

What it means to be a URISA International Member

The question has come up several times: "What are the benefits to being a URISA member?" It is often brought up in comparison to being a chapter member. The answer I give you today is that it is an individual choice, and the more involved you are with any organization, the more benefit you will see come out of it. Consider your career - do you prefer to network locally and branch out only for educational opportunities? Do you want to make the leap to expand your network and thus your opportunities for potential clients, new hires, or even a new job?

MAC URISA has a wide regional reach, covering all of New Jersey, Eastern PA, and Delaware. We offer a multitude of both free and paid educational and networking events which can be attended by anyone, regardless of membership with the chapter or its international parent organization. We have a long-standing relationship with the regional GIS community that spans more than 30 years.

But why limit yourself? URISA International membership expands that reach. The organization offers both virtual and in-person content, both domestically and internationally. With ever-changing locales, the event experience varies, and you can opt to attend those events that are closer to home or venture out to a place you want to see for the first time. Attendance at their events offers exposure to a broader range of professionals, and the community you would be joining is both active and supportive.

For me, international membership has been well worth the investment. I started as a chapter representative, working with the leadership of other chapters so we could share knowledge and learn from one another. Over the years I have become more involved with URISA international as a volunteer, assisting in GIS Pro event planning and offering feedback on the OneURISA model.

The connections I have made through this involvement have repaid my efforts in spades. I'd been on the fence about what my next career move would be for some time. Then I got a call to ask if I knew anyone that might be interested in a GIS Manager position. The company had not had much luck finding good candidates and reached out to the GIS community outside the state to continue the search. The more I heard, the more it sounded like the right job for me, and the right opportunity to make a big career leap. So, on the recommendation of another URISA member and pre-COVID, I put my resume in. And at the beginning of all the shutdowns, made my way to Texas to start my new job and the next phase of my career. A year later, I am happy to say it was the right move.

You never know where that next opportunity will be, whether it is a new job, a new client, or a new venture. Being a URISA member opens the door to those opportunities. I encourage everyone in the GIS community to join URISA International and start making those connections.

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