

## **RECRUITMENT IDEAS**

These ideas are the result of training sessions on Membership Recruitment held in the Spring 2013 and conducted by BJ Thomas McMillan ([bjthommc@kaballero.com](mailto:bjthommc@kaballero.com)) as a member of the Virginia Federation of Chapters Membership Committee. Some ideas work better in urban areas than in rural, or for retired Federal employees than active, and vice versa. Also - many of the ideas below are actions that YOU - not your Chapter - can take to find and recruit new members. This list will be constantly changing as new ideas/suggestions are presented - BY YOU.

### **A. IDENTIFYING WHO IS AN ACTIVE OR RETIRED FEDERAL WORKER OR A SPOUSE**

Scan the following for write-ups on individuals, which often mention whether that person works for, or used to work for, a Federal agency:

- Newsletters or other communications of clubs, hobby groups, or other groups you belong to:
  - Camera Clubs
  - Computer Clubs
  - Quilting Guilds
  - Art Lesson Groups
  - Discussion Forums
  - Bowling Leagues
  - Ham Radio Club
  - Toastmasters
- Volunteer activities you are involved in:
  - Volunteer Fire Department
  - Lions
  - Winchester Medical Center Auxiliary
- Professional associations, museums, theater groups you belong to:
  - Sports and Exercise Groups
  - Homeowners Associations
- Newspapers (including small local papers) and the local magazines (like the freebies often found in libraries, community centers, exercise clubs, etc.)
- For articles on upcoming speakers, persons in charge of event or projects, or persons who have a small business – which also often mention whether someone was or is a Federal employee.
- Scan obituaries - and call any surviving spouse to offer information or assistance re survivor benefits, etc.
- Search FaceBook and Linked In - for profiles mentioning Federal employment
- Be alert for opportunities to initiate conversations to find out if someone is/was a Federal worker (or spouse of a Federal worker)
  - At conventions of professional associations or other groups
  - At events you participate in (e.g., genealogy conventions, civil war re-enactments, cooking classes, etc.)
  - At events you simply attend (concerts, plays, basketball/football/baseball games - while waiting for the event to start)
  - Even at airports, while waiting to board.
- Keep business cards handy to hand out to prospects.

## **B. CONTACTING THOSE PROSPECTS WHO'VE BEEN IDENTIFIED**

- When talking about NARFE to a potential recruit - -
  - Name one thing NARFE has achieved recently
  - Mention what NARFE is working on now
  - Mention that you would like to send them a magazine/materials about NARFE – and get their email/ phone #/ or mailing address.
  - Finally, ask them to call you after they get the packet - to discuss “how we can benefit you” or “address your concerns”.
- At the end of the year, hold a prize drawing among all Chapter members who recruited another member.

## **C. MAKING YOUR CHAPTER/NARFE KNOWN TO POTENTIAL MEMBERS**

You might want to work with your Chapter PR person on some of these.

- Leave info packets and member applications at local realtors' offices - and ask the realtors to hand them out to new clients who mention they are or were Federal employees - or to include them in their welcome packets.
- Place meeting notices/flyers at:
  - Library
  - Community Center
  - Post Office
  - Grocery Stores
  - Bakery/Coffee Shop
- Print the NARFE HQ poster - and post it in Post Offices
  - May need the Postmaster's permission, or the Post Office may just host a community bulletin board for use by any non-profit.
- Submit meeting/activity notices or articles (with photos) to:
  - Newspapers to run in Local Events/ Community sections.
  - Local newsletters of other groups you belong to - if appropriate.
  - For PSA's in local radio stations
- If you are a Chapter that covers a wide geographic area
  - Submit articles and notices to ALL the newspapers and radio / TV outlets in your coverage area
  - Consider rotating your meetings among your entire coverage area
- Try to get interviews on local TV/radio – especially if you have a prominent speaker as a meeting program, or are sponsoring a charitable activity.
- Get onto online local calendars and blogs
- If you are in a housing association development
  - Try to get articles/place notices in the Association's newsletter
  - Check if the Association keeps a list of civic and other organizations, and if so, get on it.
- Contact the President of any organizations likely to have active / retired Federal employees, or spouses thereof, as members and ask to speak to the organization.
- Explore use of Meetup.com

