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**Alzheimer’s Congressional Team (ACT)**

**Member Roles & Responsibilities**

January 2016

The role of ACT members is to help raise their elected officials’ understanding of Alzheimer’s disease as a pressing public health issue that requires their attention, and to persuade those officials to support the Alzheimer’s Association’s public policy goals.

To do this, ACT members work with their fellow team members and Association staff to build relationships with and to educate their Member of Congress, state legislators and local elected officials. Volunteers strategize, plan, organize and participate in a wide range of activities to engage these elected representatives, including private meetings with elected officials and their staff; writing letters to the editor encouraging officials to act or thanking them for acting; and persuading their elected officials to participate in events that we organize, such as Coffees with Congress, community forums and the Walk to End Alzheimer’s.

ACTs currently range in size from as few as 2 members to approximately 20, and we are working toward the goal of having at least 10 members on each ACT. We are also working to make our ACTs more diverse and inclusive, so that each ACT reflects the diversity of the Congressional district it represents.

ACT members commit to:

* Serve a one-year term, renewable upon member interest, at the Association’s discretion. Throughout the year, they should expect to spend 2-4 hours per month working in this role.
* Ensure that all their communications with their assigned Congressional office and all other elected officials are fully in alignment with Chapter and National policy priorities and strategies, and are conducted according to the highest ethical standards.
* Work exclusively with and through the Alzheimer’s Association on Alzheimer’s policy so long as they elect to serve in this voluntary role.
* Report all their interactions with their assigned legislators via our online reporting system, [www.alzadvocacy.com](http://www.alzadvocacy.com).

While some ACT members may prefer to serve “at large,” with no defined responsibilities, we are actively seeking ACT members willing to fill one of several defined roles, including:

* **Ambassador**. The person in this position is the Association’s designated spokesperson to the Member of Congress’ local office; this position is by invitation only. See the Ambassador job description, attached.
  + **Team Leader / Co-Chair**. While we strongly prefer Ambassadors who can handle both the Spokesperson and Team Leader roles, some Teams may find it necessary to split these roles between two people who can serve as Team co-leaders. In this case, the Team Leader/Co-Chair will be the person who is responsible for welcoming and helping to orient new Team members, and communicating regularly with Team members to give them the information they need to participate in the team’s activities to their fullest potential.
* **State Legislative Liaison(s).** In addition to their Member of Congress, each ACT member also has one State Assemblyperson and one State Senator. (You can find out who your state legislators are by going to <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov> for California or [http://mapserve1.leg.state.nv.us/whoRU](http://mapserve1.leg.state.nv.us/whoRU%20) for Nevada, and entering your address.) Each Team should designate one State Legislative Liaison for each state legislative district within the Congressional district, to be the Association’s designated spokesperson to the state legislator’s local office.
* **Walk Committee Liaison**. Teams in Congressional Districts that host a local Walk to End Alzheimer’s should have a Team member participate in the monthly meetings of the Walk Planning Committee’s Mission Subcommittee, where the advocacy piece is planned, to ensure that the Walk fully realizes its potential as an opportunity to engage your Member of Congress and to build our advocacy network in the district.
* **The Longest Day Liaison**. [The Longest Day](http://act.alz.org/site/TR?fr_id=8480&pg=entry) is our newest signature fundraising event, and provides a tremendous opportunity to engage elected officials at every level, all around California, and to garner statewide media attention for our movement to end Alzheimer’s. This person will be the Team’s point person for figuring out how to use The Longest Day as an opportunity to engage their Member of Congress and other local elected in activities to raise public awareness about Alzheimer’s.
* **Social Media**. If you are a frequent user of any social media platform, whether it’s Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, you can amplify your Team’s message by sharing and interacting about Alzheimer’s policy issues with your Member of Congress on social media.
* **Writer**. If you’re a good writer, you can amplify your Team’s impact by developing sample Letters to the Editor and opinion pieces and inviting your team members and (when appropriate) Member of Congress to personalize and submit to local papers.
* **AIM Volunteer(s).** The Alzheimer’s Impact Movement (AIM) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization working in strategic partnership with the Alzheimer’s Association to make Alzheimer’s a leading issue on Capitol Hill and in the 2016 Presidential campaign. AIM’S most important tool is its political action committee, AIMPAC, which gives campaign contributions to Alzheimer’s champions in Congress. AIM has been a vital asset in the recent Alzheimer's policy victories in Congress. We need 1-2 members of each ACT to recruit AIM members in their district at education conferences, Walks to End Alzheimer’s and other events.

In addition to the roles above, all ACT members are asked to help support a variety of Team activities during the course of the year. Typical activities include:

* **Attending Annual Policy Retreat**. Team Members are encouraged to attend our Chapter’s annual day-long Policy Retreat in their state. The Policy Retreat provides an opportunity to do a “deep dive” on state and national policy with state and national staff, and to work with peers on building your skills to improve your effectiveness as an advocate.
* **Quarterly in-person team meetings with your local Congressional office**. Ambassadors are responsible for scheduling these meetings and inviting their ACT members. Staff will help new ACT members prepare for these meetings by providing background materials, a suggested agenda and talking points.
* **Submitting a letter to the editor of your local paper**. Your Team Writer will provide templates that you can personalize and send.
* **Attending community events and interacting with your Member of Congress**. Attending in-person or telephone town halls or other events where the Member of Congress is present and asking a question or talking with your Member about Alzheimer’s policy.
* **Attending National Advocacy Forum**. ACT members are encouraged to attend the Alzheimer’s Association Advocacy Forum held each spring in Washington, DC. Limited financial assistance is available to help defray travel costs. The next Forum will be April 4-6, 2016 at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park.
* **Participating in meetings to learn about policy and plan advocacy activities**. ACT members meet once a year to develop a one-year plan for educating and engaging their Member of Congress. ACT members are also encouraged, but not required, to participate in regional Policy Committee meetings (which are either quarterly or every other month, depending on the region), which provide an opportunity to learn more about our policy priorities and share information with other Congressional teams in your area.
* **Participating in state policy opportunities.** Team membersare encouraged to participate in state policy activities, including our annual State Advocacy Day at the State Capitol.

We will be with you every step of the way to provide training, support and guidance as to how best to establish and maintain a good relationship with your legislators.

No experience is needed – just a small amount of your time!