



# MEMBERSHIP

## ADVANCEMENT PLAN

### Unity in Diversity

The General Federation of Women’s Clubs is proudly represented in thousands of communities around the world by dedicated volunteers who work to better the lives of others, make cities and towns better places to live, and extend the hand of friendship to those near and far. We are individuals of diverse talents, interests, and backgrounds united by a dedication to community improvement through volunteer service.

GFWC offers a network of support for 80,000 clubwomen who volunteer on a local, state, national, and international level. Working together, we constitute a powerful, service-oriented organization that encourages volunteerism through training and coaching, leadership opportunities, personal enrichment, and many other benefits. Various GFWC resources, from members-only materials to legislative alerts, support individuals and clubs in their volunteer efforts.

The many benefits of belonging to GFWC include:

- **STRENGTH IN UNITY.** GFWC members strengthen their voice in shaping public issues and policy through the combined efforts of women serving in their club, District, State Federation, Region, or at the national level.
- **SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.** GFWC offers members a network of women with similar interests and concerns. Fun, fellowship, and lasting friendships are a large part of the GFWC experience.
- **LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.** Knowledge and experience acquired through GFWC volunteer training and community service can enhance a personal resume and open the door to new career or personal opportunities. Or, prompt new academic pursuits and success in a wide variety of fields.
- **A VARIED VOLUNTEER MENU.** GFWC offers many national resources to help clubs plan and create community service projects in the diverse areas of Arts and Culture, Civic Engagement and Outreach, Education and Libraries, Environment, and Health and Wellness. GFWC also supports Special Programs that advance Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention and encourages members to become Advocates for Children.
- **HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.** Studies show that the personal satisfaction that comes from making a positive difference helps volunteers live longer, function better, suffer fewer ills, and enjoy life to the fullest.



### 2020-2022 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

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## **MARKETING GFWC MEMBERSHIP**

The more you TELL, the more you SELL, so tell the benefits of GFWC membership whenever you can. Assure a prospective member that her experience will be rewarding, challenging, and stimulating. Bring GFWC and club promotional materials to all projects and events. Promote membership by wearing GFWC emblematic apparel, pins, and buttons.

### **DEVELOP AN “ELEVATOR SPEECH”**

An “elevator speech” is a brief personal statement about something that is meaningful to you, which can be presented in 30 seconds—about the length of the average elevator ride. Chance encounters at grocery stores, coffee shops, community events, and social gatherings are often great opportunities to share your enthusiasm for GFWC with a potential member, but you must be prepared. Even when more time is available, boiling down your passion for GFWC into just a sentence or two is a great way to discern and recognize the value of your membership.

### **SAMPLE ELEVATOR SPEECHES**

I am a member of GFWC—the General Federation of Women’s Clubs—a long-standing and productive women’s volunteer organization. We are committed to bettering our local communities and those around the world, and we work to improve the lives of women and their families. GFWC volunteers get a lot of joy from working together and helping others. Here, let me give you one of my cards. Call me, I would love to tell you more and invite you to get involved in some of our projects.

GFWC was one of the first volunteer organizations founded by women, and we continue to serve individuals and communities through a wide variety of service projects. Our current national emphasis is Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention. Would you like to learn more? Let me have your number so I can invite you to our next meeting.

Thanks for asking about my pin! GFWC is a sisterhood of women in clubs across the country who support their communities and like to help others. We have a good time doing it, too. Would you like to come to our next lunch and learn? We will be discussing local gardens, the importance of pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, and their role in healthy, vibrant gardens.

I am a member of a GFWC Junior Club, an organization with members across the country. Our club meets once a month, except in summer, and we work primarily on children’s issues, but we do all kinds of things. One of my favorite projects is our annual Kentucky Derby Party, a fundraiser for Shot@Life, which ensures children around the world have access to vaccines. You would be great on our decorations committee! Here is my card, look at the GFWC website and give me a call.

