members of the State Organization
- Reporting to the members of the State Organization on significant developments regarding ACT programs and services



Colorado Colleges and Universities That Have Accepted the ACT Since 1959

Fort Lewis College
Lamar Community College
Mesa State College
Northeastern Junior College
Otero Junior College
Regis University
Trinidad State Junior College

Current Colorado ACT State Organization Council*

ACT State Representative

Jennifer Sengenberger
Director, Career Planning and Advising
Pikes Peak Community College

Eric Carpio
Director of Admissions
Adams State College

Julie Williams
Assistant Principal
Doherty High School

Chairperson

Mary Ontiveros
Associate Vice President for Enrollment
and Access
Colorado State University

Cindy Cowan
Principal
Rocky Ford High School

* As of May 2009

Chair-Elect

Rana Tarkenton
Director of Outreach Services
Denver Scholarship Foundation

Gary Frantz
Counselor
Scott Carpenter Middle School

Jana Frieler
Principal
Overland High School

Past Chair

Don Crow
Independent Counselor

Jo Anne Gearhart
Counselor
Broomfield High School

Secretary

Robin Boren
Independent Counselor

Nancy Sarchet
Counselor
Valley High School

ACT Liaison

Ben Hix
Consultant, EPAS®
ACT West Region

Dawn Taylor Owens
Executive Director
College in Colorado

