

# **REGION VIII FEDERATION AND CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP PLAN**

**January 2012**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This plan is my attempt to make chapters aware of the actions that can be taken to not only retain our existing members, but also recruit new members. With the steady decline of our membership over the past years, it is imperative that all chapters – actually all members - take action, accordingly, to do whatever it takes to retain our current members, and recruit new members.

At a time when the Federal Community is facing the largest crisis in a number of years, apathy among our members is growing. Some members don't attend meetings, don't participate in chapter activities, don't volunteer for committee service nor as chapter leaders; thus a few members become "stuck" in that job for what seems a lifetime, which is unfair, not only to those few members, but also to the entire chapter. Some of our chapters are closing, simply because members are not willing to take leadership roles.

It is time for the chapters to pull together, to work as a team, to grow NARFE membership – with the threats from Congress to not only the federal employee, but also to the federal retiree, we cannot sit back and wait for "Someone to do it" - "Someone" is older, tired, and has been doing it for so long, he just can't keep doing it for everyone – we all need to help "Someone" and help ourselves at the same time!

Each Chapter is requested to contact ALL members, and encourage them to assist in implementing these ideas in each chapter. The best way to contact members is, of course, by telephone – there is nothing like a personal call to encourage and enlighten members, who may just be waiting to be personally asked for their assistance. Members have volunteered to serve as chapter leaders – just because someone took the time and effort to make that personal call.

None of these actions are new actions, they have been published in NARFE Manuals, Officer Duties and Responsibilities, *Recruiting & Retention Journals*, *Quarterly News*, in Federation training sessions, and on the web site – this is an attempt to put these actions/ideas into one document, which can be easily utilized by chapters.

The time for action is NOW – and the more members we can ask for assistance in accomplishing these actions the stronger NARFE will become – and the stronger our clout will be with Congress – so they will not scapegoat the Federal Community in their budget cutting efforts.

## **INCENTIVES**

First year membership is \$45, which includes both National and Chapter Dues. Follow years are \$40 for national dues plus the chapter dues of record.

If you sign up for Dues Withholding, (for retirees only) national dues are \$34, plus the chapter dues of record – a savings of \$6. Some Federations and Chapters offer additional incentives to their members to sign up for dues withholding. The CA Federation offers \$10 for the member; \$5 if the member signs up a spouse; and another \$5 for signing up the spouse on dues withholding. In addition, some chapters offer members \$5 or \$10 to sign up for dues withholding. On dues withholding, for example, a chapter with dues of \$12 added to the \$34 for national dues, results in NARFE dues of \$3.83 a month, or 13 cents per day.

If you sign up an Active Federal Employee (AFE), NARFE will send you, personally, a check for \$8 for each AFE you sign up.

## **GOALS**

1. Retain existing members
2. Recruit new members
3. Increase meeting attendance – and encourage more to participate as NARFE leaders
4. Involve maximum number of members in achieving actions
5. Establish goals for each item listed above. i.e., 5 new members per month; 5 more members attending meetings per month; 5 more members working to achieve goals per month, etc. Of course these numbers will vary based on the size of each chapter. The most important thing to do is to establish these goals – it has been said that, “*If you fail to plan, you plan to fail*”.
6. Review the statistics monthly of your chapter membership (retention and recruitment) and determine what has worked well, and not so well in the efforts you have made.
7. ***Report to the Region VIII Vice President and Federation President on a monthly basis. Identify success stories which can be shared with the National Headquarters for posting on the NARFE web site. If you need more assistance, also report what is needed.***

## **RESOURCES**

All materials listed below are available on the NARFE Web Site, [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org); on the NARFE Officers Home Page. To order Manuals & Guidelines, Applications and Brochures, use the Requisition for Printed Supplies, F-18, or order online by completing the F-18.

