

## ACM Reciprocal Network Policy Guide

### Overview

When the ACM Reciprocal Program launched twenty years ago, there were far fewer children's museums and the policy of free admission to museums participating in the program was intended to provide a benefit to families while traveling on vacation and visiting out of town relatives. It was never meant to provide free admission to all museums within a given community or area. Most if not all museums provide free admission on specially designated days or special programs to serve low-income families.

As the number of children's museums continues to grow, so grows the number of museums participating in the Reciprocal Program. Today there are almost 200 museums participating in the program, many within close geographical proximity to one another. Since all museums that participate in the program are nonprofit organizations and depend on the support of the public to continue their missions of providing safe places for children to learn through play in spaces designed solely for them and their families, the Reciprocal Program in its current form has become unsustainable for many.

As you may have noticed on the roster of museums participating in the program (current list attached), there are numerous museums with admission restrictions and some of these restrictions are quite complicated. In an effort to simplify the program for both families and museum admissions staff, the Association of Children's Museums undertook an extensive review of the program.

ACM and its Board of Directors sought to simplify the program policies for admission and resolve the inequity in the program as more museums sought local restrictions. They considered many variables and possible policies before deciding on the changes that will go into effect in 2013. The new program terms eliminate these local restrictions and create one reciprocal admission policy at every museum participating in the program:

### Effective April 1, 2013:

- The ACM Reciprocal Program will be called the ACM Reciprocal Network.
- The ACM Reciprocal Network admission policy will shift from free admission for up to four (4) family members from the same household (or, if applicable, local restrictions) to:  
**50 percent off general admission for up to six (6) people. Additional visitors must pay current admission price.** (Note: Museums may not implement this policy before April 1, 2013.)
- All current local restrictions will be eliminated and participating museums may not request new restrictions.
- Family memberships that include ACM Reciprocal Network benefits must be sold at a minimum price of \$125 or more.

Use this guide to become familiar with the new policies and find answers to your questions about how to make the transition to the ACM Reciprocal Network.

Please print this guide and circulate to all or your membership, admission and guest services staff. This information is also found at [www.ChildrensMuseums.org](http://www.ChildrensMuseums.org) where you will find downloadable versions of key documents referenced in the guide.

<b><u>Table of Contents</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<b>1. Planning the Transition to the ACM Reciprocal Network.....</b>	<b>3</b>
• Checklist	
<b>2. Key Transition Dates.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Notifying Your Staff and Members.....</b>	<b>5</b>
• Sample Messages	
• Further Suggestions	
<b>4. Updating Your Web site.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5. Attention Membership Sales Staff.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6. Training Your Admissions Staff.....</b>	<b>10</b>
• Current Procedures	
• Procedures after April 1, 2013	
<b>7. Issuing Membership Cards with Reciprocal Benefits.....</b>	<b>12</b>
• Logo and Stickers (dates to remember)	
• What to Include on the Card	
• Further Suggestions	
<b>8. Welcome Materials for Memberships with Reciprocal Benefits.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>9. Frequently Asked Questions.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>10. Withdrawing from the Program/Network.....</b>	<b>18</b>

**To search** the guide for key terms, hit Ctrl F and in the dialogue box that opens, type the word or term you want to find and hit enter.

**Questions?** Please email or call Victoria Garvin, program officer, membership, at 703.224.3100 or Victoria.Garvin@ChildrensMuseums.org.

**Feedback?** ACM has created a feedback channel for you to let us know how the transition is going: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/ReciprocalNetworkFeedback](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ReciprocalNetworkFeedback).

## I. Planning the Transition to the ACM Reciprocal Network

Checklist for Transition to ACM Reciprocal Network	Complete By (date)
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify your strategies for transitioning to the new policies (admission policy, membership rate increase – minimum of \$125 for a membership with reciprocal benefits – effective April 1, 2013)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop timeline for implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a What you need to have in place now</li> <li>b What you need to have in place by April 1, 2013</li> </ul>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate changes to staff (admission, membership and guest services) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Announcement at administrative meetings</li> <li>- Email notice to staff (plus reminders on key transition dates)</li> <li>- Morning meetings-ongoing training</li> <li>- Update front desk manual</li> <li>- Update staff orientation/training and training documents</li> <li>- Reference sheets at admission points</li> </ul>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate changes to members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a Notification Letter/Email*</li> <li>b Membership materials               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Have new versions ready to go to press</li> </ul> </li> <li>c Website updates*               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership page</li> <li>• Plan Your Visit page</li> <li>• Online renewals page</li> <li>• Gift Memberships page</li> </ul> </li> <li>d Membership renewal letters</li> <li>e Acknowledgement letters               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New member packet (include new ACM Welcome* and Brochure)</li> <li>• Renewing packet (include new ACM Welcome and Brochure)</li> </ul> </li> <li>f Newsletters</li> </ul>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate changes to visitors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Signage at admissions points</li> <li>- Download and print Reciprocal Brochure in lobby for visitors</li> <li>- Laminate Brochure and keep at membership and admissions points for staff reference.</li> </ul>	
<p>* Included in the Guide and available for download on the ACM Web site.</p>	

## 2. Key Transition Dates

While April 1, 2013 is the effective date for the changes to the ACM Reciprocal Program outlined in the Overview on page 1, there are several key dates in the transition period to put on your calendar:

### Between now and April 1, 2013

- Family memberships with ACM Reciprocal Program benefits with an expiration date of March 31, 2013 or before will receive free admission (or current restrictions) for up to four (4) family members from the same household through this date.
- Membership cards issued between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013 may carry the current or new Reciprocal logo.
- All other current Reciprocal Program policies remain in effect until March 31, 2013.
- Museums may not implement the new admission policy of 50% off general admission before April 1, 2013.

### Beginning April 1, 2013:

- The program name will be ACM Reciprocal Network. Reciprocal benefits will change from free admission (or local restrictions) to **50 percent discount on general admission for up to six (6) people. Additional visitors must pay current admission price.**

Note: With these parameters, e.g., the benefits for a one-year membership with reciprocal benefits sold after April 1, 2012 will have a partial year of free admission and a partial year of 50% discounted admission. How many months of each benefit depend on the date of sale and subsequent expiration date (note well when selling two-year memberships).

- Your museum's family membership with ACM Reciprocal Network benefits must be priced at \$125 or more.
- All new membership cards with ACM Reciprocal Network benefits issued must have the new logo (see Section 7 for complete requirements for cards).
- Any local admission restrictions at your museum must be eliminated.

### Through March 31, 2014:

- The current ACM Reciprocal Program logo on a membership card with Reciprocal benefits will be accepted for admission through March 31, 2014, providing the expiration date on the card has not passed at the time of admission. (Some families may have purchased multiple year memberships.) However, the benefit changes to 50 percent off general admission on April 1, 2013 regardless of card expiration date.



Current logo



New logo

Download from the ACM Web site

### 3. Notifying Your Staff and Members

Every day you and your staff interact with visitors and members of both your museum and museums participating in the ACM Reciprocal Program (ACM Reciprocal Network after April 1, 2013). ACM understands the need for transparent and positive communication about the changes. To help your museum in this process, ACM recommends using the samples below as a starting point at your museum:

SAMPLE EMAIL TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP, ADMISSIONS AND GUEST SERVICES STAFF or ALL STAFF

Dear Staff Team,

The Association of Children's Museums (ACM) announced some important changes to the ACM Reciprocal Program benefits we offer our families who purchase memberships in the [names of your membership categories that include the Reciprocal benefit]:

Effective April 1, 2013:

- The ACM Reciprocal Program will be called the ACM Reciprocal Network.
- The ACM Reciprocal Network admission policy will shift from free admission for up to four (4) family members from the same household (except where local restrictions apply) to: 50 percent off general admission for up to six (6) people. Additional visitors must pay current admission price.
- Any local admission restrictions will be eliminated [if applicable, note your museum's restriction, e.g. This means that as of April 1, 2013, the mutual restriction with Name of Museum, will no longer apply and members with Reciprocal benefits from this museum will receive 50% percent off our general admission price for up to six people. ]

Because of these changes, any [category/categories] memberships sold or renewed now with an expiration date of April 1, 2013 or later will require an explanation of the change. We will be scheduling a meeting/training to review these changes and how to both sell memberships with Reciprocal benefits and admit visitors with Reciprocal memberships from other museums.

