



New York State Government Membership Frequently Asked Questions

What is The NYS Forum, Inc.?

The NYS Forum, Inc. is a non-profit membership organization incorporated as a 501(c)(3). The Forum's membership is comprised of state and local leaders and professionals in the public and private sector who collaborate in a neutral, non-biased, environment to advance New York State's public sector information technology (IT) practices. The NYS Forum provides the framework through which professionals and managers exchange knowledge and experiences and articulate information technology-related policies and operational strategies to effectively leverage information resources as a core component of government operations.

What is the Value of The NYS Forum, Inc.?

Government Members of The NYS Forum, Inc. benefit from an array of services and supports. The Forum's initiatives are designed to align with and support the state's current technology and business priorities, while providing a venue to understand and explore the applicability of emerging technologies, practices and strategies. The NYS Forum, Inc. provides the following benefits and services:

Networking

The NYS Forum provides multiple ways for Government Members to interact with IT and business professionals at all levels in the public and private sector. Networking opportunities are available through The NYS Forum-sponsored educational meetings, events and Work Groups.

Work Groups

The NYS Forum's Work Groups provide the venue for members to identify and share information regarding common issues. Work Groups develop and implement activities and initiatives that directly supplement the skills and knowledge of the state's workforce skills enhancing their ability to fulfill their professional duties. The Work Groups programmatic initiatives are integral to The NYS Forum, fulfilling its mission and achieving its strategic goals.

Educational Meetings & Conferences

Since its inception, The NYS Forum has developed and offered a multitude of educational events that are offered at no or low- cost. In the 2010-2011 program year The Forum offered 28 educational programs covering topics such as: *Cloud Computing; Mobile Website and Mobile App. Development; Master Data Management; Web 2.0 and Accessibility*; and *Project Management*. Over 2,700 individuals registered for these events as representatives of 57 NYS government entities and the 62 IT Corporate members of The Forum. By event, the rate of participation by state government personnel ranged from 60 to 94% of the total number of attendees.

The Table below shows a comparison of events and participation for the last three program years.

The NYS Forum, Inc. Educational Events & Trainings	2008/09 Oct. - Sept.	2009/10 Oct. - Sept.	2010/11 Oct. - Sept.
Number of Events	27	51	27
Total Number of Attendees	2,688	4,049	2,751
NYS Government Participation in Events: (reflected as % of total registrations)	68%	64%	68%
Entities Participating By Type 2010/11 Program year	57 State Government Entities 62 IT Corporate Members 29 IT Corporate Members that are MWBE/Small		

Leadership Development

Government Members of The NYS Forum, Inc. have a multitude of opportunities to develop leadership skills through involvement as Work Group Co-Chairs, serving as a member of the Board of Directors; working on and chairing other committees and task forces organized to meet identified needs, etc. Government Member individuals have the opportunity to acquire and demonstrate leadership skills needed to convene interested stakeholders from other entities/agencies and participants of the private sector, to identify common issues and interests and implement activities that align with the goals of the organization to meet its mission. Engagement in these opportunities proves valuable not only for the individual government entity/agency personnel that volunteer, but to their government entity/agency. The opportunity to engage with and learn from other leaders in the New York State IT arena directly supports the state's need for succession planning and leadership development.

Website, Electronic Communication, Repository of Information, Resources, Tools

The electronic resources of The NYS Forum, Inc. enables Government Members to network, collaborate and share resources. Through the web site, email-based communications and other electronic tools, members are able to connect with over 2,000 of their peers.

Responding to NYS Government Needs

In the last year, Government Members of The NYS Forum, Inc. coalesced to respond to specific identified needs. Examples of these targeted activities include:

Strategic Planning Collaborative Sessions - The NYS Forum’s Small/Medium/Local Government Agencies Work Group worked with collaborators to develop and offer two special 5-session courses in public sector strategy development to help small, medium and local government entities/agencies establish a vision, set priorities, and focus on what is truly important. More than 50 individuals from state and local government entities/agencies took advantage of this no-cost training. Participants developed the knowledge, tools and guidance to successfully develop a Strategic Plan.

