

TIPS FOR MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

How do we find new members?

Identify target groups; consider how to reach them and what AAUW has to offer each group.

- Newcomers who want to make friends and get involved in the community
- Newly retired individuals who suddenly have free time
- Young mothers looking for adult company
- Students and faculty interested in equity on campus
- Mothers of girls anxious for their daughters to have equal opportunities in school
- Young professionals interested in networking
- Professional women in isolated settings such as women working on military bases or in prisons
- Members-at-large and lapsed members

Check the newspaper for articles about women who have been promoted or have new jobs in the area.

- Create visibility
- Make sure that the local library, Chamber of Commerce, convention/visitors bureau, etc., have up-to-date information about AAUW meetings, events and membership brochures
- Have a web-site with a sign-up/contact section. Keep the contact information up-to-date
- Distribute bookmarks that list branch events, goals, membership contacts
- Participate in college fairs by setting up an information booth.

Form a branch membership committee, and then involve all branch members in recruitment activities. Ask branch members for names of prospective members, keep a log of all prospects and record all contacts with each prospect.

Print AAUW business cards and ALWAYS leave with prospects along with a membership packet that includes information about the branch, state and the Association. Or get the prospect's name, address and telephone number and mail the packet.

How do we get a prospect to make the commitment to join?

Show a genuine interest in each prospective member. Encourage them to talk about themselves and listen carefully for clues before bringing up membership. Look for the person who is alone or has that lost look on their face.

Let your dedication and enthusiasm show when talking about AAUW.

Be knowledgeable about AAUW, its mission statement, history, accomplishments, and dues structure in relation to other organizations. Be able to discuss the national and local issues promoted by AAUW, but tailor the specifics to the interest of the potential member.

If at first you don't succeed, try again. It's difficult to say no to someone who sincerely and persistently invites you to join.

How do we keep a member once they've joined?

Pair a branch "mentor" with a new member. The mentor is responsible for making sure the new member gets to meetings and is involved in branch activities.

Send them a "thank you" and "we're glad you've joined" note shortly after they join. Make them feel welcome.

Have an orientation to help new members learn about AAUW at all levels.

Vary meeting times to accommodate members with different schedules and responsibilities.

Get new members involved. Projects can be broken into small "bites." One branch used a "Minute Member" approach with tasks broken down into half-hour segments. Anyone signing up knows the time commitment is limited: do a mailing, pass out fliers, work an hour during an exhibit, etc.

Feature new members in branch newsletters.

Offer incentives for early dues payments, such as a free membership drawing.

Assign reasonable and meaningful tasks to younger members. Be open to new ways to approach tasks.

Call all unpaid members and ask them to renew.

Thank you for all you do for AAUW! Ann and Christy

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