- NARFE seal decal for car windows
- Have NARFE HQ offer training in web site design
- Use social media:
  - Create a FaceBook page for your Chapter - where meeting and activity notices can be posted.
  - Mention your NARFE activities on your own FaceBook page or in Tweets
  - Mention your Federal agency in your FaceBook/Twitter/Linked In profile
- Have a booth at health fairs
  - Develop working relationship with Blue Cross or other health insurance representative - so they can alert you to health care events and other events, and tell you who to call for a possible booth.
  - Might want to host a booth jointly with other chapters
- Coordinate with Area Agencies on Aging - for a booth/speaking opportunity at seminars, Senior Days, etc.
- Have a booth at:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local festivals/farmer's markets</li> <li>➤ Senior Expos</li> <li>➤ Apple Blossom Festival</li> <li>➤ Ramp festival</li> <li>➤ Pre-retirement Expos</li> <li>➤ Court Days</li> <li>➤ Chautauqua Festival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Swap Meets</li> <li>➤ Fall Festivals</li> <li>➤ Rivah Fest</li> <li>➤ Fries By The River Festival</li> <li>➤ Daffodil Festival</li> <li>➤ Maple Festival</li> </ul>
--	--
- Assist NARFE HQ with a booth/tent at any Public Service Annual Event
  - Get NARFE members to walk around during the event, handing out brochures and information
- Set up a NARFE table/make info available at your community yard sale.
- When you have a booth:
  - Offer a raffle for a free 1-year membership (or for some other prize) - to encourage prospects to fill out the prospect cards (order from HQ) and drop them into a basket/jar.
  - Hand out NARFE pens, letter openers, bookmarks, etc. (Bookmarks are especially useful- and they are probably cheaper than other items.)
- Participate in local parades
- Attend funerals where possible/appropriate of Chapter members or co-workers you knew.
- Consider listing your Chapter with the local Chamber of Commerce and any other business organization/directory. (Some of these may require fees.)
- Work with a local restaurant - to offer 15% discount to everyone who comes in with a NARFE coupon.
- Sponsor political debates, issues forums (e.g., on the proposed "chained CPI" or changes in Medicare, etc.) – perhaps jointly with other Chapters.

- Conduct fund raisers for Alzheimers - wearing NARFE polo shirts, caps, etc.
  - Work with a local restaurant - to have Chapter members serve as waiters - and donate all tips to Alzheimers Research.
  - Have Alzheimer's collection table/booth at local festivals (e.g., Fairfax Arts & Crafts fair, Vienna October Fest)farmers markets.
  - When possible, chat with those donating funds re whether they are a retired/active Federal worker - but keep it low key since your primary purpose is to collect funds for Alzheimer's Research, maybe just asking for their contact info if they would like to receive info on NARFE.
  - Work with local CVS or Walgreen's - to have them advertise your Alzheimer collection efforts on their running banners - on the days or a few days before - you are collecting funds at their store.
- Go door-to-door collecting food for foodbanks - wearing NARFE polo shirts, caps, etc.
- Participate as a Chapter/sign up as a team in charity-related activities:
  - Blood drives
  - Wounded Warriors
  - 5K runs – for MS, cancer, etc.
  - Outhouse Races
  - Sponsor a water stop for runners/bike riders
  - Hospice
  - Voter registration projects (non-partisan of course)
  - Sign-up for “Adopt-a-Highway” in a highly traveled area.
  - Sign-up for slots at local homeless shelters, battered women shelters, hospice, etc. – to give time or provide food.

*Note: Great opportunities for interaction with other participants and discover if they are potential NARFE recruits.*

- Participate - as a NARFE member - in Career Day in local schools.
  - If possible, ask students if their parents are Federal employees/retirees
  - Mention checking [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org) for more information)
- Sponsor a ball team
- Write op-eds or letters to the editor on issues relating to Federal employees or your former job, based on your own experiences.
- For Chapters that meet at the same place monthly, ask if you can put up a sign stating your meeting day and time. Explore whether putting up a medallion of the NARFE seal, w/your chapter ID's (similar to the medallion for Lions, Rotary, etc.) along popular driving routes might be possible.
- Work with local active adult communities (e.g., Patriot Village in Williamsburg) to see if you can:
  - Schedule a meeting at the venue
  - Invite any eligible residents.
  - Schedule a presentation on NARFE at the venue
  - If a resident is a chapter member, ask them to approach management about this
  - Hold a paper-shredding event