Community of Practice Starter Kit - The IT Work Skills Development Work Group developed the *Community of Practice Starter Kit* to guide the successful development of communities of practice. The tool kit was beta tested by three separate groups, refined to reflect the input of the beta testers and published for broad distribution to the general public in October 2011.

What are the Benefits of Membership in The NYS Forum, Inc.?

The NYS Forum, Inc. is a membership organization and is dependent upon membership dues to support mission-related goals and initiatives. The engagement of individuals from the public and private sector is key to the mission of The NYS Forum, Inc. Membership and associated benefits available to New York State government entities/agencies are outlined below.

- **Government Members** – New York State government entities/agencies that are members in good standing (those who have paid membership dues) can take full advantage of the array of The NYS Forum offerings.
- **Government Participants** – New York State government entities/agencies that are not members in good standing (those who have not paid membership dues) are allowed to participate in specified activities on a limited basis, but are restricted from certain events, activities and leadership opportunities and decision-making roles within The NYS Forum.

The table below provides an at-a-glance view of The NYS Forum, Inc. benefits offered to New York State Government Members (paid) and New York State Government Participants (non-paying). Access to services and benefits offered are categorized according to the membership.

Key to Benefits	
<i>X</i>	Available as noted
<i>0</i>	Not available to Government Participants (Non-Paying)
<i>Limited</i>	Available, but limited for Government Participants (Non-Paying)
<i>X\$, X\$\$</i>	Available, with associated cost.

Benefits of Membership Government Member vs. Government Participant	NYS Government Member <i>(Paid)</i>	NYS Government Participant <i>(Non-Paying)</i>
<i>Governance & Leadership</i>		
Institutional Representation NYS Government Entities/Agencies designate an Institutional Representative (IR). The IR represents the agency, casts decision-making votes to elect The NYS Forum Board of Directors.	<i>X</i> <i>Available</i>	<i>0</i> <i>Not Available</i>
The NYS Forum Board of Directors The NYS Forum Board of Directors is the governance body of the Corporation. NYS Government Entities/Agencies must be Government Members in order to serve on The NYS Forum Board of Directors.	<i>X</i> <i>Available</i>	<i>0</i> <i>Not Available</i>
Strategic Plan (SP) The Strategic Plan is the road map for the goals and strategies that The NYS Forum will undertake to fulfill its mission. The SP drives the prioritization of activities and the allocation of resources. Members in good standing are engaged in the development and prioritization of the SP. Government Participants will be engaged as external stakeholders interested in SP related activities. As part of SP development efforts, Government Participants can provide general input but do not have a role in prioritization of activities.	<i>X</i> <i>Available</i>	<i>Limited</i>
The NYS Forum Work Groups, Communities of Practice, Task Forces – Leaders / Co-Chairs Only Government Member Individuals can be considered for a leadership or co-chair role with any of The NYS Forum supported Work Groups, CoPs, or Task Forces. Work Groups, CoPs, Task Forces established under the auspices of The NYS Forum provide the venue for Government Members to identify and share information regarding common issues and to collaboratively develop and implement programmatic activities and initiatives. The programmatic initiatives are integral to The NYS Forum, fulfilling its mission and achieving its strategic goals.	<i>X</i> <i>Available</i>	<i>0</i> <i>Not Available</i>