To help your museum notify your members, here is a sample letter/email you might send:

SAMPLE LETTER/EMAIL TO YOUR MEMBERS WITH RECIPROCAL BENEFITS

**Your Logo Here**

Dear Member,

We have some important changes to tell you about your **[name of membership category]** membership with ACM Reciprocal Program benefits.

As you may have noticed on the roster of museums participating in the program (current list attached), there are numerous museums with admission restrictions and some of these restrictions are quite complicated. In an effort to simply the program for both families and museum admissions staff, the Association of Children's Museums undertook an extensive review of the program.

When the Reciprocal Program launched twenty years ago, there were far fewer children's museums and the policy of free admission to museums participating in the program was intended to provide a benefit to families while traveling on vacation and visiting out of town relatives. It was never meant to provide free

admission to all museums within a given community. Most, if not all, museums provide free admission on specially designated days.

As the number of children's museums continues to grow, so grows the number of museums participating in the Reciprocal program. Today there are almost 200 museums participating in the program, many within close geographical proximity to one another. Since all museums that participate in the Program are nonprofit organizations and depend on the support of the public to continue their missions of providing safe places for children to learn through play in spaces designed solely for them and their families, the program in its current form has become unsustainable for many.

After careful consideration, ACM and its Board of Directors announced the following program policy changes that simplify the program and resolve the inequity in the program both now and as more museums join the program. The new policies eliminate local restrictions and create one admission policy at every museum participating in the program.

Effective April 1, 2013:

- The ACM Reciprocal Program will be called the ACM Reciprocal Network.
- The ACM Reciprocal Network admission policy will shift from free admission for up to four (4) family members from the same household (except where local restrictions apply) to: 50 percent off general admission for up to six (6) people. Additional visitors must pay current admission price.
- No local admission restrictions!

Your membership benefits here at [Name of Museum] will continue to provide you and your family with free unlimited admission, etc, [insert your list of benefits here]. We look forward to your continued membership and to making your visits a fun-filled, educational experience that brings your family together.

Sincerely yours,  
**[Name]**

Further Suggestions for Notifying Your Members and Visitors

- Update your Web site (see Section 4).
- Have copies of ACM Reciprocal Program Brochure available with your membership brochures and at your admissions desk.
- Post notices at sales and entry points.
- Insert notices into your regular member communications: newsletters, etc.

**Share Your Success:** how did your museum notify its staff and members? ACM will post your strategy on the Web site, email: [acm@ChildrensMuseums.org](mailto:acm@ChildrensMuseums.org).

## 4. Updating Your Web Site

To provide your members and visitors with the most current information on the ACM Reciprocal Program and transition to the ACM Reciprocal Network, please review your Web site and make the following changes as needed:

1. Update with the current ACM logo (many participating museums' websites have the out of date ACM logo):

**Current ACM logo:**

ASSOCIATION OF  
**CHILDREN'S  
MUSEUMS**

**Use this logo**

Download the logo at: [www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/acmprofessionaltoolkits/acm-reciprocal-program/web-site-compliance.html](http://www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/acmprofessionaltoolkits/acm-reciprocal-program/web-site-compliance.html)

**Out-of-date logo:**



Association  
of Children's  
Museums

**Do not use**

2. Update with the link to the ACM Reciprocal Program on the newly launched ACM Web site. Continuing to link to ACM's old website provides out-of-date information.

**Current link:** [www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/family-reciprocal-membership.html](http://www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/family-reciprocal-membership.html)

**Out-of-date link:** [www.childrensmuseums.org/visit/reciprocal.htm](http://www.childrensmuseums.org/visit/reciprocal.htm)

3. Update the **number of museums** participating in the ACM Reciprocal Program to **almost 200**.
4. List your museum's participation in the ACM Reciprocal Program on your **Plan Your Visit** page as well as on your Membership page.
5. Add this notice to your Membership and Plan Your Visit pages:

**Effective April 1, 2013**, the ACM Reciprocal Program admission benefit will change from free admission for up to four (4) family members from the same household (or, if applicable, local restrictions) to 50% off general admission for up to six (6) people with no location restrictions!

6. Upload the current PDF list of participating museums: [www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/family-reciprocal-membership.html](http://www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/family-reciprocal-membership.html). This brochure is updated frequently; please check ACM's Web site often.
7. Add the new ACM Reciprocal Network logo:



You may begin using the new logo on or after April 1, 2012. See p. 3 and p. 9 for further detail about logo use. **Download the new ACM Reciprocal Network logo at:** [www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/acmprofessionaltoolkits/acm-reciprocal-program/web-site-compliance.html](http://www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/acmprofessionaltoolkits/acm-reciprocal-program/web-site-compliance.html).

