

United by Our Diversity: How to Recruit New GFWC Members

The General Federation of Women's Clubs is one of the oldest and largest women's volunteer organization. GFWC Clubwomen serve communities in all 50 states and in over a dozen countries. One of the most notable goals we have is to ensure this noble tradition continues. New GFWC members can be found everywhere we go – the key is to share GFWC with all of them. Getting new members takes enthusiasm, creativity, determination and a very good plan.

This has been prepared to help meet the challenge of recruiting new members for GFWC clubs. It is divided into sections that will lead a club through the steps involved in holding a successful member recruitment event.

Every suggestion offered here is just that – a suggestion. Each community and each club is unique. Adopt or adapt the ideas presented here to best suit your situation. Use your imagination, and most importantly, HAVE FUN!

Introducing women to the personal rewards of membership and extending to communities the benefits of GFWC programs will guarantee that GFWC not only survives but thrives.

Recruitment is like planting a tree from a seed. The seed demonstrates that we are all grafted from many diverse backgrounds and because of that diversity we all have something unique to contribute to our clubs and GFWC.

During your recruiting season, host events, invite prospects to your meetings, ask members to each bring a friend focusing on bringing in women from different groups within your community. All members of your club must be involved in the recruitment of new members. In addition, a membership chairman that is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about GFWC must be selected from your club members. The Club Membership Recruitment Committee Chairman can function as a “coach”, offering encouragement and advice.

Qualities of a Club Membership Recruitment Committee Chairman should be:

- Organized and efficient
- Enthusiastic and motivated
- Knowledgeable and positive about the club and GFWC
- Comfortable speaking in public
- Able and willing to delegate responsibility

Qualities of Club Membership Recruitment Committee Members:

- Organized and efficient
- Enthusiastic and motivated
- Knowledgeable and positive about GFWC
- Outgoing and comfortable meeting new people
- Willing to accept delegated responsibility

The Recruitment Event Committee should plan to meet at a convenient time on a regular basis for several months prior to the event itself. Planning of a successful recruitment event takes time and should not be haphazardly put together. Plan a recruitment event with a “theme”. This makes the event fun and one that prospective members would want to attend.

So, what are the steps that should be included in planning a “successful” recruitment event?

Set a Goal – Goal setting is an inducement to succeed. Make sure it is a realistic goal and not so high that it is intimidating to your members. Stress to your club members that they are all a part of the “membership recruitment” team and that the club needs their support.

Dollars for the Event – Does your club have funds to put on the event or will you need to depend on creative ways of putting the event on? If so, reach out to your club members and tap into their talents. As a bonus, this gives your members ownership in the success of the recruitment event.

Who are you trying to recruit to your club? – Ask each member to provide a list of friends/family/co-workers/anyone they think would enjoy being part of your club. What about past members? Maybe their life situation has changed, and they are now able to come back to the club.

If your recruiting event is public, utilize social media to get the word out. If you have a local newspaper, ask them to share the information and to possibly attend the event and write a story on its success!

Create flyers that can be posted at your library, community bulletin boards, hair and nail salons, etc. Brainstorm with your members and you will be amazed at all the places you will come up with to share your flyer.

Ask one of your team members to maintain the master list of names, addresses, cell phone and email addresses; as well as serve as the point person for prospective members to contact and RSVP for the event.

The Recruitment Event

A Membership Recruitment Event should be just that – an EVENT! It should be devoted exclusively to the purpose at hand – enticing, encouraging, enlisting potential members to your club. It should not be part of a regularly scheduled club business meeting. The possibilities are bound only by your imagination. Clubs have held teas, high teas, cocktail parties, “Chick Flick” movie nights, pool parties, etc.

Where should the event be held?

Remember that every aspect of your event will send a message. Holding a recruitment event at a fancy restaurant may give the impression that your club is too expensive or too exclusive; an event held in a place of worship may discourage women of a different faith

from participating. While the intent may be entirely innocent, think carefully about subtle messages.

Look for a well-known, neutral, possibly prestigious location such as a historic home, museum, community center or library. Of course, if your club or your state has a clubhouse, use it! Look for a site that will accommodate the number of people expected to attend, and more. But make sure it's not too large because even though you have a great turnout it may look small in a large room. Make sure the location has AV access, a kitchen to prepare the food and of course make sure of additional charges for clean-up afterward are included in your budget.

