

AAUW MEMBERSHIP
BABY-BOOMER ACTIVISTS and GENERATION X
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Baby Boomer Activists

Sociologists and the media define baby boomers as those born between 1946 and 1964. They range roughly in age from 40 to 60 years of age. About 76 million boomers (29% of the population) live in the United States today.

Baby boomer women in community leadership positions and other activists—women who work on gender equity and social justice issues through community projects and public policy—can bring an organization new knowledge, skills, and contacts. These women may not be able to offer commitments of time, but they can provide influence and resources that will help advance program goals. Their participation may also attract other members with more time to give.

- Have an issue-based program and ask activists involved in similar issues to attend. Better yet, invite them to take serve on a planning committee. Then ask them to join.
- Inform members and the community about AAUW's programs and issues that appeal to baby-boomer activists. Include policy priorities; educational equity projects; LAF's work to challenge sex discrimination on campus; Woman-to-Woman community dialogues; and Foundation fellowships, grants, and research.
- Target a group of activists already working on an AAUW priority issue and invite them to present a program to your membership. Invite them to work with you on a project of mutual concern and ask them to join.
- Brainstorm a "most wanted" list of potential activist members. Have committee members select two individuals they would be willing to recruit. Provide membership materials, including a list of projects and other benefits.
- Give a gift membership to an influential local or state leader. Present the membership formally and invite the media to the presentation.
- Watch the news for community leadership exhibited by individuals and companies. Send a congratulatory letter thanking them for their actions. Include background information on AAUW.
- Pair new member activists with current member activists. The new member will have an instant connection and the current member will be energized.
- Distribute relevant fact sheets and position papers to media, school administrators, activists, and prospective members.
- Contact current or former local Foundation fellows and LAF plaintiffs who have already shown a commitment to actively promoting equity. Show them your support and invite them to join.
- Rotate meeting times and locations to accommodate members with different schedules and in different areas. Make sure sites are accessible via public transportation or organize carpools.
- Offer childcare during meetings and events.
- Attend your local library's story hour for children. Women who bring their children to these may share the educational focus of AAUW. Bring membership brochures!

Generation X

Across the association landscape, many membership leaders are finding it difficult to find either the right recruitment approach or retention techniques to attract Generation X individuals, those born between 1965 and 1978. They range roughly in age from 25 to 40 years of age.

Cynthia D'Amour, author and renowned expert on "Generation Me," as she call this group, has served on volunteer boards for more than 30 years. She knows firsthand the key issues that association leaders and membership volunteers face in dealing with Generation Me. A leadership coach, D'Amour is president of People Power Unlimited. In this excerpt from *How to Turn Generation Me Into Active Members of Your Association*, reprinted with permission from the author, D'Amour describes Generation X.

Welcome to "Generation Me"

- There's a rumor out there that the "Me Generation" does not want to get involved in your association and chapter activities.
- Have you heard it? Are you experiencing it?
- If I've heard it once, I've heard it a hundred times all over the country from chapter leaders – like you.
- The interesting thing is, the "Me Generation" has been described as Generation X, people in their 30's and 40's, those "flower children that never grew up," and every age in between.
- The description of the "Me Generation" varies by city, industry and type of association.
- What they all have in common is that they are people who "should" belong to your associations – but aren't joining because they're "too busy with life."
- I'm going to rename them "Generation Me" – it's the secret to turning them into active members...
- Generation Me is not defined by age.
- They are a new group of potential active members who need to be sold over and over on why they should invest their time being involved in your association and chapter activities.
- The value of their time determines their potential involvement in your chapter.
- Let's look at the typical life of Generation Me.
- They live in a stressed-out, time-poverty era. Technology keeps advancing – creating more to learn and constant change.
- In many homes, it takes two incomes to make ends meet. Work life is demanding. Down-sizing, right-sizing, and mergers are abundant – creating chaos and extra work.
- Their children have soccer games, music lessons and schedules as tight as many adults.
- Generation Me takes time to work out to stay healthy – and needs some time to relax and sleep!
- On top of all this is your chapter meeting!
- Demands on time are the real competition you face to get people active in your chapter.
- At this point, you may be frustrated. Their life sounds like yours – and, you've made time for your chapter!