## 5. Attention Membership Sales Staff

Membership with ACM Reciprocal benefits should be marketed to promote higher-level family memberships and as a value-added benefit for families who wish to visit children's museums outside of their local community.

**Fair Play Clause:** The target audience for the ACM Reciprocal Program/Network is families who reside within the museum's community. Encourage families to buy locally, from the museum they plan to visit the most often — this is the museum where they will receive free admission! Note: Museums may not mention other museums by name when selling or marketing the benefit.

While each museum trains its staff how to sell memberships, please ensure your staff understands and communicates the following points when selling a membership with ACM Reciprocal benefits.

### Key Points When Selling Family Memberships with ACM Reciprocal Benefits

- Explain what the Reciprocal Program is:
  - The ACM Reciprocal program is a network of ACM member museums open across the U.S. and Canada that offer free or discounted admission to one another's members that hold premium family memberships. Currently, almost 200 museums participate in the network and provide free admission for up to four (4) family members from the same household, unless otherwise specified. Since local restrictions may apply, please call the museum you plan to visit ahead of time and verify their admission policies for the ACM Reciprocal Program.

Note: Under the Fair Play Clause, avoid saying, "If you buy our membership you will receive free admission to Museum Name and Museum Name." Instead say: "This membership with Reciprocal benefits provides free or discounted access to almost 200 museums in the network." If the potential member asks for the names of local museums, show the brochure and ask, "Was there a particular museum you had in mind?" (Have them name the museum.) Point out the museum on the brochure and answer, "Yes, that museum is participates in the Reciprocal Program."

- Explain what the Reciprocal Program is not:
  - The Reciprocal Program is not a membership to ACM or to any of the museums participating in the Program. You might also say, "Your family is buying a membership to this museum. In buying a membership, you are supporting the ongoing programming and exhibits that we offer your family."
- Explain the Reciprocal Program benefits:
  - I. Until March 31, 2013 Reciprocal benefits are free admission for up to four (4) family members from the same household at museums participating in the program. **Note:**
    - If your museum membership includes more than four (4) members in a family, explain that other museums participating in the Reciprocal Program will admit up to four. Families with more than four (4) members will need to pay admission for each additional person. For example, your museum's family membership with Reciprocal benefits includes two adults and four children. Currently this family will receive free admission for up to four family members. Starting April 1, 2013, this family will receive a 50% discount on general admission for up to six people.
  - Not all children's museums participate in the Reciprocal Program, but currently there are almost 200 that do.
  - Local restrictions may apply. Visit the ACM Web site for the current list. Instruct the new member to call ahead to verify participation and policies.



- Any membership purchased now with an expiration date of April 1, 2013 or later will receive some months of free admission and some months of the discounted admission. Adapt and expand this explanation as it applies to the membership you are selling.
- **Emphasize the good news**—now up to six people and no more restrictions!
- If your museum participates in other national or local reciprocal admissions programs (ASTC, AAA, etc.), explain the differences between the different program benefits and admissions policies.
- Explain the Admission Procedures when visiting other museums participating in the ACM Reciprocal Program:
  - Your member must have his or her card at the time of the visit to a museum participating in the Reciprocal program.
  - The card holder must be present at the time of admission (ID may be requested).
  - The museum being visited is not obligated to call this museum to verify membership. The member **MUST** have his or her card for verification.

**Please note:**

1. Be sure the cards your museum issues for memberships with reciprocal benefits are valid (see section 6 for card details):
    - Card has the ACM Reciprocal logo on it.
    - Card has one adult member name printed on it.
    - Card has an expiration date that has not passed.
  2. If you are selling a membership that *does not* include Reciprocal benefits make sure the buyer understands the difference. Museums report that visitors with non-reciprocal category memberships think they are entitled to reciprocal benefits.
- Promote the many membership benefits at your own museum, not free or discounted admission to a nearby museum (see Fair Play rule above).