When to Hold the Event

The time will depend on who you are trying to attract to your club. If you are looking for the younger woman, remember she may work outside of the home so an evening event or weekend event may be easier for them to make. If you are looking for retired women, a mid-day event would work perfect. What about the stay at home moms? How about right after car-pool drop off in the morning by hosting a "coffee" break event. Of course, the one thing we can never control is the weather, so always have a Plan B in the event of inclement weather.

Next is time to send out the invitations!

Be sure to get everyone involved in sending out the invitations by providing those very important contacts with addresses and email addresses. You may want to even use an E-vite program vs. mailing invitations to cut down on your cost. Whichever way you decide, be sure to include the following information in your invitation:

- Date, time, location – including address and directions of the event
- Purpose of the event (Appendix A)
- Name and cellphone number of person to call for further information and to RSVP
- Include a "Respond by" date for planning purposes

Time to Brag on your Club

Prepare a "brag board" that will visually tell your club's story. It should be an interesting, well-designed display of the activities in which your club is involved. Keep it simple and uncluttered. Feature activities that demonstrate the club's commitment to volunteer service, personal growth and fun.

Include Club Profile brochures, GFWC brochures, copies of your club's newsletters, your state's Clubwoman Magazine and if your club has a scrapbook, put that out on display too! Anything that tells the story of your club!

Refreshments

Everyone loves to EAT! Enlist the members of your club to provide the refreshments. Decorate your refreshment table so that it is enticing and elegant. Use your theme if you have chosen a specific one for the event.

Your Guest Are Arriving!

Make sure you have your GFWC nametag on and that everyone in the club wears theirs too. That way guest can easily see who is a member and who is not. Provide nametags for your guest and have members ready to graciously greet everyone that enters with a smile, a handshake, and warm words of welcome!

Make sure as your guest arrive they sign-in so when the event is over you have contact information of who attended. Make sure you get name, address, email address and cellphone so you can follow-up with a “thank you” for attending.

Your Program

The informal portion of your recruitment event is as important as the more “formal” program. Warm, hospitable, welcoming, positive, friendly club members and hostesses will guarantee that the first half of your event is a hit! The mixing, mingling, refreshments and chatter set the stage, create the environment and solidify the first impressions that will make a potential member want to join!

The more formal portion of your program is where you share about your club and GFWC. Time is precious, so make sure you set a time limit on how long this part of the program goes. A long-winded program will be a big turn-off.

This portion of the program is presided over by either your Recruitment Committee Chairman, your club membership chairman or your club president. She must preside according to an agenda prepared. She should be completely comfortable, and well-practiced with her presentation.

She should give a warm and sincere welcome to officers, guests, potential new members and club members. A BRIEF explanation and purpose of the event also should be given, for example: “we’d like to introduce you to the GFWC Woman’s Club of Anytown, let you know who we are, what we do and how you can help. But first, let me introduce you to some special people who are with us today from our (district) (state) organization.

Provide a brief introduction of each of the officers and the duties within GFWC. Keep introductions *short and sweet*. GFWC is a multi-layered organization and could seem complicated and complex if too much detail is included at this point.

Now it is time to share the details of your club and GFWC – **BRIEFLY**

- Give background information about the club: when founded, mission statement, and major achievements in your community, include past and present.
- Provide current information about the club: how many members, current and on-going projects, meeting day and time, social activities and any special interest

groups if you have one such as a book club within your club. Of course, financial information you will need to share is the amount of dues for your club, district, state and national.

- Summary of the club's most important project: emphasize how potential members are needed to help reach project goals, kinds of skills/talents needed and importance to the population served.
- Share the Benefits of Membership in GFWC (Appendix B)
- Allow time for questions.
- Sincerely thank them all for attending and make sure they leave with a club profile, as well as a GFWC Brochure. Mention your next meeting and that you would love to see them attend and join your club.

THE EVENT IS OVER, BUT THE WORK IS NOT – TIME TO FOLLOW-UP!

- Be sure and write a personal note thanking the potential new member for attending your event. Remind her of the next date of your club and let her know how much you would love for her to join your club!
- Write a note to the potential members who were unable to attend sharing with them the information covered and inviting them to your next club meeting. Keep them on your radar.
- If your club has a newsletter, use those email addresses collected and send them your next two club newsletters.
- If your club is involved in a big project, invite them to come out and help – no commitments necessary!

Time to Welcome Your New Members!

