

Keys to Membership Retention, Recruitment and Engagement

Enthusiastic – with fireworks – that is how AAUW National feels about increasing membership! There is a new retention goal:

95% members retained year-over-year – with membership retention being measured on September 30.

We are on the right track! Some things have been proven to help with the process of membership recruitment and retention. Here are the key components:

1. Decide Your Branch Membership Strategy

Your branch has a personality, so make sure it is the one that you want to project, and that you can clearly state the value your branch brings to your members and community. Then develop the strategy or vision of what you want to achieve this year. The vision should be one that will increase the impact of your branch to the community in the way that your members support and value. Is your desire to increase members that better represent the diversity of your locale? Or maybe you want to increase the visibility of your branch by better advertising your special interest groups? Don't forget to leverage your Shape the Future reduced new member national dues and free memberships.

Think about those members who joined your branch last year, and be sure you have continued to engage them and listen to them so they will keep coming back and become a life-time member.

2. SMART Goals to meet the Strategy

Once your goals are defined make sure that you have developed ways to measure those goals. The goals should be SMART – S, specific; M, measurable; A, achievable; R, relevant; T, time-bound.

Finally, from your SMART goals you will want to develop specific tactics for each of your goals. Don't bite off more than you can chew: no more than 3 goals in a year.

Whatever your branch would like to do in terms of membership this year, make sure your branch members have input on your goals and tactics. You can do this in a variety of ways such as through a survey, or a structured meeting.

3. Include Mission-Based Programming

It has been statistically proven that branches focused on mission based programming are vital and growing. Those branches without mission based programming are those that are not likely to grow. Be sure you understand the mission of AAUW, how you articulate it and apply it in your community. Your branch will want to select areas of emphasis that are important to your community and will help you meet your branch membership goals. For instance, you may want to have a program that leverages AAUW National's research like "[Deeper in Debt, Women and Student Loans.](#)" This program will appeal to high school and college students and their parents as well as grandparents. AAUW does excellent research – be sure you are leveraging it! There is a [Program-In-A Box](#) for this topic and lots of others on the AAUW website to use. Additionally, each of the Adelante books for this past year has an [author webinar available on-line](#) and AAUW national will be continuing this program for 2018-19. Please continue to check in as the new listing should be available soon!

4. Be Inclusive and Seek Diversity

Is your branch a reflection of your community? That is a goal of AAUW! Think about ways that you can be more diverse and inclusive in support of your membership goals. For instance, you can partner with organizations with membership that includes diversity that your branch does not. Once you decide the components of diversity that you will work on this year, be sure you listen to the stakeholders of that diverse group and if needed make changes to your branch that will make them feel more comfortable and included. It may be small actions like having an identification **icon** on their nametag that allows branch members to understand that they are new to your branch. This alerts long-term members to be sure they invite the new members and visitors to sit with them and engage them in a conversation.

5. Leverage Social Media

Social media including your website, Facebook and other media are imperative to branch health. It provides you a quick and easy way to express AAUW's mission and your branch activities in support of the mission and your members! One of the most exciting things we saw at the conference was the [tremendous videos that are available to all of us on U-Tube](#). They are awesome and will really energize your meetings. Be sure you view "[Ifs and Onlys.](#)" It will inspire you and make you proud you are an AAUW member!

6. Ask People to Join

Don't forget to ask people to join your branch! Do this after you have established a relationship with the individual. Be sure they know the mission of AAUW and the personality of your branch. Make sure they feel welcomed!

Then include them in some small leadership opportunities – don't overwhelm them! You may want to establish a "buddy" for them who continues to encourage their engagement. You want them to be a member for life!

Have fun, create a welcoming branch and engage in mission based programs. You'll have a great year!