**Closing the Membership Sale**

- Issue a New Member Packet that has a valid membership card with the ACM Reciprocal logo, name of one adult member and an expiration date, and:
  - Welcome to Family Membership with ACM Reciprocal Program Benefits: download from the ACM Web site at:  
[www.childrensmuseums.org/images/Membership/Welcome\\_to\\_Membership\\_with\\_ACM\\_Reciprocal\\_Program\\_Benefits.pdf](http://www.childrensmuseums.org/images/Membership/Welcome_to_Membership_with_ACM_Reciprocal_Program_Benefits.pdf).
  - ACM Reciprocal Program Participant roster (aka the Brochure): download from the ACM Web site at: [www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/family-reciprocal-membership.html](http://www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/family-reciprocal-membership.html).

## 6. Attention Admissions Staff

Families have purchased a membership with Reciprocal benefits and are visiting your museum because they trust children's museums will be a friendly, welcoming, safe place where they can play and learn together. While each museum trains its staff about its admissions procedures, ACM provides the following guidelines regarding the admission of card holders with memberships that include ACM Reciprocal benefits:

### Current Admission Procedures (Now through March 31, 2013)

Please have the most recent List of Museum Participating in the ACM Reciprocal Program (brochure) and Staff Reference Guide available at all points of admission.

- Member must present a valid card demonstrating membership with ACM Reciprocal Program benefits. A valid membership card with ACM Reciprocal Program benefits has:
  - A color ACM Reciprocal Program logo\* (the logo may be a sticker or printed directly on the card).
  - An expiration date that has not passed.
  - Name of one adult family member.
- Card holder (adult family member whose name is printed on the membership card) must be present at the time of admission. (Admission staff may request photo ID to verify identity, but are not required to do so).
- ACM Reciprocal Program benefits admit up to four (4) family members from the same household. Admitting less than four, if four are present, is in violation of the program (unless a local restriction is written in the Reciprocal Brochure or ACM Web site). However, museums may admit additional individuals from the same household for free at their own discretion.
- **Unless** your museum has a residency restriction written in the Reciprocal Brochure or ACM Web site, **there is no mileage restriction** (the 90-mile and same state residency restrictions are ASTC's Passport Program, not ACM's Reciprocal Program).
- If your museum has mutual restrictions with other museums in your area, please be very careful to apply the restrictions to card holders from those museums only and not to all card holders with ACM Reciprocal Program benefits.
- Accept temporary membership cards, provided they have the same information as a valid permanent membership card.

#### Note:

- Cards issued before July 5, 2009, are not required to list at least one adult family member by name.
- Families with membership cards issued prior to July 4, 2009, should be admitted if the card has the ACM Reciprocal Program color logo and if the issuing museum is a current member of the Reciprocal Program.

#### \*Logos



#### Current logo

Valid for reciprocal admission until March 31, 2014



#### New logo

Valid for reciprocal admission starting April 1, 2012

### Admission Procedures On and After April 1, 2013

On April 1, 2013, the name of the program changes to ACM Reciprocal Network. Have the most recent List of Museums Participating in the ACM Reciprocal Network (Brochure) and Staff Reference Guide available at all admissions points

- Member must present a valid membership card with ACM Reciprocal Network benefits. A valid membership card with ACM Reciprocal Network benefits has:
  - A color ACM Reciprocal Network logo\* (the logo may be a sticker or printed directly on the card). Both logos are valid until March 31, 2014.
  - An expiration date that has not passed.
  - Name of one adult family member.
- Card holder must be present at the time of admission. (Admission staff may request photo ID to verify identity, but are not required to do so).
- ACM Reciprocal Network benefits admit up to six (6) people (including the card holder) at 50% off general admission. Additional visitors in the group must pay current admission price.
- There are no local restrictions in the ACM Reciprocal Network.
- Accept temporary membership cards, provided they have the same information as a valid permanent membership card.



**ACM Reciprocal Program logo**

Valid through March 31, 2014



**ACM Reciprocal Network logo**

Valid starting April 1, 2012

## 7. Issuing Your Membership Cards with ACM Reciprocal Program/Network Benefits

In making the transition to the Reciprocal Network and new logo, ACM wants to help museums avoid the need to reissue its membership cards. Should your museum encounter difficulties meeting the transition timeline, please contact Victoria Garvin at 703.224.3100.

### Network Logo and Stickers

All valid family members cards with Reciprocal benefits, must display the Reciprocal logo in color. The logo must be clearly visible and printed on a white or light-colored paper stock.