- Send an official letter of welcome from the club president.
- Assign a long-standing member to the new member as a mentor. She will welcome the new member at the meetings, sit with her, explain what all those acronyms mean (GFWC, CSP, CCI, etc.) and introduce her to the other members of the club.
- The Membership Recruitment Team should check in with the new members a few months out to answer any questions they may have but don't want to ask in front of the full club.
- Be sure to assign the new member to a committee/or project where her talents, interests and skills will be best used.
- Encourage her to invite some of her own friends to come to meeting with her...if she is excited that will show to her friends and that will peak their interest in GFWC!

Whether the new member recruiting event takes place in March, September, or May, the principles outlined above are relevant. The goals are:

- To identify and invite potential members who can and will actively participate in club activities.
- To present your club and the benefits of membership in the most positive way possible.

- To stage a well-planned and organized event.
- To welcome new members into your club.

Post Event Meeting

New members bring fresh perspectives, talents, ideas, energy and enthusiasm to your club. You need them! AND THEY NEED YOU... Don't forget that being a member of a GFWC club provides the opportunity to:

- CONTRIBUTE to the quality of life in your neighborhood or community;
- GAIN a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction in doing good;
- PARTICIPATE in interesting, informative, inspiring programs;
- EXPLORE and sharpen skills that can lead to professional advancement;
- EXPAND a network of contacts – profession and personal;
- BECOME PART of a support system – for the community and personally;
- BUILD lifelong friendships and have lots of FUN!

SAMPLE INVITATION (Appendix A)

Dear Tammy Smith,

Please join us at the (GFWC Woman's Club of Anytown) (use your theme here) ex. Membership Recruitment Tea. We would like to introduce you to our club, to the General Federation of Women's Clubs and to our members. We also think you will be interested to learn how (the GFWC Woman's Club of Anytown) contributes to our community – and how you can get involved.

This much we can tell you now: as members of (the GFWC Woman's Club of Anytown), we enrich our lives by putting our talents, time and experience to work on causes that benefit families and communities. And we have a lot of fun doing it!

We hope you can join us on (DATE), (TIME), at (PLACE, with address). Dress is casual, and refreshments will be served. (Optional: If you need a ride, we can arrange to have a member of the club drive you. OR: If you need childcare, the club has arranged to have babysitting services available at the event.)

Please RSVP to Sally Jones at 123-4567 by (date). We look forward to introducing you to the (GFWC Woman's Club of Anytown).

Sincerely,

Bea Member

GFWC Woman's Club of Anytown

Benefits of Belonging (Appendix B)

Suggested Timeline For Membership Recruitment Event

SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT:

- At a club meeting, announce intention to hold a recruitment event and tentative date, emphasizing need for all members to be involved.
- Ask members to start suggesting names of invitees.
- Appoint chairman and members of recruitment event committee; schedule and begin regular committee meetings.

FOUR MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT:

- Choose a theme for your event, if desired.
- Set date of event; announce definite date at a general meeting of the club.
- Establish location for event; make arrangements to secure location; check out restrictions on use and/or fees involved.
- Details: assign responsibilities for setting up room; cleaning up room; securing, setting up and operating AV equipment; purchasing/designing nametags; refreshments; designing, printing, mailing invitations; master invitation lists/RSVPs; publicity.
- Invite special guests: state/district officers.
- Design a club brochure, if club does not already have one.
- Order GFWC brochures from the GFWC Marketplace

THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT:

- Review materials to be distributed at recruitment event.
- Remind members at a general club meeting to submit names of potential members along with address, email address and cellphone number.
- Review with the recruitment committee the status of all "DETAILS" listed above.
- Submit article about recruitment event to include in club newsletter.

TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT:

- Make a presentation at a general club meeting about the recruitment event; motivate members to become involved, submit names and attend.
- Include another article in club newsletter.

- **Details, details, details: review status of all details.**

SIX WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT:

- **Mail invitations/or send out E-vite invitations.**
- **Publicity: posters, flyers, newspaper articles, etc.**
- **Details, details, details.**

FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO EVENT:

- **Contact club members who submitted names reminding them to call the prospective member to ask if they will attend, if they need a ride, or if they have any questions, etc.**
- **Contact invited guests (district/state officers) to remind them of the recruitment event and the importance of their attendance. If they have responsibilities at the event (i.e., remarks to make), make sure they understand what is expected; directions to the event, etc.**
- **Coordinate RSVPs with name tag person.**
- **Event hostess should have agenda and remarks prepared; share with recruitment committee so everyone knows what will happen and when.**
- **Details, details, details.**

EVENT DAY!