### **PROMOTE THE VALUE OF GFWC**

Do you realize that your annual GFWC membership dues are just \$15 a year? Many people spend that much money for a movie and popcorn, or a music CD, without a second thought. Your dues provide:

- The GFWC Club Manual, which contains information and resources strengthening your club’s activities in Communications and Public Relations, Fundraising and Development, Leadership, Legislation/Public Policy, Membership, and the Women’s History and Resource Center.
- The Community Service Programs, which offer tools for developing and executing action plans to create effective projects in Arts and Culture, Civic Engagement and Outreach, Education and Libraries, Environment, and Health and Wellness, and in our two Special Programs—the Signature Program: Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention, and the Juniors’ Special Program: Advocates for Children.
- The GFWC Awards, Contests, and Grants, which provide recognition and/or financial rewards to GFWC members, clubs, and State Federations.
- The GFWC Communication Tools, which offer up-to-date information to keep members and clubs informed and connected:
  - ø GFWC’s website ([www.GFWC.org](http://www.GFWC.org)) is our cornerstone communication channel that provides

- organizational history and current information, notice of upcoming events, member and club highlights, GFWC Marketplace access, and various resource and program materials.
- ∅ *GFWC Clubwoman Magazine*, our quarterly glossy magazine, highlights seasonal happenings and events, and provides club information and support, including everything from administrative details to Affiliate Organization initiatives.
  - ∅ *News & Notes*, GFWC's weekly e-newsletter, provides timely information straight to your inbox, with highlights of various programs, member and club news, plus GFWC Marketplace sales. Look for a link to the GFWC Blog, for an inside peek at many successful club projects.
  - ∅ GFWC Facebook provides daily updates on historic commemorations and current events. Join the conversation, connect with fellow members, and be the first to know about special offers. Go to [www.Facebook.com/GFWCMembers](http://www.Facebook.com/GFWCMembers) to get started.
  - ∅ Follow @GFWCHQ on Twitter ([www.Twitter.com](http://www.Twitter.com)) for up-to-the minute news from GFWC on events, programs, and Affiliate Organizations.
- The GFWC Member Center, at [www.GFWC.org/Membership](http://www.GFWC.org/Membership), contains resources to help members and clubs reap the rewards of GFWC's dynamic network of community volunteers, including:
    - ∅ Membership Discounts with a listing of companies offering special discounts, such as 80% savings on printing at Office Depot/Office Max.
    - ∅ A Mediators Program that offers specialized, confidential assistance with difficult issues related to club members and/or club development.
    - ∅ A Top Projects list from the last year of Award Entries to stimulate new ideas and activities in clubs.
  - The GFWC Women's History and Resource Center provides members with access to GFWC Headquarters and its archives through tours, exhibits, publications, and an interactive history timeline on the GFWC website at [www.GFWC.org/what-we-do/whrc](http://www.GFWC.org/what-we-do/whrc). The GFWC WHRC publishes a quarterly newsletter that all members can subscribe to via the GFWC Member Portal. GFWC affinity programs offer a variety of member benefits and discounts, including travel and tour opportunities, club liability and D&O insurance, a GFWC affinity credit card, and the ability to direct up to 0.05% of your online shopping through Amazon.com to GFWC.

Add benefits and rewards to this list that are specific to your club. Take time at a meeting to have members share their own stories about membership in the club and how GFWC has been a valuable life resource for them. Personal anecdotes are the best way to effectively communicate the benefits of belonging to GFWC.

### **SUBSCRIBE**

You can subscribe to *GFWC Clubwoman Magazine* at the GFWC Marketplace or by contacting GFWC Headquarters at 1-202-347-3168. Sign up for your complimentary subscription to *News & Notes* through the Member Portal.

### **RETENTION**

After a summer break, many clubs renew their work in August or September. This is an opportune time to strengthen core groups of members.

Start the new club year right by surveying members. For example, you can ask the club officers to give a list of their "Wells and Betters." This includes what they thought the club did well over the past year and what they believe the club could do better. When you are honest with yourselves on your weaknesses, you can develop new approaches, highlight your strengths, and enjoy a renewed sense of purpose and focus.

