# State of Associations Quarterly: 2025 Q4

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## Key findings

- **28% of responding associations** say they are actively evaluating or budgeting for a new AMS or member-portal platform within the next two years.
- **End-of-vendor-support** is the single most common trigger, cited by 41% of associations planning a replacement, ahead of member complaints (26%) and a merger or chapter consolidation forcing a single data model (19%).
- Associations plan for a median of **14 months** between a board decision to replace a system and a public launch date.
- Among associations that have completed a single sign-on rollout in the past three years, those that staged it by chapter or business unit report meaningfully fewer support tickets in the first month than those that cut over all at once.

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## Why this quarter looks at AMS and portal replacement

Every quarterly brief in this series pulls one topic out of the annual State of Associations survey and looks at it in more depth than the annual report has room for. This quarter's topic is association management software: the systems that hold membership records, process dues and event registrations, and increasingly serve as the member-facing portal associations point their own members toward. NANA is running its own version of this project, with an RFP issued in March 2025 and a vendor, Civic Ledger Software, selected that June. The build toward a 2026 launch is underway as this brief goes to print, which gives NANA's own research and digital teams an unusually direct view into the questions other associations are asking at the same stage.

## How many associations are in the market

Twenty-eight percent of associations responding to this quarter's supplemental survey say they are actively evaluating or budgeting for a new AMS or member portal within the next two years, a figure that held steady across association size once staff count was controlled for. Smaller associations were somewhat more likely to describe the process as informal — a staff member collecting demos rather than a formal RFP — while associations with more than twenty staff were more likely to have a written evaluation process already underway.

## What triggers a replacement search

The most common trigger, cited by 41% of associations already in a replacement process, is a system reaching the end of vendor support: a platform being sunset, a vendor acquired and its product line discontinued, or a contract renewal that comes with a price increase the association can no longer justify against the system's age. Member complaints about the existing portal's usability were the second most common trigger, at 26%, typically described as a slow accumulation of frustration rather than a single incident. A merger or chapter consolidation that forces two or more separate membership databases into one accounted for 19%, and the remaining associations cited a mix of reasons, most commonly a new executive director wanting to modernize systems early in their tenure.

## Timeline: from decision to launch

Associations in this quarter's sample report a median of fourteen months between a formal board decision to replace their AMS or portal and a public launch date, with a wide range depending on data complexity: associations migrating a single chapter's records typically closed the gap faster than those, like NANA, coordinating records across six regional chapters into one system. Associations that had budgeted less than a year for the full process were disproportionately likely to report the launch slipping past their original date, most often because data cleanup — deduplicating records, reconciling chapter-level membership lists, resolving lapsed accounts — took longer than the technical build itself.

## Single sign-on: staged versus all-at-once

For associations with multiple chapters or business units, one of the sharper decisions in a portal relaunch is how to roll out single sign-on: cut every chapter over on the same date, or stage the migration one chapter or unit at a time. Among associations in this quarter's sample that completed an SSO rollout in the past three years, those that staged the cutover reported meaningfully fewer support tickets and lockout complaints in the first month after launch than those that moved everyone at once. The staged approach takes longer in total and requires running two authentication systems in parallel for a period, which several associations described as its own operational burden, but it concentrates the disruption of any given cutover to a smaller, more supportable group of users at a time.

NANA's own digital team, led by Director of Digital Renée Okafor, is weighing this same trade-off as the build toward its 2026 launch continues, and has said the eventual choice will be shaped in part by how the build's testing phase goes with the association's smallest chapter before a wider rollout is scheduled.

## Questions for a vendor evaluation

Associations early in their own AMS or portal search can use this list as a starting point, drawn from what NANA's evaluation process has surfaced so far:

- How does the platform handle chapter-level or regional data alongside a single national membership record?
- What does the vendor's own migration process look like for an association with multiple existing databases, and who does that migration work — the vendor, the association's own staff, or a third-party implementation partner?
- What single sign-on options does the platform support, and does it allow a staged rollout by chapter or business unit rather than requiring an all-at-once cutover?
- What is the vendor's support-response commitment during the first ninety days after launch, when ticket volume is typically highest?
- Does the vendor's contract include a defined path for a phased go-live, or does its pricing and implementation model assume a single cutover date?

## NANA's own build, so far

NANA's research and digital teams have treated the AMS selection and build as a live case study for this series, sharing what the process has looked like from the inside rather than presenting only the aggregate survey findings. The RFP process itself took roughly three months from issue to vendor selection, longer than some associations in this quarter's sample reported for a similar-sized member base, which the digital team attributes to wanting demonstrations from finalist vendors with each of NANA's six chapters represented in the room rather than a single national headquarters review. That extra step, Okafor has said, surfaced chapter-specific requirements — different views into local event calendars, different levels of access for chapter volunteer leaders — that a headquarters-only evaluation would likely have missed until later in the build. Future editions of this brief will follow the build through its 2026 launch and report on how the actual rollout compared with the plan described here.