## D. ATTRACTING POTENTIAL RECRUITS

- Expand your program topics. Speaker ideas (in addition to politicians):
  - Authors (Especially Historical)
  - Scientists
  - Exercise Experts
  - Heart Specialist
  - Dietitian
  - Bee-Keeper
  - Naturalist
  - Park Ranger
  - Pharmacist
  - Wounded Warriors Representative
  - Cookout/Picnic
  - Speakers From NARFE HQ
  - Meteorologist
  - Sports Figures
  - Wine Tasting
  - Fishing Captain
  - Music Programs
  - Tour Medical Facilities (e.g., INOVA Hospital Heart Surgery)
  - Museum Curator
- Schedule behind the scenes tours of:
  - Medical facilities (e.g., Inova Hospital heart surgery)
  - Jefferson Labs, Newport News (involved in accelerator research)
  - Theaters
  - Sports facilities
- Provide incentives
  - Give prospects “invitations” to meetings, w/a discount coupon to apply toward lunch (if the meeting is a lunch meeting)
  - Grant a discount on member dues to 1st time attendees at meetings if they join at the meeting.
  - Give a free lunch if a first-time attendee signs up at that meeting.
- Hold activities outside of meetings:
  - Fishing Trips
  - Nature Hikes
  - Bike Rides
  - Skiing
  - Museum Trips
  - Cruise To Dinner, Etc.
  - Antique Crawls
  - Ball Games
  - Fruit Picking/Festival
  - Trip To The Zoo
  - Kayaking
  - Wine Tastings
  - Arts & Crafts Fairs
  - Car Races
  - Bluegrass Music Festivals
  - Local Plays
  - NARFE Night At Professional Plays
  - Fiddlers Conventions
  - Set Up-A Crab Picken' Afternoon With Several Chapters
  - Trip To Amusement Park With Several Chapters
- Active workers often can't come to Chapter meetings – but they might be able to participate in activities on weekends or in the evenings. The hope is that if workers get involved with their local Chapter before they retire, they may not settle for just joining the e-Chapter when they do actually retire. In addition, the newer retirees don't want to come to meetings – so we need to provide alternatives to traditional meetings.
- Make your page on Federation website a recruiting tool.
  - Include photos and a schedule of meetings (with program topics) and activities.
- Create a calendar on the website showing the meetings and activities of each of your chapters (or have separate calendars for, e.g. Area I, Area II, the Northern Virginia Caucus, etc.)
- In areas with inter-state crossover, create a calendar for that area. (Ex: VA, WV, MD – in the Winchester, VA area.)

## E. PERSUADING PROSPECTS

- Leave extra copies of NARFE magazines at:
  - Community Centers
  - Golf Clubs
  - Senior Centers
  - Health Clubs/YMCA
  - Nail Salon
  - Bakery/Coffee Shop
  - Libraries
  - Hospitals
  - Car Mechanic
  - Veterinarian
  - Doctor
  - Dentist
  - Haircutter/Barber
- Affix labels to the magazines with info on how to contact your Chapter.
- Dispel the idea that NARFE is a union; emphasize that:
  - Its mission is advocacy for the earned benefits of Federal workers.
  - NARFE is an information-providing entity for its members.
  - That we will need to pass on to new blood the task of protecting our earned benefits and of spreading more accurate information about what Federal workers do. To do this, information must also be passed on
  - NARFE is part of your preparation for retirement.
- Create a one-sheet summary of “Benefits from Joining NARFE” – include info on NARFE’s current focus; the magazine; affinity partners, such as hotel discounts (which are sometimes greater than those for AARP or AAA); and the NARFE Federal Credit Union. Give this to prospective members.
- Keep copies of NARFE brochures in your car - and be prepared to hand them out to prospects.
  - These brochures are online at [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org), then Member Login.
  - Click on Online Reports & Forms in the Orange box. Then on Forms by Number or Member Recruitment.
  - Order print versions by clicking on Supplies.
  - Click on an individual brochure, and then save it as a .PDF file and then email it to prospective recruits as an attachment.
- Talk to Funeral Home Directors and ask him/her to provide brochures/info to clients who mention that their spouse was a Federal worker.
- Use [www.narfe.org](http://www.narfe.org)
  - Click on Legislation
  - Print out Legislative Accomplishments
  - This document is frequently updated as the legislative landscape changes.
- Financial argument: Our house and our pensions may well be our two most important assets. Ask if they carry insurance on their house. One can view belonging to NARFE as a form of insurance for your earned benefits.
- Forward particularly interesting GEM or NEWSWATCH e-mails to prospective recruits.

## **F. USING NARFE HEADQUARTERS MEMBERSHIP RECORDS AND DATA**

- The new OAM (Online Activities Module) relates primarily to retention issues but does house data about New Prospective Members which is helpful in recruiting activities.
- Sort the Membership Report by Zip Code
  - Determine the number of members in each zip code:
  - Who might contact new prospects in their same zip code
  - Where to hold meetings
- Get data from NARFE HQ showing the # of Federal retirees/active workers by zip code
- Analyze the potential pools of members v. the actual number of members.

