

DEVELOPING MEMBERSHIP STRATEGIES

After evaluating your membership recruitment and retention efforts, work to develop strategies for improvement.

1. As a board, agree upon total board responsibility for both recruitment and retention.
2. Agree upon a recruitment goal.
3. Involve current members by asking them to bring prospects or new members to meetings.
4. Think membership. Ask how each event can attract and retain members.
5. Keep a guest book or list and use name tags at all League functions. Make follow-up phone calls to guests.
6. Schedule activities when time conflicts are minimal. Pick interesting, convenient places, a consistent day of the week, and a variety of meeting times. Consider the attraction of food—a wine and cheese reception, potluck dinner, brunch, coffee and dessert. Learn the time preferences of new and old members. Lunch hour or evenings may be better for employed members. Make arrangements for child care and transportation. Establish a telephone system to remind people of activities.
7. Be sure that meetings are well run, informative, and worth attending. Start and end on time; two hours is long enough for any meeting. Ensure that members feel that their participation is as important as their attendance.
8. Use your VOTER as a recruitment and retention tool. Make sure it is informative, upbeat, and interesting, reaching every member and active prospect. Include the membership director's name and phone number on the masthead. (see "Is Your VOTER Member Friendly?")
9. Work with the public relations director to create community interest in the League. Establish an annual event that is always associated with the League. Become involved in a "hot" issue and publicize your involvement. Allow enough lead time for coverage of League activities in the bulletin and local press. Try for coverage of your planning, the event itself, and a follow-up.
10. Extend the same tender care to the inactive members as you traditionally give to new and prospective members. Contact them at least once a year (not with just a dues statement or finance drive letter) to thank them for their continued support. Try to involve them in some way by offering a small responsibility that matches their interest (but respect the wishes of those who have made it clear that they do not want to be called).