NARFE 2012 Membership Marketing Plan

### **Manuals and Guidelines**

Chapter/Federation Officers Manual, F-10

Membership Development Manual, FH-19

Public Relations Handbook, FH-6

### **Posters - (Note these posters cannot be ordered, they must be downloaded and printed)**

Protect America's Heartbeat

Protect America's Heartbeat-2

Chapter Poster: Active Casual

Chapter Poster: Active Suits

Chapter Poster: Retirees

Chapter Meeting Poster

### **Membership Application**

Membership Application – H-140A

Membership Application (Self Mailing Envelope) – F-14C

Dues Withholding Application for Retirees – DW - 2 (for existing members) {White Form}

Dues Withholding Application for New Members (Retirees) – DW – 3 {Green Form}

Life Membership Application – F-53

Gift Membership Application – F-85

All materials listed below are available on the NARFE Web Site, [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org); on the NARFE Officers Home Page.

### **Membership Brochures**

Look at What NARFE Has Done for You Lately – F-122  
10 Worst Mistakes Federal Employees Can Make – F-126  
10 Worst Mistakes Federal Retirees Can Make – F-127

### **Publications**

*Protect America's Heartbeat Tool Kit* – includes fact sheets, letters to the editor, press release info, etc.  
*Quarterly News* – Although no longer distributed to chapter officers, archives exist on NARFE website  
*Recruiting & Retention Journal* – Archives provide ideas from chapters all over the country on what has worked for recruiting and retention. (November 2011 Issue contains lots of ideas)

### **Tools for NARFE Leaders**

#### **Recruitment**

Recruitment Tips  
Recruitment Tips from Chapter and Federations  
Recruitment Tips for Individual Members  
Recruitment Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Retention**

Retention Tips  
Ensuring Members Renew

#### **Leadership Development**

Special Issues  
Recruitment and Retention Tips  
Send Us Your Best Practices

#### **Chapter Development**

Boosting Member Involvement  
Tips on Conducting Chapter Business

#### **Communication Tools**

Slide Shows  
Sample News Releases (fillable/downloadable)  
Sample Chapter/Federation Member Communications  
Recruitment Materials for Special Events

### **Templates** – Word format

Newsletters  
NARFE and 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Logos  
Certificates – Distinguished Service for Chapter and Federation use  
Stationery  
Chapter Badge (with NARFE logo) – to be used with Avery Adhesive Name Badges  
Business Cards (with NARFE logo)  
Return Address Labels (with NARFE logo)

**Buttons:** “Proud to be a NARFE Member”, etc.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Window Static Cling NARFE Logo** – Free – available from Chuck Timanus, NARFE HQ

## **REGION VIII FEDERATION AND CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP PLAN 2012**

### **ACTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED** **WITH CORRESPONDING GOALS ESTABLISHED IN EVERY CHAPTER:**

#### **Administrative**

1. All Chapters obtain information/training, as necessary, from the District Vice President, Federation President or Regional Vice President regarding any items addressed herein. The “NARFE Officer’s Home Page” provides a great deal of information
2. All chapters obtain passwords for downloading Chapter Online Reports and Online Activity Modules.
3. Chapter Presidents share password for accessing Chapter Online Reports and Online Activity Module with other officers, such as Chapter Vice President, Chapter Membership Chair, etc.
4. Provide Headquarters Member Records with updated member information, such as current address, phone number and email address.
5. Develop Telephone Committee (a committee is more than one person) to call members about special meetings or in case of a Legislative Alert. If not feasible, contract with a company, such as Robodial.org, who has been used by other Federations for NARFE Call-in Days at about 2 cents per call.
6. Consider listing NARFE in the telephone directory or at least with the Chamber of Commerce who maintains a listing of Associations in the community.
7. Consider listing your local Chapter on Facebook, ensure updated information regarding your meeting, special features, and/or guest speaker is included.
8. Consider establishing a local website for your chapter. NARFE can host the website for you, and provide assistance. See “NARFE Web Hosting” on the NARFE website, [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org); on the NARFE Officers Home Page.
9. Place meeting notices in local newspapers and/or locally distributed “free” newspapers.
10. Download and post NARFE Membership Posters throughout the community on free Public Bulletin Boards in Community Centers, Senior Centers, Grocery Stores, Laundromats, etc. – ensure a local contact name and phone number is indicated. If you have contacts with any postal union, ask permission to post a NARFE Poster on their bulletin board in the post office; NARFE is a member of the Federal-Postal Coalition in Washington DC, as well as in California.
11. Distribute extra magazines (with chapter meeting location and contact name and number on cover) to local Congressional offices (get to know the staff), hospitals, doctor offices, dental offices, senior centers, beauty shops, barber shops, library, etc.
12. Consider holding a Chapter Recruiting Contest, with a reward for the top recruiter