#### Dates to remember:

- The current ACM Reciprocal Program logo can be applied to new cards until March 31, 2013.
- The current ACM Reciprocal Program logo will be accepted through March 31, 2014 (please note for multiple year memberships.)
- Either logo may be applied to new cards from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013; however, if you are printing new cards, we strongly encourage you to use the new ACM Reciprocal Network logo.
- Apply only the new ACM Reciprocal Network logo to new cards on or after April 1, 2013.

There are three options for placing the logo onto membership cards:

#### 1. Order logo stickers from ACM

A museum is entitled to 100 free logo stickers when it joins the program or renews its participation. At the time of renewal, additional sets of 100 stickers are \$25 each. At other times, additional sets of 100 stickers are \$35 each. Please contact ACM to order.

#### 2. Print your own stickers

ACM has created a template so that you can print logo stickers at your museum.

Download the template from

[www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/acmprofessionaltoolkits/acm-reciprocal-program/issuing-membership-cards.html](http://www.childrensmuseums.org/index.php/acmprofessionaltoolkits/acm-reciprocal-program/issuing-membership-cards.html)

Print in color on Avery Labels 05408

#### 3. Print the logo directly onto your museum's membership cards

Download and save the JPEG file of the logo to insert into your card design. Available at:  
[www.childrensmuseums.org/images/memberlogos/2012\\_sticker\\_size.jpg](http://www.childrensmuseums.org/images/memberlogos/2012_sticker_size.jpg)

-Reciprocal Program logo colors: raspberry, PMS 676/orange, PMS1655

-Reciprocal Network logo color: red, PMS 711



**Current logo**



**New logo**

### The Card – What to Include

A valid membership card with ACM Reciprocal benefits must include:

- A color ACM Reciprocal logo (the logo may be a sticker or printed directly on the card).
- An expiration date that has not passed.
- Printed name of one adult family member.

**Cards Issued On or After April 1, 2013:**

A valid membership card with ACM Reciprocal Network benefits includes the same information as in the list above, but must have the new color **ACM Reciprocal Network** logo.

**Further Suggestions:**

Print on the card:

- 1) "Member must present this card for admission."
- 2) Contact number for issuing museum membership coordinator (often people change, but numbers don't).
- 3) Weekend contact number, e.g., box office of issuing museum, since during weekend hours no one is in the membership office.

## 8. Welcome Materials for Memberships With Reciprocal Benefits

There are several other national programs similar to ACM's, such as Association of Technology-Science Centers (ASTC) Passport Program, and local programs such as AAA. If your museum participates in more than one of these programs, the multiple policies may be confusing to members. We hope this guide will help you familiarize new and returning members with the ACM program benefits and policies. Note: The Welcome document below is for the current Reciprocal Program and includes information about the transition to the Reciprocal Network. ACM will post a new Welcome document with only Reciprocal Network information in March 2013.

ACM recommends issuing the following documents with every new and renewing membership:

- Welcome to Membership with ACM Reciprocal Program Benefits
- List of museums currently participating in the ACM Reciprocal Program (aka Brochure)

WELCOME DOCUMENT (Download from ACM Web site)

### **Welcome to Membership with ACM Reciprocal Program Benefits**

Congratulations, you've purchased a family membership from your local children's museum that provides free or discounted admission to almost 200 museums in the U.S. and Canada. This network of museums participating in the ACM Reciprocal Program offer free admission for up to four (4) family members from the same household, unless otherwise specified. Please call the museum you plan to visit ahead of time and verify its admission policies for the ACM Reciprocal Program.

### **Finding Museums Participating in the ACM Reciprocal Program**

- To find the most current list of museums participating in the ACM Reciprocal Program, go to the ACM Web site, [www.ChildrensMuseums.org](http://www.ChildrensMuseums.org). Click on the Search Now button under Find a Children's Museum. For easy reference, this web address is part of the Reciprocal logo on your membership card.
- Remember, not all ACM member museums participate in the Reciprocal Program.
- Some ACM Reciprocal Program museums restrict admission privileges under specific circumstances. Check the ACM Web site for valid restrictions, e.g., some museums restrict local residents with out-of-state memberships and ask for proof of residency.
- Call the destination museum to verify participation and/or restrictions before you visit. During the year, the list of participating museums may change. While ACM makes every effort to post updates to its Web site as soon as possible, it is always a good idea to call ahead before visiting.

