

Network Feedback

Area 1: Membership

During the open feedback collection process in 2019, the following core issues were raised by members of the CC Network relating to membership:

1. The membership process is not transparent, technically buggy, or overall takes too long to move through.
2. The membership process is disconnected from local chapters and lacks local context/knowledge, and that can lead to challenges in coordination or knowing what members are doing. Membership decisions being made by a central body without local chapters having veto power furthers colonial structures and could prevent local chapters from creating a safe, inclusive environment.
3. Membership appears to be for life, whether you continue to be involved or not.

At the same time, some elements of the membership process were flagged as important and worth preserving. Those include:

- Opening the doors to a broader, more inclusive community.
- Making room for people with a variety of skill sets to participate.
- Ensuring no one can be excluded from participating without good reason.

Please note that this document includes recommendations specifically about the membership process - comments involving the value of membership, or chapter structure, for example, fit more logically into other recommendation areas and will be addressed there.

Based upon the solutions proposed by network members during the feedback process, and after consultation with the Membership Committee and staff from Creative Commons, the following changes are recommended by the Executive Committee, corresponding with the issues raised above.

1. The membership process has been streamlined and debugged significantly since the first rounds of members went through it. The Membership Committee was formed, it instituted tighter timelines and policies for addressing applications, and made technical improvements. The time that membership applications spend awaiting vouching or MC Committee votes has decreased significantly since the first year of the new process. However, in additional response to this concern, the Membership Committee and CC HQ have committed to more clearly communicate the procedure on the network website, offer direct guidance to potential new members, and are receptive to further technical

improvements on the process. The Executive Committee also recommends that CC HQ improve the membership dashboard to more easily show Chapter Leads the existing members in their jurisdiction, pending applications, and rejected applications.

2. A significant thread among comments was the lack of local/chapter input on the membership process. This was raised both from the organizing perspective, ie. the Chapter Lead's ability to manage a chapter without being able to track their changing membership, and from an equity perspective, ie. the inability of chapter leaders to guarantee a safe, inclusive space for their members without having say in who participates. The Committee was wary of scrapping and replacing the membership process in its entirety, as there is policy fatigue and it would further slow local organizing to introduce an entirely new system, but as chapter members ourselves, we share these concerns and want to offer changes to address them.

Therefore, we recommend that Chapter Leads be given a window in which they have the ability to expedite, or add a flag to, a membership application.

Here is what that means and how it would work:

- **Step 1 (Same as current process):** A community member applies to join the Global Network, and their application must include 2 vouchers.
- **Step 2 (Same as current process):** Vouchers must confirm their vouch and add information about the applicant.
- **Step 3 (New):** Chapter Leads receive a notification that a new application has been submitted from their jurisdiction.
- **Step 4 (New):** Chapter Leads have a 2-week window to:
 - Expedite the application: if the applicant is someone that the Chapter Lead knows to be involved, and they feel confident the applicant would offer a positive contribution to the chapter, they would be able to approve the application, de facto approving the new member.
 - Add a flag: if the applicant is someone the Chapter Lead has concerns about, they can add a brief note to the application explaining their concerns for the Membership Committee to take into consideration. Flags would be kept confidential to the Lead and the Membership Committee itself. A flag does not block the application, however.
 - Do nothing: if the Chapter Lead does not know the applicant, is unsure about their involvement, or any other circumstance besides the above apply, they may choose to take no action.
- **Step 5 (Same as current process):** If the Chapter Lead chooses to take no action, or adds a flag on the application, it passes on to the Membership Committee for review and decision, following the already-established process.

- **Step 6 (New):** The Membership Committee informs Chapter Leads of any decisions regarding applications from their jurisdiction, whether approved or rejected.

This change would have the benefits of (1) informing the chapter lead when a new member might be joining their jurisdiction, (2) allows applications of engaged and known community members to move forward quickly and easily, (3) builds in a way for local knowledge to be included in membership decisions, while (4) ensuring that no applicant can be excluded from participation for illegitimate reasons.

3. As the goal of the membership process is to give people who are involved in the community a voice in the governance of it, it is inconsistent to approve members once for life and not periodically confirm that they remain involved in the community. The Committee recommends that annually, members receive a reminder of their membership, a guide to updating your membership profile, and a “quit/opt-out” link.