

MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING Q & A

1. Who is a member in good standing?

MEA's Constitution (Section 3.a.1) defines a member in good standing as: (a) an active member of the Association (b) who has met the dues payment schedule set forth in the MEA Dues Transmittal Policy. The MEA Dues Transmittal Policy can be found, along with the Constitution and other governance documents, online at www.mea.org/governance.

2. Who is an active member of the Association?

An active member is an educational employee represented by an MEA affiliate who has signed an MEA Continuing Membership Application and who has not resigned during the window period allowed for resignations each August.

3. Are all MEA members active members?

No. There are other categories of MEA membership in addition to active members, including associate members and MEA-Retired members. They are not active members because they are not employees in bargaining units represented by an MEA affiliate.

4. Are employees who are on layoff or on a leave of absence active members?

Yes. Since persons on layoff or leave of absence have rights to return to their employment, they are still considered employees and active members of MEA. Because those on layoff or leave of absence are not receiving wages from their employer, they pay reduced MEA and NEA dues.

5. Are all employees in a MEA bargaining unit MEA members?

No. In order to be an MEA member, an employee must have signed a Continuing Membership Application. New employees are non-members until and unless they sign the Continuing Membership Application. In addition, employees who resign their membership during the August window period are thereafter non-members.

5. How far behind may a member be in payment of dues and still be a member in good standing?

The MEA Dues Transmittal Policy has specific payment schedules for 10-month and 12-month employees. In general, a member may be a month overdue in paying his or her dues and still be a member in good standing. Generally, falling two or more months behind in the payment of dues would make the person a member in arrears and not a member in good standing.

6. Once a member becomes a member in arrears, how does the member return to being a member in good standing?

By paying his or her dues to meet the schedule in the MEA Dues Transmittal Policy, the person immediately returns to being a member in good standing. However, that person may not be eligible for MEA legal services, if the need for legal services arose while the person was a member in arrears.

7. Why is it important to be a member in good standing?

Only members in good standing may attend Association meetings, hold Association office or serve on Association committees or commissions, and vote on Association issues, including voting on the ratification of a collective bargaining agreement. Only members in good standing are entitled to the full-range of legal services provided under the MEA Legal Representation Policy. In fact, a member who is in arrears at the time of an adverse employment action may not be eligible for MEA legal services, because a person must be a member in good standing at the time of the incident resulting in the need for legal services.

8. What happens if a member fails or refuses to pay the dues owed to the Association?

The MEA Board of Directors has adopted a Dues Collection Policy, which provides the process for attempting to collect overdue Association dues. During the first 60 days that a member is behind in the payment of dues, the local association will make several contacts with the member to attempt to persuade the member to pay his or her dues. Once the member is 60 days or more in arrears, the MEA Membership Department will make at least three contacts with the member by e-mail, phone, or mail, depending upon the member's contact information. If the member fails to either pay the dues or establish a payment schedule, the member will be sent a letter advising that he or she has 30 days to either forward payment or to arrange for a payment plan with MEA. If the member still does not pay, the member's overdue account will be referred for collection procedures.

9. Is a member in good standing if they're making payments on a payment plan established with MEA Membership for current or prior years' dues?

For this first year under these new policies only, MEA will consider a member to be in good standing if he or she is making payments for the current year and is complying with a payment plan for dues owed from prior years.