### **ACM Reciprocal Program Admission Policies for Families**

- A family must present its valid Family Membership Card with ACM Reciprocal Program benefits (indicated by the program logo) to receive free or discounted admission at museums participating in the ACM Reciprocal Program Network.
- Card holder must be present with other household individuals. (Photo ID may be requested to verify identity.)
- Most museums participating in the Reciprocal Program offer free admission for up to four (4) individuals from the same household. A few museums admit *more than* four family members, these admission policies may vary from museum to museum.
- Reciprocal admission privileges **do** extend to special exhibits.
- Reciprocal privileges **do not** extend to discounts for gift shop or café purchases, museum special events, programs, summer camps or birthday parties.

### **Family Membership Cards**

A valid Family Membership Card with ACM Reciprocal Program benefits should include:

- The ACM Reciprocal logo.
- An expiration date on the card that has not passed.
- The name of at least one adult family member on the cards issued.

### **For Memberships that Expire After April 1, 2013**

The Reciprocal Program is changing on April 1, 2013.

- **Effective April 1, 2013**, the ACM Reciprocal Program admission benefit will change from free admission for up to four (4) family members (or, if applicable, local restrictions) to 50% off general admission for up to six (6) people with no location restrictions!
- This change is effective on April 1, 2013 regardless of when the membership was purchased and regardless of when it expires.
- Reciprocal privileges **do not** extend to special exhibits, discounts for gift shop or café purchases, museum special events, programs, summer camps or birthday parties.

### **Questions about Your Family Membership with ACM Reciprocal Program Benefits?**

Call the membership department in the museum where you purchased your Family Membership.

\* \* \*

## 9. Frequently Asked Questions

Find answers to questions from participating museums about the transition from the ACM Reciprocal Program to the ACM Reciprocal Network.

**Q. The new reciprocal policy says that it includes up to 6 people. It does not specify that these must be family members. Does this mean that the reciprocal admission policy of 50% off general admission will apply to any 6 people in the visitor's party, regardless of whether they are family or simply friends of the membership card holder?**

A. Yes, that's correct. In developing the new admission policies, ACM reflected on the challenges reported by frontline staff and families and created an admission policy that would be simple for both the staff and families. How does one check to see if people in the group are family members? Is the baby sitter part of the household? And family size differs. This policy is the result of those considerations.

**Q. Our museum's premium membership includes only four family members. May my museum choose to admit less than 6 people?**

A. While each museum may determine the benefits of its own membership categories (namely, the number of admissions per membership), the new Reciprocal Network admission rules require your museum to admit up to six (6) people in a group that meets the following criteria:

- The membership card they present has a valid ACM Reciprocal logo.\*
- The name of at least one adult member is printed on cards and present with the group (ID may be requested).
- The expiration date is printed on the card and has not passed.

Keep in mind that your museum will receive 50% of the general admission as revenue for the visit.

\*See p. 10 for information on valid logos.

**Q. Several other museums in my area would like to offer free admission to one another's museums. Will ACM allow this local network among the museums participating in the ACM program?**

A. ACM asks that you review the reasons why the program benefits changed from free to 50% discounted admission:

1. The number of local restrictions among museums in close proximity to one another was increasing.
2. Museums sought restrictions because the sheer number of free admissions became difficult to absorb, especially for museums in an area with many participating museums and between museums of dramatically different sizes. Some smaller museums reported so many free visits they had no paying visitors on a given day.
3. Local restrictions were complicated and difficult for families to understand and front line staff to implement.

Further, we ask that you consider the following:

- The hallmark of the new ACM Reciprocal Network is simplicity: simple for families to understand and for front line staff to implement. Creating local inclusion networks would reintroduce rules that complicate admission for families and create enforcement issues for frontline staff.
- The aim of the new Reciprocal Network is to provide equitable, field-wide, consistent benefits. Inclusion networks defeat these aims and also, may not be in the best interests of all museums.



Any agreements your museum enters into with other museums to create local inclusion networks, whether they are with museums participating in the ACM Reciprocal Program/Network or not, are outside of ACM's administrative purview. ACM will not mediate these agreements or intervene should problems arise. Further, these local networks must be clearly named to avoid confusion with the ACM program and may not in any way involve the use of the ACM name or Reciprocal logo. Museums must understand that creating local networks will increase complexity and misunderstandings.