### **ENGAGE YOUR MEMBERS**

A stable core of experienced members is the backbone of every club. New members can lean on and learn from members who have an institutional memory and history. Working together, experienced members and new members can function like one healthy body—standing tall, moving forward, and making strides toward accomplishing your club's goals. Members who actively participate in club work are more likely to want to continue their membership.

To engage your members, your club should ensure an atmosphere of fellowship and friendship and provide varied opportunities for them to exercise their talents and abilities. Encouraging involvement from both longstanding and new members not only capitalizes on members' creativity, skills, and energy but also increases their commitment and allegiance. Members need to feel useful and have a continuing reason to belong. Consider subsidizing a trip to a convention or conference to help members connect with other members and the Federation. Raffles or fundraisers could produce the revenue to offset the cost.

Find ways to use the talents of ALL members and engage every member in club projects to avoid conflict. Ask for and try to implement member suggestions to keep your club happy, strong, and growing.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR ENGAGING MEMBERS**

Each club and community are unique. Adopt or adapt these suggestions to revitalize and engage your members:

- Encourage member input through a suggestion box, surveys, one-on-one calls, or by having an informal chat session at a club meeting.
- Establish and maintain an effective system of communicating with members:
  - ∅ Institute a telephone tree or email list to remind members of regular meetings and special events.
  - ∅ Create a club newsletter, including a Club President's Message, news about recent program/project successes, upcoming club events, member highlights, and other pertinent information, such as notices from the State Federation, Region, and GFWC.
- Encourage attendance at District, State Federation, Region, and national GFWC events, to learn about important program information and other news. Club leaders should stress that all members are welcome and encouraged to attend GFWC meetings.
- Keep club projects fresh, relevant, and interesting. When members begin to tire of a project, it is time to make a change.
- Initiate brainstorming sessions to give all members a voice in club activities and promote a sense of club ownership.
- Keep a tab on member satisfaction with periodic surveys. Individual interests change with time as members grow and evolve.
- Review the guide "How to Retain GFWC Club Members," which can be obtained from GFWC, for more ideas.

### **CONDUCT A GFWC FEDERATION REFRESHER**

Research shows a positive program on the benefits of belonging to GFWC can increase a club's overall retention rate. This program or "Federation Refresher" is essential for instilling a sense of pride and purpose in both new and seasoned members. GFWC continually looks for new ways to improve its benefits and services to members. All members should be knowledgeable about GFWC, which offers many programs designed to keep members informed and connected. In any refresher, include information on why Unity in Diversity was chosen as the GFWC motto and why it is as important today as it was when it was adopted at the first GFWC Convention.

### **ENCOURAGE FLEXIBILITY IN YOUR CLUB**

If there is one thing that we all have too little of, it is time. Lack of time is one of the most common reasons that clubs lose members. Respect the limits of your members' time by being flexible and efficient, and they will be more likely to make GFWC a permanent fixture in their lives.

- Streamline meetings to ensure they are as convenient and productive as possible and ensure they meet the needs and diversity of club members.
- Schedule meetings at a time that accommodates as many members as possible or consider a “Morning Division” and “Evening Division.”
- Email the Treasurer’s Report and minutes of the past meeting prior to a regular meeting so they can be reviewed in advance for corrections and/or additions.
- Make an agenda and stick to it. Typically, two hours should be adequate for a full meeting.
- Keep reports brief and to the point by sharing lengthy program considerations and project and personal news in the club newsletter.
- Allow time for discussion but set a time limit on debate.
- Ensure an outside speaker’s topic will be interesting and relevant to the club’s goals. Inform the speaker of the time limit and be sure it is respected.
- Schedule a period of social time with refreshments before or after the business meeting, so members can attend as their time allows.
- Consider scheduling some social opportunities outside of meeting times. These opportunities can be on a regular basis, like a “Morning Moms” group that meets once or twice a month for coffee after dropping children off at school, or intermittent, such as an impromptu lunch or after-work “wine down.” Or, invite members to start a yoga group, book club, or other common-interest activity.

Remember rules, regulations, requirements, and traditions are not set in stone. Parliamentary procedure outlines a set of rules to assist a club in best practices, but those rules are not meant to stifle the fun and enthusiasm of your club. Routinely review club bylaws and standing rules and amend those that no longer serve the club or member concerns, situations, and/or interests. In doing so, pay special attention to those that require attendance at a certain number of meetings or call for a set number of volunteer hours of service.

