

Page: Entry Information

Chapter

CAI Ohio Valley Chapter

Chapter Size

Small (50-260)

Category

Chapter Operations and Sustainability

Program Name

Sponsorship Structure

If this was a joint program with another chapter, please list the chapter.

Each question is worth 20 points and will be scored using the following rubric:

(1-5) Poor Didn't effectively answer the question

(6-1) Fair Answered the question

(11-15) Good Answered the question with more detail

(16-20) Excellent Went above and beyond with proven results and visible data

Describe the program and why it fits the category. (20pts)

For the 2026 Sponsorship year, our board made the determination to switch from a binary model of Management Companies and Business Partners as the categories of sponsorship, with a \$400 and \$600 respective fee structure to a more typical four-tier "metals" system: Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze. This was designed to provide more financial sustainability, improve budget predictability and planning accuracy with standardizing commitments and benefits, and offer our sponsors a more customized choice based on their desired promotional needs.

How did this program meet the mission and vision of the chapter and CAI as a whole including fostering an inclusive environment that reflects and serves our diverse community? (20pts)

Members found the previous binary system and its names specifically to be confusing since the Sponsorship Level matched the Membership Level name. In fact, many of our sponsors and members thought both were interchangeable and often lived under the assumption that sponsorship included membership. We wanted to reduce confusion and support national CAI's membership model by adopting a more traditional sponsorship naming program. Members and prospects, especially Business Partners, were accustomed to seeing a typical Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze model at the other like-minded organizations they sponsored or even other CAI chapters, as many business partners belong to more than one.

From an inclusivity perspective and looking at the ever-volatile economic conditions, we recognized that business partners and management companies represent different annual revenue tiers, have differing budgets for promotional initiatives and desire different benefits to accomplish their marketing goals. Therefore, we wanted to ensure that we had a wider variety of price points and diverse benefit offerings to more closely align with our sponsors' particular and unique needs.

What was the impact on the chapter and its members after completing the program? (Growth of membership, financially, public awareness, membership value, better chapter/member relationship, chapter operations, etc.) (20 pts)

We spent some time debating how to roll-out the new sponsorship model for 2026 since it was vastly different than our previous model. For the initial roll-out, we ultimately chose to "assume the sale" by simply saying it was time to renew and approach people one-on-one rather than as a larger group. We sent emails to each sponsor from 2025 with a heartfelt thank you and a simple sentence that said we updated our sponsorship model to give them more promotional value. We didn't apologetically defend our decision nor did we overplay it, and we didn't have a splashy roll-out. We simply and intentionally positioned our renewal solicitations with a trusted partner approach. This is what we wrote:

Thank you, thank you so very much for your continued support of the Ohio Valley Chapter of the Community Associations Institute. We have had a fantastic year with educational events, social events, a trade show and an amazing Golf Outing. We can't do it without your sponsorship.

"We're constantly working on ways to give you even more promotional value for your sponsorship and as such researched and talked to several other chapters to see what other benefits were out there.

We're very excited to present a new Sponsorship structure for 2026, with lots of flexibility for what you're interested in.

Please see the information below to choose your preferred package.

To renew, simply email me at caiochapter@gmail.com or [CLICK HERE](#) to purchase."

As noted in the next question, the new sponsorship model has been met with much success and not one sponsor has questioned the decision. While we are just in the first year, we believe the impact includes increased financial stability, elevated chapter operations positioning us to be more competitive with other organizations and chapters, and less confusing from a marketing perspective. We believe it will lead to greater sponsor satisfaction and continued retention.

Provide quantifiable data supporting the rationale for success. Include why this data is significant. (20pts)

We need to share a bit of background here to demonstrate just how significant this change was. Our chapter went through a rough transition in late 2023, when we abruptly parted ways with our previous executive director and our previous president was also dealing with significant family health challenges resulting in strained engagement in the chapter. When we hired our new executive director in early 2024 after a rocky period as our previous director was leaving, many of the chapter records were scattered or unattainable. We also learned that no sponsors had yet been invoiced for 2024. During the leadership void, the chapter was also in a transition to Star Chapter, a new CRM system (previously invoices were done on Word or in some other manual way, and tracked in a physical binder with a ledger type cover sheet). Our new Executive Director ramped up relatively quickly, but the sponsorship piece was tricky due to not finding a complete list of previous sponsors. By the time we were able to recreate that list, it was four months into the year (April, whereas normally we would invoice in November or December in the year prior). We realized in order to be good stewards we would have to pro-rate the sponsorship amount, thus sacrificing income, and also with no guarantee that our potentially perceived disorganization could cost us the sponsorship relationship altogether. That year for 2024, our sponsorship total was \$7201 in sponsorships. In 2025, we billed for nearly \$12,000 renewals, but only received only 73% of what we billed, which we firmly believe had to do with the rebuilding mode we were in and the likely lack of confidence and perceived value in our sponsorship program the year before where had billed late and thus had to pro-rate.

We're very pleased to report that for 2026 we are already at \$11,550, which represents a 24% year-over-year growth. The sponsorship renewal season is still ongoing and we are aware of a few more sponsors that will still be renewing, and anticipate that number to grow even higher. The significance of the data reflected here demonstrates operational efficiency, financial resilience, and sustainable growth, not just increased revenue.

What are your plans to maintain the momentum of this program moving forward? (20 pts)

- We plan to engage in the following efforts to maintain the momentum of this program:
- Conduct an annual review of sponsorship tiers to align with budget priorities and member needs
 - Use sponsorship data to support to long-range financial planning and reserve development
 - Provide regular reporting to the board to ensure financial oversight and accountability
 - Integrate the sponsorship structure into broader governance and strategic planning efforts
 - Position the program as a repeatable, scalable operating model rather than a one-time initiative

Supporting documents including flyers, postcards, pictures, videos etc. can be uploaded below. While they aren't required for your submission we certainly encourage it.

Would you like to upload additional documents?

Yes

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