

INDEPENDENT AFFILIATE

Independent affiliation is an option for those divisions that are in an extremely strong position. This option allows these groups to retain formal governance structures, fiscal management, and decision making authority within the context of the affiliation agreement and association best practices and laws. The affiliate will maintain its relationship with AAMFT benefiting from AAMFT's recruitment, retention, and dues processing for the affiliate and in marketing events and programs to a wider audience. Costs for these services will be shared between AAMFT and the affiliate with a 25% association management fee taken from the dues disbursement. The affiliate can also use AAMFT branding and materials such as the *Family Therapy Magazine* to promote its efforts and has access to discounted services such as web hosting and community platforms. Affiliate advocacy efforts should be conducted in conjunction with the Family TEAM to ensure a consistent and strong MFT advocacy voice. Independent affiliates can only be geographic in nature and should focus on networking and advocacy first and foremost. To ensure these goals are met, and to avoid the marginalization that occurs with regionalized strategies, the efforts of the group should target an area that is no farther than a 6-hour drive from a central location that is selected. While the affiliate may have members that live outside of that area, its activities should be limited to that area.

Phase 1: Information and Documentation Gathering

During this phase of the process, your division board will work to gather the information and documentation necessary to make your decision. While this process will have different considerations for each division board based on your unique circumstances, you will want to address the following at a minimum.

- Beginning at division leader day and continuing with your full board, review and work through the Planning for the Future workshop form and decision making matrix.
- Become familiar with the legal and regulatory processes in your geographic area with relation to association best practices and legal requirements to ensure your operating procedures will be in good standing.
- Identify the division's financial assets, standing, and obligations. Build a proposed budget for the affiliate based around an optional dues structure.
- Determine potential advocacy liaison(s) to lead engagement efforts on Family TEAM and begin recruitment of interested members.





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Phase 2: Plan Development

During phase two, your division board will work with AAMFT staff to develop your state/provincial specific strategy.

- Work with AAMFT staff to finalize any necessary steps to complete planning phase.
 - Submit final business plan, including proposed member benefits and dues structure, to AAMFT for review. Final plan is due no later than December 30, 2017 for consideration. Affiliate plan must include planned minimum membership targets of 350 members and affiliate must be able to demonstrate sufficient operating reserves (.70) or a plan to work towards that within 5-years.
 - Review affiliation agreement and terms.
 - Develop statement for membership to identify goals and intended programs for marketing efforts.
 - Advocacy liaison and/or designated member of legislative committee will work with AAMFT government relations staff to identify necessary agenda focuses.
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Phase 3: Plan Execution

During phase three, your division board will work with AAMFT staff to execute your state/provincial specific strategy.

- Division leadership and AAMFT staff will execute the necessary legal steps to create the affiliation. Affiliation should be reviewed every two years with an updated business plan, if necessary.
- Affiliation agreement is signed.
- Upon official date of affiliation, association management fees will be removed from dues rebate checks. AAMFT begins recruitment, retention, and marketing efforts for affiliate. Affiliate receives access to agreed upon services and options for other discounted services. Dues rebate checks will be sent on a quarterly basis.
- Advocacy liaison and/or designated member of legislative committee will coordinate with AAMFT, serve on Family TEAM and attend events, and provide quarterly updates for AAMFT Family TEAM advocacy updates.
- Affiliate should submit to AAMFT annually proof of good legal and financial standing.
- Affiliate relationships will be reviewed every three years to evaluate mission, goals, accomplishments, and finances ensuring that member benefits are relevant and sustainability exists. If affiliate fails to meet minimums for two consecutive years after consultative strategies with AAMFT, a sunset process will be executed.
- Affiliate and AAMFT may enter into separate revenue sharing agreements related to programs, services, or products.
- With the exception of advocacy assistance, the affiliate will be responsible for its own operations and fiscal management.