## **G. FOCUS ON RECRUITING SPOUSES OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES/RETIREES (SURVIVOR ANNUITANTS)**

- Scan obituaries- and call any surviving spouse to offer information and assistance re survivor benefits, etc.
- Be prepared to explain what NARFE is and what it does for retired or active Federal employees and their surviving spouses.
- Talk to Funeral Home Directors and ask him/her to provide brochures/info to clients who mention that their spouse was a Federal worker - and the contact information for your Chapter's Service Officer.

## **H. FOCUS ON RECRUITING ACTIVE FEDERAL WORKERS**

- Invite representatives from Federal agencies in your area to be a speaker at monthly meetings. This will also help build relationships with an agency.
- Sponsor a retirement seminar on an evening or on Saturday
  - Ask to advertise it on agency bulletin boards and in Message of the Day type e-mails (have active chapter members ask at their own agencies). NARFE HQ has a person assigned to conduct these seminars.
- Attend retirement parties (preferably for people you know) – and “present” the retiree with a “recognition” from NARFE for 30 years (or more) of service.
  - And of course, give them brochures/materials re joining NARFE.
  - Include a retirement “gift” from your NARFE chapter (a plant, a magazine on computers, gardening, cooking, a brochure for a local theater group, a golf ball – in other words, something relating to an activity they like and might have time for in retirement)
- Attend Conferences and Workshops that are open to the public
  - Chat with those sitting near you - who may well be a current employees of the sponsoring agency
- Hand out NARFE materials at games of agency sport teams
- Attend events highlighted in publications of agency recreation associations
- Have a booth at Congressman Moran’s Women’s Forum
- Have a table/booth at the FEW (Federally Employed Women) Convention

- Sponsor a “Funniest Fed” contest at the Arlington Draft House
- Some agencies have alumni groups:
  - Find out if your agency does, and start attending events.
  - Even if it’s not your agency alumni group, contact the President or Secretary - and ask if you can arrange with them to mail/email NARFE info to their members.
- The Feb 2013 NARFE magazine article “Whittling Away at FERS Retirement” would be especially appropriate to hand out to current Federal workers.
- Try to work with the Retirement Coordinator in any Federal agencies in your area - offer to speak at Retirement Seminars, and at a minimum, provide them with brochures and info.
- Ask Chapter members to write down the names of 5 active workers they know - and commit to contacting them - by phone, email or mail – and providing info to them.
  - Suggested brochures:
    - ✓ Start with the “10 Worst Mistakes Federal Employees Can Make”
    - ✓ Then “What Has NARFE Done For You Lately” or the “Legislative Accomplishments”
    - ✓ Then a particularly interesting NEWSWATCH
    - ✓ And finally, F-135, the new “Membership” brochure or F-132 or F-133, the 1-page member applications with info on FEHBP insurance options, or on the ins and outs of the FERS retirement system.
- Include interview and photo of new members in your Chapter newsletter - and ask that person to pass it along to other active worker colleagues.
- Ask active workers who ARE Chapter members
  - To keep the NARFE magazine on their desks, and possibly a few brochures/member applications
  - To put NARFE magazines in their coffee areas
  - To post flyers on Chapter activities on their doors or in their work space (if permitted).
- Explore renting/creating a billboard - on travel routes to agencies in your Chapter area
- Consider holding some evening meetings

#### **I. DEVELOP A RECRUITMENT PLAN FOR YOUR CHAPTER**

- Have members focus on the non-NARFE activities in which they are involved
  - Identify the newsletters, etc. that they can scan for potential recruits.
- Conduct a role-playing session
  - Chapter members can gain practice in bringing up NARFE to identified prospects.
- Set a member goal (e.g. 5% of current membership, OR each one recruit one, etc.)
- At the end of the year, hold a prize drawing among all Chapter members who recruited another member.



## **J. MISCELLANEOUS**

- Create a blog/Google group, etc.
  - Opportunity for Membership Chairs to share ideas and success stories
  - Include photos of the Chapter Chairs - so we can get to know each other better.
- Give gift memberships - especially to any of your children who are Federal employees.
- Hold luncheon meetings where possible.
- Stress the importance of Dues Withholding.
- When a chapter member moves, alert the NARFE chapter in the area they are moving to, if known.
- Utilize NARFE HQ training offer for Web site design.

Please e-mail me if you have other ideas for recruiting new members

BJ Thomas McMillan, [bjthommc@kballero.com](mailto:bjthommc@kballero.com)