13. If your Federation has a Federation Recruiting Contest, publicize it in your newsletter, or on your website.
14. Consider establishing an incentive for members to go on dues withholding – perhaps a cash prize or a free lunch. Recognize them in your newsletter.
15. If your Federation has a dues withholding incentive, publicize it in your newsletter, or on your website; some members are unaware of this incentive.
16. Publicize the NARFE \$8 Finder's Fee for recruiting an Active Federal Employee, and clearly state that the check goes directly to the recruiter.
17. Consider writing letters to the editor (these are generally free) on timely legislative topics; or announcing a dynamic speaker; or educating the public about NARFE; or inviting federal retirees to visit your local chapter meeting. NARFE Protect America's Heartbeat website has sample letters to the editor in the Toolkit, and valuable information regarding legislative matters affecting the federal community.
18. Publicize your efforts to support Alzheimer's Research in local newspapers – or local Alzheimer's support you provide to community agencies.
19. Consider using name tags/badges for members at meetings, so they will get to know other members, especially new members. A template is available on the NARFE website.
20. Encourage all members to carry a membership application (either the H-140A or F-14C, AND the F-122, What Has NARFE Done Lately) with them at all times – in your purse, your car, your golf bag, briefcase, etc.. You never know when you might accidentally meet a member of the federal community, who could become a NARFE member.
21. Consider attending Senior Resource Fairs hosted by your Congressman, to learn more about issues affecting the local community and perhaps the federal community. It provides networking opportunities for you with other associations in your community – and if other attendees are interested in federal issues, you can talk to them about NARFE and our efforts not to scapegoat the federal community – perhaps you'll be able to sign up a new member, or have an opportunity to speak at a meeting of that other association. Contact your local Congressman to learn of these events.

### **Membership Committee**

1. Review the NARFE 2012 Membership Marketing Plan, posted on the NARFE website. Note that several items require action by chapters.
2. Review duties assigned to the Membership Chair, Form F-60, and determine what can be done in your chapter.
3. Review ideas discussed in the Membership Development Manual, Form FH-19, for ideas which could be implemented in your chapter.
4. Review the *Recruiting & Retention Journal* Issues available on the NARFE website to identify suggestions from other chapters in the country that have resulted in new members for chapters.

