



GFWC OF NORTH CAROLINA

MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

Why Do Members Join?

Knowing why people join a volunteer organization like GFWC-NC is essential to knowing how to keep them in our organization. There are almost as many reasons to join a club as there are members. Meeting their expectations plays a major role in retaining members. Look over the following list and think about how your club and district recognizes and responds to the following motives for membership:

- ❖ *Make Friends*
- ❖ *Feel Needed*
- ❖ *Be Appreciated*
- ❖ *To Make an Impact*
- ❖ *Gain Leadership Skills*
- ❖ *Contribute to Greater Good*
- ❖ *Have Fun*
- ❖ *Explore a Career*
- ❖ *Family Tradition*
- ❖ *Part of a Team*
- ❖ *Civic Duty*

How are you doing? The list represents just a few reasons why some of your members belong. Is your club meeting the needs of these members?

Making Members Feel Special from the Start

- ❖ Hold a special initiation/induction ceremony for new members.
- ❖ Present new members with a GFWC member pin, or state pin.
- ❖ Assign a “big sister” or mentor to new members who will make sure the new member is properly introduced to everyone, can answer her questions and explain unique club traditions.
- ❖ Nametags - everyone should wear one.
- ❖ For a large “class” of new members, encourage them to have their own service project, with an experienced member to provide guidance and help when asked.
- ❖ Find out what skills/talents/abilities the new member has and is willing to use and or share.
- ❖ Carpool to meetings. Sometimes the ride to and from the meeting can be a wonderful membership mixer and brain storming session.
- ❖ Assign new members to committees that are relevant to their interests.
- ❖ Share the GFWC Clubwoman magazine and the GFWC-NC Clubwoman magazine with new members and explain how the clubs fit into the district/state/region and internationally with GFWC.

Encourage Flexibility in Your Club

There is one thing we know there is just too little of—time. One of the most common reasons why a member leaves a club is lack of time. Respect your members’ time and they are more likely to make GFWC a permanent fixture in their lives.

- ❖ Streamline meetings to ensure they are as convenient and productive as possible to meet the needs and diversity of your club members.
- ❖ Consider the time commitments of members and schedule meetings that accommodate as many members as possible.
- ❖ Email or mail the minutes and treasurer’s report prior to the meeting, allowing time for members to review for corrections or additions at home.
- ❖ Make an agenda and stick to it.
- ❖ Keep reports brief and pertinent.
- ❖ Two hours is about the right time frame for a meeting.
- ❖ Allow time for discussion, but set a time limit on debate.
- ❖ Provide time either before or after the scheduled meeting for socializing and refreshments.
- ❖ Include programs that are interesting, stimulating, and short.

Something to Think About

- ❖ Encourage members to remember why they joined the club in the first place, what they have enjoyed about their membership and provide a “safe” opportunity to give constructive criticism.
- ❖ Most members will say they came to a meeting because they were asked or invited.
- ❖ Hold an orientation program for all members, emphasizing positive aspects of Federation. Show the GFWC-NC Membership DVD.
- ❖ Offer club members a chance for personal growth as well as providing community services.
- ❖ Visit a nearby club to observe how other clubs function.
- ❖ Attend district or state meetings and bring back new information to share with club members.

GFWC-NC: Dedicated To Community Improvement Through Volunteer Service. Since 1902

GFWC of North Carolina
Mailing Address: 7474 Creedmoor Road, #310, Raleigh, NC 27613

www.gfwcnc.org
Email: hq@gfwcnc.org



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Membership Retention

“Volunteers don't necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”

Things to Remember

Retaining members is everyone's responsibility: officers, board members, committee chairmen, and members at every level. Membership retention depends on new and long time members...

- ❖ Knowing the mission and goals of the club, state federation and GFWC
- ❖ Understanding that participation is good for the community and good for them
- ❖ Having interesting and appropriate responsibilities
- ❖ Feeling welcome and appreciated
- ❖ Maintaining a positive attitude
- ❖ HAVING FUN!

Recognition: Little Things Mean a Lot

Say Thank You:

- ❖ “Great job; you made us all look good.”
- ❖ “Your efforts are really making a difference”
- ❖ “You are an inspiration to us all”
- ❖ “Your help is much appreciated”
- ❖ “We couldn't have done it without you”
- ❖ “You are a great team player, and the team thanks you”

Assign an officer to call “no shows” or inactive members once a month to let them know they were missed and keep them informed with what is going on. Ask if they need a ride to the meetings and offer to give them one. Let members know that they are missed when they aren't there.

Recognition:

- ❖ Recognize and reward those members of your club who have been retained. Hold an end of the year celebration, or recognize them as new officers are installed.
- ❖ Recognize and reward members who contribute to the well-being of the club/district/state. Everyone loves to know that her efforts are appreciated. Certificates, flowers, or prizes are just a few of the ways to thank and acknowledge a job well done, a positive attitude or even a perfect record of attendance.

Honor those members who have belonged for “milestone years” 5, 10, 25, 50!

- ❖ GFWC offers a silver 25 year pin, and a Gold 50 year pin. GFWC offers the Gold 50 year pin free of charge; all other pins are available through GFWC.
- ❖ GFWC-NC also allows clubs and families to pay tribute to members with Honorary Lifetime Memberships. 25-year Members' names may also be submitted to the GFWC-NC President-elect for Silver certificate recognition.

Keeping It All Together

- ❖ Encourage attendance at district and state meetings where important program and Federation information is shared. Be sure to bring back and share with members what you learn.
- ❖ Initiate alternative times and dates for club and district meetings to maximize opportunities for members and clubs to participate and attend.
- ❖ Provide a variety of GFWC membership, leadership, or program “how to” materials that can be distributed to club/district/state chairmen. Most chairmen love to receive handouts that can make their job easier or solve their problems.
- ❖ Encourage leadership training Leadership is vital to recruiting and retaining members. Encouraging, preparing and training potential leaders keeps members engaged and invested in the future of the club/district/state.
- ❖ Celebrate Federation Day and let the community know what your club has accomplished as well as GFWC-NC and GFWC.



The General Federation of Women's Clubs of North Carolina, Inc. (GFWC-NC) is a volunteer organization consisting of over 150 clubs and approximately 4,000 members in North Carolina. Club members support the community through volunteer service.

Information in this brochure compiled from GFWC's “How to Retain GFWC Club Members”

“They will never care how much we know until they know how much we care”