

AAUW MEMBERSHIP SECRETS FOR GROWTH

Plan your strategy. A \$100.00 grant is available from the state; an application (with requirements) can be obtained from the NYS Membership VP. Enthusiasm, persistence, and patience are vital. Good luck, good leadership and good programs are also important. Above all don't be discouraged. What works in one community may not in another. All branches go up and down in membership. If your branch is active and visible in the community, you continue to invite friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join— they will.

Form a membership committee

- Secure an adequate budget
- Plan a campaign
- Identify likely groups to target and how to reach them
- Create a welcome kit containing a branch brochure with list of action projects and interest groups, current newsletter, and a personal note inviting the prospect to the next meeting
- Keep a record of all non-members attending AAUW events. Appoint someone to follow up on all visitors and send out welcome kits to interested parties
- Show a genuine interest in each prospect, listen carefully for clues before bringing up membership
- Invite Individual Members (Members-at-large) to attend a specific event, encourage them to join the branch
- Involve all members in membership tasks, everyone is on the team
- Ask members for the names of friends and colleagues who may be prospective members. Hold regular —Invite-a-Friend“ events
- Designate particular individuals rather than committees to look for and attend to visitors
- Let your dedication and enthusiasm show when talking about AAUW
- Be knowledgeable about AAUW's mission, history, accomplishments
- Publicize special offers like Shape the Future discounts and Give A Grad A Gift campaign Be patient, it sometimes takes three asks to get a new member

Identify target groups in your area

- Newcomers seeking involvement in the community
- Newly retired individuals with free time
- Members-at-large and former members
- Students and faculty members interested in equity on campus
- Young mothers anxious for adult company
- Professional women interested in networking
- Check newspapers for possible candidates
- Place membership forms in appropriate public places such as libraries, schools, businesses
- Remind members to bring friends to meetings and suggest names to membership committee
- Target community leaders in various ways

Create visibility

- Develop a branch brochure with membership information describing AAUW and its history
- Encourage members to publicize events and distribute brochures
- List meetings in newspaper's Area Events; invite reporters to cover special programs
- Host a few widely publicized special events
- Join the local community cable network

- Volunteer as a group for local public television, Junior League Show House, etc.
- Initiate a relationship with a reporter interested in women's issues
- Send press releases regularly to community newspapers
- Distribute bookmarks listing branch events, goals, membership contacts
- Prompt members to tell friends, co-workers, and other associates what they like about AAUW
- Donate AAUW publications/research studies to the library, ask that a bookplate identifying your branch be put in the books
- Create a web-site with up-to-date contact information
- Print flyers to send with invitations to prospective members
- Use branch AAUW display board with awards, pictures of activities, etc.
- Post flyers in key locations around your community

Keep existing members, both new and current

- Ask new members what you can do for them
- Hold special events for newcomers such as an informal orientation dinner, tea, coffee and dessert, or luncheon
- Develop a new member's packet with branch roster, bylaws, program schedule, newsletters, etc.
- Develop a strategy to integrate new members quickly into the life of AAUW
- Convene meeting of branch committee chairs in which names and interests of newcomers can be passed to related committees
- Each spring plan a campaign to retain current members with incentives to renew early
- Member of membership committee should serve or advise the nominating committee since the committee knows members and their interests
- Meet and greet at each branch meeting, handle nametags and introductions
- Pair a branch —mentor“ with a new member
- Be open to new ways of approaching tasks
- Gather a group of newcomers together for a feedback session
- Introduce each newcomer to yourself and one other person
- Call members who don't participate in programs or study groups. Keep in touch

Coordinate with program

- Have membership material available at ALL meetings
- Plan programs and events that showcase AAUW's mission and that make a difference in your community. Sister to Sister Summits, Transitions Conferences, Woman to Woman dialogues, Issues Forums have wide appeal
- Hold programs and events at times when younger members can attend: lunchtime, evenings, Saturdays or Sundays
- Plan workshops with appeal for younger working women such as career development, resume writing, finding good daycare, financial management
- Invite accomplished women as speakers
- Regularly evaluate the quality of your programs
- Have membership information available at each program. Announce its availability and location
- Involve membership committee in planning the fall meeting with the emphasis on a situation that promotes mingling, discussion, etc.
- Make a form to collect feedback/evaluations from members. Have some convenient at every event. Point out that you expect them to be utilized.