5. Review the Frequently Asked Questions on the NARFE website, for development of recruiting skills among all members.
6. Consider developing a Chapter “Membership Action Plan” as identified in Appendix C, of the Chapter and Federation Officers Manual, Form F-10.
7. Develop a means to personally contact new members identified on the Online Activity Module to welcome them to your chapter, provide them with information about your chapter and encourage them to participate in chapter meetings and operations. Welcome them by printing their name in your Chapter Newsletter.
8. Consider dividing functions of the Membership Committee into smaller portions – so that one member of the committee is responsible for one aspect of the membership committee. Divisions of the responsibilities may include: (1) New Members; (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> Notice Members; (3) Dropped Members; (4) Deceased Members – follow up with survivor to assist with necessary forms through Chapter Service Officer – and more importantly engage the survivor to become an active member of the chapter; (5) Outreach into the community to gain access to Federal Agencies; (6) Work with Public Relations Committee to identify projects within the community that will raise awareness of the purpose of NARFE, etc.
9. Consider making a personal phone call to members who renew or reinstate their NARFE membership expressing your appreciation and thank them in your newsletter.
10. Consider personal contact with those members who appear as “*Second Notice*” and offer to check with headquarters to see if their check has been received. You might also offer to explain to retirees the dues withholding process, where membership costs less than \$4 per month – and they save \$6 each year and never have to write a check for dues..
11. Consider personal contact with those members who appear as “*Dropped for Non Renewal*”, express the need for them to continue their membership at this critical time for the federal community. Offer to explain to retirees the dues withholding process, where membership costs less than \$4 per month – and they save \$6 each year and never have to write a check for dues. If the member still resists rejoining NARFE – try to determine what caused them to drop their membership, keep record of that information and report it to your Chapter President. Perhaps they are unhappy with something in the chapter and the chapter leaders need to know of their concern.
12. Identify organizations and associations in your community and network with those who are members of the Coalition Partners of NARFE (lists of organizations are available on the NARFE website). Utilize contacts through NARFE chapter members who are members of these other organizations/associations to gain access and share NARFE information – or make a presentation to the group about the value of NARFE.
13. Consider publicizing and giving a Gift Membership to a colleague who is retiring, or a spouse or family member, friend, neighbor, or your letter carrier.
14. Consider having a membership table at a convention/conference of a NARFE Coalition partner.

15. Consider having a training session at your chapter meeting on “How to Recruit” new members.
16. Encourage chapter members to wear NARFE badges, buttons or logo apparel in public to provide name recognition within the community.
17. Develop a brief “recruitment script” for use by all chapter members to use in encouraging friends, neighbors, acquaintances to join NARFE.
18. Contact NARFE members on your chapter roster, who live outside the area, to identify a nearby chapter to which they may transfer and become active with NARFE. Out of area members may lose interest in NARFE, and drop their membership because they are so far away – but may actually participate in a local chapter near their residence.
19. Contact friends, neighbors, acquaintances, who are also members of other fraternal or social organizations to determine if they are active or retired federal employees, and ask them to attend a meeting and join NARFE.
20. Consider working with the Federal Executive Boards, to identify contacts within Federal Agencies.
21. Consider working with representatives of Federal Employee Health Plans to identify contacts within Federal Agencies – or ask if these representatives would assist in providing NARFE materials at Health Fairs held at Federal Agencies.
22. Look in local telephone directory, or online, for contact information for Federal Agencies in your community and follow up by meeting with the Human Resource Director for future involvement, health fairs, providing NARFE posters, NARFE information, magazines, etc.
23. Ask chapter members if they have any contacts with Federal Agencies from which they retired, and set up meetings with the Human Resource Director to educate them about NARFE. Ask if you can place posters in their agency – or if they might provide an information kit about NARFE to employees who retire.
24. Continue to remind members of what NARFE has done recently for the federal community (review Form F-122), report at chapter meeting, or place some information in chapter newsletter.
25. Consider working with the Public Relations Committee to publicize NARFE through community events such as Alzheimer’s walk, Senior Fairs, Community events – perhaps some volunteer involvement in an annual event in your community, such as a Festival, being sure to wear NARFE logo apparel. Some Federations have Tri-Fold Display Boards, Table covers, Banners, etc. to publicize NARFE.
26. Consider having a brainstorming session with your chapter members on what they suggest could be tried within the chapter to encourage new members to join.
27. Consider working with a nearby chapter on membership efforts which could be coordinated in local communities – joint efforts can create new opportunities and ideas.
28. Become familiar with “Matching Funds” which can provide additional funding for efforts to promote NARFE you wish to pursue within your community.

