

Question:

Wondering how other states deal with Life Members. Below is our current information from our Policies and Procedures but we are currently not meeting our budget for the year and are considering making changes to this policy.

Life Member:

1. Any voting member who has attained the age of 65 years and has held membership for the fifteen consecutive years immediately prior to application, may apply for and automatically receive Life Membership, which will be granted by the WSLHA Office.
2. The WSLHA Office shall oversee Life Membership application forms and shall alert the Membership Committee when members apply for Life Membership.
3. Life Members shall have all the privileges of a member but will not pay a fee.

Answers:

NJSHA does have life membership category. Here is ours (note regular membership is \$85 for one year and \$150 for two years):

LIFE MEMBER

A Regular Member who has attained the age of 65 (by January 1, 2020) and has held membership for 20 consecutive years prior to age 65. Such Regular Members may apply for and, upon approval, receive Life Membership with all privileges of a Regular Member with reduced payment of annual dues. Contact the NJSHA Office for verification.

Dues: \$25.00 one year, \$45.00 two years

In California, we had a policy very similar to Washington's.

We ended up doing away with Life Membership a couple of years ago. There was one main reason, three different causes.

Number one reason: Bottom line. We could not sustain the financial commitment to providing "free" benefits to Life members.

Cause #1. Due to the growing number of retirees (baby boomers), 10%+ of our members were Life Members. (Eg 10% of members received full benefits, but paid nothing for them.)

Cause #2. Our former outdated database/computer system made verification of years of membership impossible. If someone said they had been a member for xxx years, there was no way to verify it.

Cause #3: Some of the life members, were actually the most demanding of time from our office staff—meaning it cost more to service a life member than it did any other category of member.

This group had a higher percentage who could not “register” on-line, and required assistance over the phone, sometimes multiple and/or very long phone calls.

Dropping of the “life membership” brought mixed reaction.

Some understood, some were angry, some dropped their membership—which they hadn’t been paying for anyway.

It was a very thoroughly discussed and thoughtful decision process, but one we had to make for financial sustainability.

A Life Member is any member who has reached the age of at least 70 years at the time of application, and has at least 25 years of consecutive NYSSLHA membership or 35 years of cumulative membership immediately prior to attaining age 70. Life Members have the right to hold office and serve on committees pursuant to the requirements of those offices or committee assignments. Life Members shall vote in Association elections or referendums in accordance with Article III, Section 5.

We very recently amended our bylaws to raise the age from 65 to 70 because of budgetary concerns related to this category, since we do offer a reduced membership for members in this category of membership. We also included the right to vote, hold office, and serve on committees.

LSHA has life members (free) when they reach the age of 65 and have consecutive membership for 10 years prior.

Connecticut no longer has a life membership. There are about 10 members who were grandfathered in 10 years ago. We simply do not have the financials to support free memberships for Life membership. Members are amenable to this decision.