

NSPS YSN Guide

Chapters vs Committees

What are they, and how do you create them?

As the Young Surveyors Network continues to grow, many members run into the same question: Should we form a committee, or should we form a chapter? Both can support leadership, networking, and engagement, but they are not the same thing. The right choice depends on the size of your group, the level of interest, and how much structure your state is ready to support.

Step 1: Understand what a Committee is

A YSN Committee is typically the simpler and more flexible way to begin.

It operates within the state society's existing structure rather than as a semi-independent group, which makes it easier to establish and manage.

Committees are well suited to states that are building interest or testing how young surveyor engagement could work. They usually have a smaller leadership structure, often led by a Chair or Co-Chairs and focus on targeted activities such as networking events, outreach, exam preparation or conference programming.

Because the committee sits within the parent organisation, it typically relies on the state society for communication, approvals and budget processes.

A committee is a low-barrier, flexible option that is easier to launch and can grow over time.

Step 2: Understand what a Chapter is

A YSN Chapter is a more structured and formal model of young surveyor engagement. While still connected to the state society, a chapter operates with greater independence, including its own leadership, programming and identity.

Chapters are best suited to states with an established and committed group of young surveyors who are ready to support ongoing activity and leadership responsibilities.

Most chapters elect officers such as President, Vice President, Secretary and YSN Delegate. They typically organise recurring events, workshops, mentorship programmes and other initiatives tailored to their state.

Chapters may also engage more directly with NSPS YSN national leadership, creating opportunities for collaboration, visibility and additional support. This increased structure requires greater coordination, communication and volunteer commitment.

A chapter is a more formal and sustainable option for long-term growth and visibility.

Step 3: Decide which structure fits your state

Before creating anything, assess your current level of interest, capacity and readiness.

Choose a committee if:

- your state is just getting started
- interest is still developing
- you want similar structure that is easier to launch
- you want to test ideas before building a more formal structure

Choose a chapter if:

- you already have a committed and engaged group
- you want regular programming and visible leadership
- your state is ready for a more structured approach
- you want to establish a long-term young surveyor presence

Neither structure is inherently better; the right choice depends on what your state can realistically support at this stage.

Step 4: How do you create a Committee?

1. Start with interest

A committee usually begins when one or more young surveyors see a need for a space to connect, organize and get involved.

2. Start a conversation with state leadership

Reach out to your State Director, Executive Board, or another society leader and explain the idea. The goal of this conversation is to determine whether a YSN Committee fits the organization's goals and where it would sit within the society's structure.

3. Ask what the approval process is

Each state society is different. Some may require a formal Executive Board vote. Others may simply recognize the group as a standing or special committee.

4. Establish leadership

Once the committee is approved or recognized, leadership is usually appointed rather than elected. Most committees have a Chair or Co-Chairs who handle scheduling, activities and communication.

5. Begin with manageable programming

Start with a few targeted activities such as:

- a networking event
- an outreach effort
- an exam prep session
- young surveyor programming at the state conference

Don't worry about taking on too much, too soon. Committees are intentionally flexible, allowing the scope to grow as interest and capacity increase.

6. Keep the state society informed

Regular communication builds trust, keeps the committee aligned with the parent organization, and helps maintain long-term support.

Step 5: How do you create a Chapter?

1. Build a committed base of interest

A chapter usually begins when a small but motivated group of young surveyors identifies a need for more consistent engagement and wants a more formal structure.

2. Develop a proposal

The proposal can be formal or informal, but it should explain:

- the purpose of the chapter
- the types of activities it hopes to offer
- the proposed leadership structure
- how the chapter supports the goals of the state society

This less as asking permission and more as explaining the vision.

3. Meet with key state leaders early

Prospective chapters should coordinate early with the State Director, YSN Delegate, and Executive Board. These conversations help clarify what approvals are required, whether **bylaws** or a **charter** are needed, and how the chapter fits into the state society's governance.

4. Follow the state society's formation process

There is no universal process. Some state societies require a formal vote to approve a new chapter. Others may approve it once certain requirements are met. The key point is that each state has its own bylaws and governance structure, so early coordination matters.

5. Formalize leadership

Once approved, the chapter should appoint or elect officers. This helps define responsibilities and gives the group continuity as leadership changes over time.

6. Create operating guidelines

Some chapters adopt bylaws or a charter. This helps clarify expectations, leadership roles, and how the chapter will continue functioning even when life gets busy or leadership turns over.

7. Launch programming and maintain alignment

After formation, the chapter can begin organizing regular meetings, socials, workshops, mentorship efforts, and other programming. Ongoing communication with the state society is important so the chapter remains supported and aligned as an extension of the organization, not a separate entity.

There is no “right” or “wrong” path, only the one that best fits your state society and its young surveyors. A chapter offers structure, visibility and long-term continuity, while a committee provides flexibility, accessibility and a simpler way to get started. Both models create opportunities for connection, leadership and growth. The most important step is to begin the conversation, build interest and choose the structure that best supports your members.