- **Check meeting room: AV equipment set-up; arrangement of room.**
- **Set out name tags of confirmed attendees and have extra blank nametags for unexpected guests; refreshments, informational material on club, state and GFWC.**
- **Take a deep breath, smile and Have a Great Time!!!!**

How to Recruit New Members This Winter

Sample Ideas

With temperatures dropping and snow falling, staying inside covered up with a warm blanket sounds nice right now! But Winter Seasonal Recruitment has started, which means it's time to start thinking about how to bring "A Flurry of New Friends" to your next meeting.

Below, GFWC Membership Committee, shares some great ways you can help your club gain more members this winter and throughout the rest of the year. After all, the Recruitment Theme, "A Proud Past and a Promising Future with Friends," is all about celebrating friendship. What better way than to share your GFWC membership with some new friends?

Tell your friends, neighbors and co-workers about GFWC

As a member for 27 years, I have discovered that the more people you tell about GFWC, the more people will want to join. Be ready to share your story with others by practicing your elevator speech, a 30 second summary about your involvement in GFWC.

Here are some examples of elevator speeches from the GFWC Club Manual:

I am a member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, one of the largest women's volunteer organizations in the world. We are committed to the betterment of our communities through volunteerism and the empowerment of women. GFWC volunteers find joy in living and giving. Here, let me give you one of our cards.

GFWC is the General Federation of Women's Clubs, one of the oldest volunteer women's organizations in the world dedicated to service in our communities, state, nationally, and internationally. Our motto is "Unity in Diversity." We do what needs to be done in our communities. Our national emphasis is Domestic Violence Awareness and Prevention. Would you like to learn more? Here is an informational GFWC tri-fold and my card. May I have your card? I will contact you with information on our next event.

Anywhere you go, whether you're at the office, a friend's party, or a community meeting, you should be prepared to talk about GFWC. Consider sharing your elevator speech when you're volunteering at places in your community, like a church or childcare agency.

Tell people about the new projects your club is doing, and invite friends or neighbors to your next club meeting or service project. I suggest encouraging every member to bring a friend to your next meeting or club event. I have found that many women decided to join GFWC because a friend invited them to a meeting!

Host a Recruitment Event

Planning an event takes time and preparation, but a successful event can show potential members what your club, and GFWC, is all about. My club recently planned a dinner with a self-help speaker where we could each invite a guest. It was a wonderful opportunity to add members.

Are you hosting a club-sponsored event? Why not invite prospective members to join in on the fun? You could follow the example of the **GFWC Taunton Junior Woman's Club** (North Carolina), who on a bus ride to a casino fundraising trip told participants about GFWC, and gained seven new members.

Or maybe try something similar to the **GFWC Junior Woman's Club of Williamsburg's** (Virginia) First Friday, a new member initiative that brings together clubwomen and prospective new member for happy hour, allowing them to mingle in a fun environment.

Combining membership recruitment events and service projects allows for prospective members to see what type of causes your club supports. Try holding a new membership lunch or dinner and encourage attendees to bring donations for a cause your club supports. For example, if your club supports a local food pantry, encourage new members to bring nonperishable food items and use the event to talk about other projects supported by your club.

Your club could also hold a monthly or bimonthly "meet and greet," allowing new members to join you and get to know what your club is all about.

Publicize your club

Other than simply asking a friend to join GFWC, I think raising awareness about your club can help increase membership. In the past, I have found that Facebook posts, fliers, brochures, pictures in the newspaper, and telling others about what our club does and supports in our communities can attract ladies who have similar interests.

Using public relations tools to promote your club can be an effective way to recruit new members. Post club photos and news on your Facebook page, or submit press releases and information about upcoming events to your local newspaper. Consider making a flyer or brochure for your club that you can distribute to places across your community. Radio advertisements or announcements about your club meetings or events can also help bring new members to your meeting.

Developing business cards for your club is another great way to spread the word about GFWC. The **GFWC Joliet Junior Woman's Club** (Illinois) installed five new members after adapting the use of membership business cards that are designed with contact information, the club's logo, and the club's mission statement.