**Q. I know that local restrictions will be eliminated on April 1, 2013, may my museum request a restriction from now until April 1, 2013?**

A. Museums may request a restriction (note: all restrictions will expire on April 1, 2013); however, the current Program guidelines remain in effective. Namely:

- All requests must be approved by ACM.
  
- Museums may propose a restriction if they are within close geographical proximity to one another. The restriction must be mutually agreed upon by both museums and submitted to ACM for review. Approved restrictions will be posted on the ACM Web site and the roster of participating museums. See the following examples of mutually agreed upon restrictions on the ACM Web site:
  - Miami Children's Museum and Young At Art Children's Museum
  - The Building for Kids and Children's Museum of Fond du Lac
  
- A museum may request a residency restriction to encourage families to purchase a membership with Reciprocal benefits from their local museum. However, ACM will not approve a residency restriction if the purpose is to create a restriction with another local museum. A mutually agreed upon restriction with the other museum should be negotiated and submitted to ACM for review. See the following examples of residency restrictions on the ACM Web site:
  - Children's Museum of Memphis
  - National Museum of Play

**Q. Our local library would like to purchase a family membership with ACM Reciprocal benefits. Or, May we donate a family membership with ACM Reciprocal benefits to our local library?**

A. No. The ACM Reciprocal Program has always been intended to provide a benefit to families while traveling on vacation and visiting out of town relatives. It was never meant to provide free admission to all museums within a given community. Most if not all museums provide free admission on specially designated days. While donating a membership card for check out at the local library is laudable, membership cards borrowed from a library extend admission benefits only to the museum that issued the card.

**Q. Are there any special provisions for offering discounted memberships, for example we currently offer a two-year membership for \$250, but offer \$20 off on occasion?**

A. As of April 1, 2013, any multiple-year membership must be priced so that the yearly membership price is \$125 or greater – just as we do not allow sales on memberships during holidays or Groupon offerings that would bring the yearly price below the minimum required by the policy.

## 10. Withdrawing from the Reciprocal Program/Network

ACM acknowledges that circumstances and finances change for museums participating in the Reciprocal Program. Occasionally, a museum decides to withdraw from the program, and with policy changes going into effect on April 1, 2013, your museum may be considering withdrawing from the program. Please consider the following in making your decision:

All museums that have opted into the ACM Reciprocal Program, agreed to abide by the terms of the program. The terms governing withdrawal from the program and payment of membership dues and reciprocal participation fees are as follows:

- I understand the ACM Reciprocal Program annual fee is in addition to yearly ACM membership dues and both must be kept current (payable on or before the expiration date).
- I understand that in the event my museum decides to withdraw from participating in the ACM Reciprocal Program, my museum will give ACM one year written notice from its renewal date, during which time the museum will be responsible for membership dues and Reciprocal Program fee. **During this phase-out year**, I agree not to sell new memberships with reciprocal benefits. Further, the museum will continue to honor membership cards with reciprocal benefits from other participating museums.

### How to Withdraw from the Reciprocal Program

A museum's opportunity to withdraw from the program is at membership renewal time. If you do not know the date of your renewal, please call ACM at 703.224.3100.

**Submit written notice** of your museum's decision to withdraw from the program via email or regular mail to:

Victoria Garvin  
Program Officer, Membership  
Association of Children's Museums  
2711 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202  
Email: Victoria.Garvin@ChildrensMuseums.org

### Note:

- A museum may not decide its withdrawal date and may not withdraw with less than a one year notice (unless the museum closes its doors).
- If a museum pays its membership dues and Reciprocal Program fee past the expiration date, the start date of the one-year withdrawal phase will commence when payment has been received and processed by ACM. The museum's annual renewal date, however, will remain unchanged.

### Next Steps

After ACM receives a museum's written notice of its intent to withdraw:

- ACM will send an acknowledgement email with the start and finish dates of the withdrawal phase.
- ACM will post a notice to its Web site stating that the museum is still honoring membership cards with reciprocal benefits through the finish date of withdrawal, but the museum is no longer selling memberships with reciprocal benefits.

Once the ACM acknowledgement email is received by the museum, the museum is expected to inform its staff, members, and public, as well as update its Web site and membership materials.