

“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 New Mexico ACT State Organization

In 1961, New Mexico organized an ACT Advisory Committee with membership representing postsecondary institutions, the Department of Education, and the Secondary School Principals Association. New Mexico State University began administering the ACT during the 1961–1962 school year.

Today, the New Mexico ACT State Organization sponsors an annual Southwest Region College Readiness Symposium with the other ACT Southwest State Organizations. It draws more than 500 participants from across the five ACT Southwest Region states—Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Additionally, the New Mexico ACT State Organization sponsors individual in-state conferences for school and university administrators on admission practices and enrollment management, developmental education, and school reform. It has been active in education reform initiatives with the New Mexico legislature. It has sponsored the New Mexico ACT College Readiness Awards for schools that have improved access to college by increasing the number of students participating in the ACT while also boosting their school ACT composite score by at least one full point, and it has sponsored the College Readiness Recognition Awards for New Mexico students who met or exceeded the PLAN® College Readiness Benchmarks in their high school sophomore year.

Past New Mexico ACT State Representatives

1962–1978	Philip Ambrose, Adjunct Professor, Educational Psychology, and Counselor, New Mexico State University
1978–1985	Phillip Farren, Vice President for Administrative Affairs, Western New Mexico University
1985–1990	Billy Bruner, Director of Admissions and Records, New Mexico State University
1990–1996	Larry Fuqua, Director of Admissions and Registrar, Eastern New Mexico University
1996–1997	Carroll Hall, State Director of Assessment and Evaluation, New Mexico State Department of Education
1997–2005	Cynthia Stuart, Director of Admissions, University of New Mexico
2005–2009	Michael Cleary, Campus Student Services Officer, New Mexico State University–Carlsbad

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



Current New Mexico ACT State Organization Council*

ACT State Representative

Michael Cleary
Campus Student Services Officer
New Mexico State University–Carlsbad

Chairperson

Terry Babbitt
Associate Vice President of Enrollment
Management
University of New Mexico

Vice Chair

Judy Cordova-Romero
Dean of Students
New Mexico Highlands University

Past Chair

Suzanne Staffki-Steil
Director, Academy Prep Program
New Mexico Military Institute

Secretary

Sharon Fischer
Campus Student Services Officer
New Mexico State
University–Alamogordo

ACT Liaison

Karen Pennell
Assistant Vice President and Regional
Manager
ACT Southwest Region

Jill Carlson
Director, Testing Center
San Juan College

Chris Farren
Vice President for Student Services
Western New Mexico University

Michael Loughrey
Secondary Assessment Coordinator
Albuquerque Public Schools

Michelle Schmidt
Dean of Student Services
Clovis Community College

Veronica Serna
ACCESS Center Director
Luna Community College

Kevin Shendo
Education Director
Pueblo of Jemez

Cindy Shue
Testing Administrator
University of New Mexico–Valencia
Campus

Ty Trujillo
Executive Director
New Mexico Association of Community
Colleges

Michael Zimmerman
Registrar
New Mexico State University

* As of May 2009