If there's some popular events in your community coming up, why not reserve a table or booth to advertise your club? Be sure to bring informational materials about your club, and display some photos of members in action! For example, I am always ready with tickets to

our events, business size information cards, or a small token that women will keep or use and be reminded of the club and what it supports.

I hope these tips help you and your club recruit new members this winter. I encourage you to adapt these suggestions to best fit your needs.

Check out the [Membership](#) and [Communications and Public Relations](#) Advancement Guides in the GFWC Club Manual for more information on recruiting new members and promoting your club.

Clubs are always looking for ways to grow and recruit new members, There are many things club members can do in order to attract new members. Here, you'll find a hundred viable approaches that one could use in order to recruit more members.

1. Ask someone
2. Bring a guest to meetings
3. Advertise in newspapers & cable TV
4. Have a clear club goal & a strategic plan
5. Letters or personal contact with local businesses
6. Contact with Chamber of Commerce
- 7. Place customized bookmarks in library books**
8. Have public meetings at malls, outdoors, etc
9. Have a booth at malls, fairs, festivals etc.
- 10. Place pamphlets in doctors' offices, hospitals, cafeterias, libraries, etc.**
11. Host an Open House
12. Hold a club assembly only on membership
13. If you have a Rotary Club, ask Rotary Foundation alumni to join
- 14. Give the membership chair one minute at every club meeting**
15. Make the membership chair a club director
- 16. Put together guest information packets**
- 17. Service projects that serve a need in the community**
18. Invite family members to join
19. Send letters to people in the news with an invitation to visit the club
20. Print club business cards with club meeting location and time
21. Distribute extra copies of magazines that relate to your club in waiting rooms, etc (i.e.: Rotarian)
22. Hold high-profile meetings
23. Hold wine and cheese receptions for prospective members
24. Have a special guest day
25. Send club members to district membership seminar
26. Make prospective members feel important
27. Honor outstanding community members with awards
28. Don't take age into consideration
- 29. Make some meetings social events**
- 30. Build a club web site**
31. Use group email to promote your club
32. Put posters in public areas
33. Ask corporations and employers to sponsor or subsidize membership
34. Have a reward program for those who bring in new members
35. Create more fun
36. Give a money back guarantee—if after 3 months a new member does not want to be a club member, return their fees
37. Invite the media to cover well known speakers
38. Use word of mouth
39. Network with coworkers, friends, and family

40. Follow up with guests

41. Place a colored dot on the watch of every member to remind them to bring a guest

42. Lead by example—how many members have you recruited?

43. Have members give talks at other organizations

44. Provide guests with free meals

45. Look for members in ethnic groups not represented in your club

46. Provide brochures for new employee packets in members companies

47. Advertise at sports events

48. Ask the district for help

49. Hold joint meetings with other groups

50. Share your club experience with others

51. Participate in community events

52. Write letters to the newspaper about the campaigns your club is working on

53. If a prospect can't attend your meeting due to time, suggest another club

54. Publicize club successes, elections, events, in local newspapers

55. Circulate the club newsletter widely

56. Design a club brochure

57. Hold recruiting events with two or more clubs

58. Form/join a speakers' bureau

59. Wear your club's pin

60. Mention your club at meetings of other organizations during announcements

61. Send newsletter to guests

62. When asked about your leadership skills & career success, tell them about your club

63. Ask every member to submit 3 prospects to the membership chair

64. Give every member a club decal or bumper stickers for their car

65. Give testimonials about your club while guests are at the meeting

66. Repeatedly invite prospective members

67. Practice selling your club at Club meetings—have a one minute elevator speech ready

68. Conduct a Membership Satisfaction Survey

69. The club president asks three club members as a personal favor to each recruit one new member

70. Make direct contact with women's business associations

71. Have new member kits

72. Hand out invitation cards for a "Free" lunch (breakfast, dinner)

73. Have members constantly promote and rave about your club

74. Meet at a good location

75. Develop a strategic plan membership is a year-round priority and needs to be planned

76. Have incentives for recruitment

77. Have a large poster that lists all the members who have sponsored a new member in the past year

78. Select a missing classification and work on filling it

79. Display a thermometer showing progress towards club goal

80. Feature a member's "benefit of the month" in the club newsletter

81. Develop a welcome letter from the president for all new members

82. Contact all members who have resigned in the past 3 years

83. Use billboards at bus stops and road sides

84. Recognize new members in newsletters

85. Pass out M & M candy to remind members that "Membership Matters" and that we need "More Members"

