

## **Introduction**

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. 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. Getting new members takes enthusiasm, creativity, determination, and a very good plan.

This manual 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.

## **THIS MANUAL IS NOT SET IN STONE AND CAN BE ADAPTED TO YOUR CLUB'S SPECIFIC NEEDS!**

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

## **PLANNING A ONE-TIME EVENT**

Recruiting new members should be an ongoing activity. However, some clubs may choose to focus on a single event to invite interested women to learn about the club and GFWC. Ask every member to provide contact information for at least one 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 who is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about GFWC and your club must be selected from your club members. The Club Membership Recruitment Committee Chairman can function as a "coach" and coordinator, offering encouragement and advice.

## **Qualities of a Club Membership Recruitment Committee Chairman should be:**

- Organized, 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, efficient, enthusiastic and motivated
- Knowledgeable and positive about the club and 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 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. Your club might also consider applying for the 2020-2021 GFWC Membership Grant. GFWC offers \$50 grants for club member recruitment programs four times annually and \$100 grants for district and State Federation new club-building programs on a rolling basis.

**Who are you trying to recruit to your club?** –Ask each member to individually contact friends/family/co-workers/anyone they think would

enjoy being part of your club. Have a team member contact past members, as their life situation may have changed and they are now able to come back to the club.

**How to get the word out** – If your recruiting event is public, utilize social media to get the word out. Post to your community’s Instagram and Facebook page. 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 to 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, paint parties, 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 cleanup 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 perfectly. What about the stay at home moms? How about right after car-pool drop off in the morning by hosting a “coffee” break event. Whatever is decided, remember the timeframe should be reflective of when many club events and meetings may be scheduled.

### **Next is time to send out the invitations!**

Be sure to get everyone involved in sending out or personally delivering the invitations. You may want to use an E-vite program vs. mailing invitations to cut down on your cost. Be sure to include the following information:

- 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 Promote 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, community participation, 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, display that too! Anything that tells the story of your club!

### **Refreshments**

Everyone loves to EAT! Enlist the members of your club to provide the refreshments (finger foods are better for mingling!). 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 for those who attended. Make sure you get a name, address, email address, and cell phone number 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. You may choose to provide financial information such as 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 (available under GFWC Resources)
- 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 to write a personal note thanking each 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.
- It's essential that each new member is assigned a long-standing 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 periodically to answer any questions they may have but don't want to ask in front of the full club. This can be as simple as a quick email or phone call.

- Be sure to suggest that the new member sign up for 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!

The principles outlined above are relevant whenever and however your club plans to recruit new members. 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.

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!

### **(Appendix A) SAMPLE INVITATION**

Dear Tammy Smith,

Please join us at the (GFWC Woman's Club of Anytown) (use your theme here, for example, 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 our community. 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

## *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.
- Determine committee responsibilities and assign tasks: 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 (if applicable): 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 tasks listed above.
- Submit article about recruitment event to include in club newsletter.

### **TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT:**

- Report at a general club meeting about the recruitment event; motivate members to become involved, submit names and attend.
- Include another article in club newsletter.
- Review status of all tasks.

### **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.
- Continue to follow up on task resolution.

### **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!!!!