

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET

### RECRUITING YOUNGER MEMBERS

<b>Program Category:</b>	Younger Members
<b>Region Specific?</b>	No
<b>Date Developed:</b>	April 2005
<b>Description:</b>	<p>This may be more of a membership topic, but it is interrelated to programming so I am including it here. After all once you recruit younger members it will be the programming in whatever form that keeps them. First, as I am sure you all understand by experience there is no magic answer on how do we get younger members to join and stay? However, I will give you some ideas to think about that may help you and your branch in accomplishing this elusive feat. In addition to my thoughts on the topic many of these ideas come from the Membership Tool Kit which can be downloaded from Association's website if your branch does not already have this publication. Much of what is in the tool kit comes from a book by Cynthia D'Amour, <i>How to Turn Generation Me Into Active Members of Your Association</i>, with Generation Me being women age 28 to 35. AAUW defines younger members as those under 40.</p> <p>The tool kit states that prospective younger members are most interested in what Cynthia D'Amour refers to as WIIFM – what's in it for me? So that is what you need to answer in your recruiting strategies. D'Amour goes on to explain that people get involved in associations for three reasons, 1) professional/personal development – how can their membership in your association help them advance in their career, or how can the quality of their life be improved?, 2) contribution to the “greater good” – how can they make a difference to causes/issues they feel passionate about by being a member?, and 3) belonging to a “community” – people that want to network, have fun and build lasting quality relationships. For younger members the first two would seem to be more important.</p> <p>Your job is to offer these opportunities to prospective members from a programming perspective. For professional/personal development you could consider offering programs on topics such as organizational skills, leadership training, time management, creative careers, balancing family and career, networking skills, how to break through the glass ceiling etc. Creating programs for contribution to the “greater good” is one of the easier topics to deal with since that is the foundation on which our organization is based. These program topics could include <b>international issues</b> such as trafficking of women and girls and third world children's health needs; <b>legal advocacy fund topics</b> such as gender bias in granting tenure, sexual harassment, title IX cases; <b>politics</b> such as a presenter/discussion of The White House Project a group dedicated to electing a woman to the presidency in the US, the ERA, voter education, political forums; <b>education</b> such as the No Child Left Behind Act, school vouchers, bullying in schools, interacting with school children on projects; <b>social</b> such as helping women/children in need in your community, mentoring young women, women's health issues and so on. As far as belonging to a “community” these would be the more lighthearted, fun programs such as women's history programs, cultural celebrations, etc.</p> <p>You may notice that these suggestions are not limited to the branch meeting format of programs but include topics that may fit community programs such as Sister-to-Sister Summits, Woman-to-Woman Summits, Voter Education Campaigns, or branch projects such as Art Goes to School, Write Read Write, and a whole host of others. D'Amour emphasizes that prospective younger members need to be sold over and over on why they should invest their time being involved in your association activities.</p>

	<p>This is where your branch needs to develop a good marketing strategy. There are some helpful tools for this marketing you could utilize. One would be written materials in the form of an informative pamphlet of what your branch does and how as members they could contribute. Since younger women are usually frequent users of computers a branch website could be quite useful. Association website has a Tools and Guides section in the Member Center for guidelines on developing a “dynamic, compelling”. The Membership tool kit recommends a website should include a prominent “join” button, description of the contributions your branch makes to the local community, leadership opportunities, and a current schedule of events among other things. In preparing your marketing materials you may want to unofficially poll younger women and ask them “What would make you consider joining our branch? What kinds of activities would get you excited about our branch? Then target these points.</p> <p>D’Amour also notes that you may need to be creative with the time you ask of members. If members can only commit an hour a month and can’t attend meetings be receptive to that, create volunteer opportunities that can be done at your meeting and require no extra time, etc.</p> <p>There are suggestions for how to turn a “maybe” into a “yes” in the tool kit as well. They provide possible counter points to the statements “I’m not interested in women’s issues”, “I’m already committed to another women’s organization”, “I have other commitments on meeting nights”, “I’m too busy- especially with my work”, “I’m just out of college and feel too young for the group”, “AAUW dues are too high”, etc.</p> <p>If you are able to create marketing tools, where do you seek out these younger members? You will know your community better than anyone so this is a question you will need to brainstorm about and be creative, but some possibilities could be – local large industries often have a company women’s group that you may be able to make a presentation to or at least provide some information to their human resources, some may even have a newsletter that they would allow you to advertise your branch in; Home and School Associations/Parent Teacher Organizations meetings may give you some time to speak to what is frequently a female majority audience; pre-schools may allow distribution of your materials to families – there are many stay at home Moms looking for something outside of child care to enrich their lives; temporary employment agencies/recruiters may allow posting of information from your branch; other women’s groups such as the League of Women Voters, chapters of the Pennsylvania Commission for Women – the danger here of course is they are too busy to join another organization, local college message boards, and so on. A good source for prospective younger members suggested by the toolkit would be seeking out current and past Educational Foundation fellowships and grant recipients in your area. Invite them to make a presentation at a branch meeting, work to publicize the event to younger women, and then lobby the advantages of being a member to the presenter as well as the audience. Association website has a Directory of Fellowships, Grants, and Award Recipients published each fall to identify new fellows studying in your area and for past recipients you can contact the EF to obtain contact information.</p> <p>To make any recruiting effort effective you must be armed with written and verbal “ammunition” so be well prepared before starting this undertaking. It is a lot of hard work but the result can be well worth it. If you feel passionate about AAUW and its mission, share that passion and contribute to the future of AAUW.</p>
<b>Resources:</b>	<p>AAUW Membership Tool Kit</p> <p>How to Turn Generation Me Into Active Member of Your Association by Cynthia D’Amour</p>
<b>For Further Information:</b>	<p>AAUW-PA Program Vice President</p>