Networking & Resources

<p>Participation in The NYS Forum Work Groups, Communities of Practice, Task Forces</p> <p>Participation in The NYS Forum supported Work Groups, CoPs, or Task Forces are open to all individuals from Government Members and Government Participants, regardless of their standing as a paid or non-paying entity of The NYS Forum.</p>	<p>X <i>Available</i></p>	<p>X <i>Available</i></p>
<p>Web Site, List Servs</p> <p>Government Members have full access to The NYS Forum’s web site including the member’s only section. Government Participants have access to informational list servs and to web-based resources available to the general public. Government Participants will be restricted from accessing the members-only section of The NYS Forum’s web site.</p>	<p>X <i>Available</i></p>	<p><i>Limited</i></p>
<p>Educational Events & Training</p> <p>The NYS Forum regularly hosts free, face-to-face and webinar-based educational and training events. Government Members have full access to educational and training events offered at no cost to them. Government Participants must pay an associated fee established, in order to attend educational and training events.</p>	<p>X <i>Available</i></p>	<p>X \$ <i>Available with Associated Cost</i></p>
<p>Executive Forums</p> <p>The NYS Forum regularly offers Executive Forums as a means to provide targeted education, highlight emerging issues and provide a broad venue for our public and private members to network with leaders and the NYS work force. These events are open to Government Members and Government Participants at no charge.</p>	<p>X <i>Available</i></p>	<p>X <i>Available</i></p>
<p>Annual Awards & Recognition</p> <p>The NYS Forum recognizes leadership and effective practices through its annual awards initiative. Government Members and Government Participants are eligible to be considered and recognized.</p>	<p>X <i>Available</i></p>	<p>X <i>Available</i></p>
<p>Social Events & Other Special Events</p> <p>Throughout the year, The NYS Forum hosts social and other special events. These events are open to The NYS Forum Government Members, Government Participants, and other interested organizations and individuals. Attendance at these events has an associated cost or fee. Government Members can attend at a reduced rate. A separate fee structure will be established for Government Participants</p>	<p>X \$ <i>Available with Associated Cost</i></p>	<p>X \$\$ <i>Available with Associated Cost</i></p>

Membership Structure & Rates

The NYS Forum's fiscal and membership period runs from October 1 through September 30. In 2010, The NYS Forum, Inc. Board of Directors adopted a 3-tiered dues structure for New York State Government Entities/Agencies for the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 membership periods. The membership structure differs from prior years and was adopted to ensure a consistent and equitable method to assess NYS Government Entity/Agency. Dues are based on the number of employees as outlined below.

Large Entity/Agency	1,000 or more employees	\$12,500 annually
Medium Entity/Agency	151 – 999 employees	\$5,500 annually
Small Entity/Agency	150 or fewer employees	\$2,000 annually

Ramifications of Non-Payment of Membership Dues

As a standard practice, invoices for membership dues are issued three months prior to the annual due date - October 1. If payment is not received within 90 days of the annual due date (by December 31), the NYS Government Agency will lose standing as a *NYS Government Member* and will lose the benefits of membership. Non-paying NYS Government Agencies will be able to receive limited benefits as a *NYS Government Participant*. If an agency renews membership after the grace period, the full membership dues rate will be required.

Note: For the 2011-2012 program year only the grace period for NYS Government Agency's payment of membership dues has been extended to 180 days - April 1, 2012 - easing transition to the new structure.

Can NYS Entity/Agency Resources be Used to Pay for Membership Dues?

In short... yes! NYS Entity/Agency Resources can be used to pay for membership in The NYS Forum, Inc. The information below summarizes the procurement and disbursement guidelines and determinations regarding payment of membership dues.

1988, the NYS Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) issued Bulletin G-76: Payment for Memberships in Professional Organizations which addresses the use of agency resources for membership dues. OSC Bulletin G-76 was reviewed and updated in 2006. The Bulletin clarifies that State Agencies are authorized to pay for professional membership dues when the membership is directly related to the professional duties and activities of the agency. The Bulletin provides guidance regarding the justification for authorization of payment and specifically notes that agencies should clearly articulate the benefits of such membership which can include access to professional meetings and conferences; reduced rates for conference or training sessions, research services, etc.

<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/agencies/gbull/g-76.htm>

In 1993, the NYS Division of the Budget (DOB) wrote to the NYS Office of the State Comptroller expressing their opinion that The NYS Forum meets all of the requirements of the Procurement & Disbursement Guidelines set forth under OSC Bulletin G-76. On March 15, 1993, OSC expressed its approval of the DOB opinion. Subsequent to this determination, The NYS Forum incorporated as a not-

for-profit organization. In 2009, The NYS Forum, Inc. requested OSC’s review of the 1993 opinion taking into consideration the organization’s restructuring. In 2009, OSC issued a letter confirming the original determination: “The NYS Forum, Inc. meets all the requirements of OSC Bulletin G-76 thereby allowing State agencies to expend State funds for Forum membership dues.” A copy of this letter can be found on the Forum’s website at: <http://www.nysforum.org/about/>

Need More Information?

If you have questions or would like to discuss the benefits of The NYS Forum, Inc. to your agency, please call Deborah V. Buck, Executive Director, 518.438.7414 or dbuck@nysforum.org