## **Chapter Operations**

1. Review Appendix B, Checklist of Chapter Operations contained in the Chapter and Federation Officers Manual, Form F-10.
2. Consider having Greeters at each meeting to welcome new members to the meeting and arrange for a “chatty” member to seat with the new member to teach them about the various aspects of the meeting.
3. Consider obtaining a “skill/interest” list from each chapter member to identify those who may be interested in serving in a leadership position or on a committee.
4. Consider having a crisp, concise, interesting, meeting (90 minutes or less) which follows an agenda and as a minimum includes reports of current legislation, actions required by members to support legislative actions, a membership report identifying the number of members in the chapter, recognizing those present who are new members, or reinstated members; and a report by the Service Officer of important information affecting members.
5. Consider having a guest speaker of general interest to all members – perhaps someone from a Federal Agency, such as Homeland Security, Social Security, Forest Service, National Weather Service; local Police and/or Fire Safety, Canine Companions & therapy dogs, City Manager, City Councilmen, your Congressman, local Radio/TV personalities, local Newspaper Editor, Entertainers from local theater groups, Curator of Museums, District Attorney to speak on fraud protection and scams, the local librarian, local nursery to speak about container gardening, local artists/craftsmen, etc.
6. Consider listing a dynamic speaker from your chapter on the Chamber of Commerce Speaker’s Bureau to speak to other organizations about the history and purpose of NARFE. Provides an opportunity for name recognition in the community – and perhaps even a new member.
7. Consider introducing new members and allowing them to say a few words of introduction about themselves, so other members get to know them.
8. Consider having a brief training session at chapter meetings on some aspect of NARFE, if a speaker cannot be provided. This could result in members learning about the various leadership positions – and perhaps volunteering to serve.
9. Encourage all members to participate in leadership opportunities – make a personal phone call to those members who appear to have an interest.
10. Consider providing chapter funds or a subsidy for members willing to participate in District Meetings/Training, Federation Training/Conventions, National Conventions and the Legislative Conference.
11. Consider annually asking chapter members to critique the chapter meetings and offer suggestions for improvements.
12. Consider asking chapter members if the date/time/place of the chapter meeting should be changed – also if the meeting should be a luncheon meeting, brown bag luncheon or a business meeting.

13. Train and encourage members about our Political Action Committee (PAC) and the importance of visiting, writing, calling Congressmen. Identify the perks associated with attending PAC events, sponsored by local Congressmen, and the networking opportunities they present.
14. Consider visits or joint meetings with nearby chapters to exchange ideas.

## **Conclusion**

The items identified above are by no means all inclusive or all encompassing. They are merely provided as “thoughts” for you and your chapter members to use to develop and expand on new ideas, establish goals and **TAKE ACTION**. You are encouraged to develop new ideas and actions to increase not only your chapter membership, but also NARFE’s membership.

NARFE membership reached its peak in 1982 with 491,876 members, after the Air Traffic Controllers Union was disbanded, the “Grace Commission” was established and Diet COLAs were instituted. Membership started to drop in 1987 and has continued to drop every year since then. Our membership at the end of 2011 is 288,081, which does not give us a very loud voice with which to speak to Congress.

Federal retirees have lost no earned benefits over the past 17 years due mostly to the efforts of NARFE’s Legislative Staff, their Action Alerts and the Action of our Members. Over the past year, our Protect America’s Heartbeat campaign has created not only member involvement by calling, writing, visiting, emailing Congress, but also valuable recognition in National Media which has kept the Fiscal Commission and Super Committee from taking the actions they have recommended which could have serious impact on the federal community. Our Legislative staff will continue to ask for your assistance in an attempt to keep our earned benefits from being reduced; we need your continued support.

We **MUST** reverse the downward membership trend in order to continue to have a strong impact with Congress and their attempts to scapegoat the Federal Community to reduce the budget deficit.

The future of NARFE depends on you – and your chapters’ actions in retaining and recruiting new members.

Please advise me and your Federation President, on a monthly basis – after your chapter meetings, of the action you and your chapter members are taking to improve our membership numbers. If you need assistance, please state that in your monthly reports. I want to hear from you!

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