### **MAKE IT EASY TO RENEW**

When it is time to pay club dues, make the process as easy as possible for members. Consider setting aside a time before or after a meeting or sending an email notice or invoice, in addition to the typical newsletter reminder. Provide a breakdown of annual dues (\$15 GFWC, plus state and club dues), so members understand what their money supports.

If a member is delinquent, contact them discreetly. Family illness, job layoff, or other unfortunate circumstances might be a limiting factor. Perhaps a payment plan can be suggested, or the club can establish a fund for such purposes.

### **TIPS FOR CONNECTING MEMBERS WITH GFWC**

Create one-on-one connections with GFWC:

- Encourage attendance at District, State Federation, Region, and GFWC meetings. Plan to go to every GFWC meeting with a full car! Make every trip an adventure.
- Invite a State Federation Officer or another GFWC leader to speak at a club meeting. Use the speaker’s area of expertise as the theme for meeting.

Celebrate GFWC:

- Celebrate GFWC Federation Day on April 24 by organizing and conducting a fun community service project. Wear GFWC emblematic apparel or wear **FEDERATION BLUE** (royal blue) so the color becomes associated with club events.
- Ask the mayor to designate April 24 as GFWC (insert name of your club) Day, to recognize the contributions your club has made to the local community.
- Invite television and newspaper reporters to your club’s major community service events. Be ready with stories and facts about the impact of your club.

## **RECOGNIZING AND REWARDING MEMBERS**

Members are more likely to remain enthusiastic about a club that has a positive and fun outlook. Members do not join a club to be recognized, but everyone needs and appreciates affirmation. Positive words can mean a lot. Honor and celebrate your members. Look for an opportunity, such as after a big project or fundraiser, to have an awards ceremony with some funny certificates such as the “Duct Tape Award,” for the member who can fix anything and the “Little Miss Sunshine Award,” to the member who is always smiling. Share a laugh and make them feel special at the same time.

### **2020–2022 INITIATIVE**

**Motivational Monday—At the start of each week write a note, send an email, or post a comment on social media using #IAmGFWC to recognize a clubwoman who has done something remarkable, such as chaired a successful project, shared a great idea, organized a meal for a sick member, provided encouragement when someone needed a boost, or has just been their usual terrific self. Be mindful of the many benefits we all receive from our membership and value the work that others do to make things go smoothly. Give a pat on the back on Motivational Monday and let others know you noticed!**

## **RECOGNIZE YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP**

You can never say thank you enough! Let members know how grateful you are by celebrating their GFWC service with a GFWC membership recognition pin:

- GFWC Gold Pins are awarded by GFWC to 50-year members. The member’s club president must request the Gold Pin, which is free of charge, by filling out a request form available at [www.GFWC.org](http://www.GFWC.org). If State Federation and District leaders also want to recognize long-term members at their meetings, they may request information about recent Gold Pin recipients in their area from GFWC Membership Services at [GFWC@GFWC.org](mailto:GFWC@GFWC.org).
- GFWC Silver Pins, which recognize 25-year members, may be purchased through the GFWC Marketplace.
- Other pins available for purchase from the GFWC Marketplace include five-year, 10-year, 15-year, 20-year, 30-year, 35-year, 40-year, 45-year, 55-year, 60-year, 65-year, and 70-year pins.

## **CELEBRATE CLUB ANNIVERSARIES**

Each year provides an opportunity to celebrate your club’s anniversary, which can be a very meaningful time for all members. Whether it is five or 50 years since the founding of your club, consider honoring one member each year with a “GFWC Clubwoman of the Year” award for their dedication and service. You can also honor a new member with a “GFWC Rookie of the Year” award for efforts to get involved with projects.

GFWC acknowledges milestone club anniversaries with a certificate, letter from the GFWC International President, and recognition on social media. GFWC defines milestone anniversaries as 25, 50, 60, 70, and every five years thereafter. Anniversary dates are based on the date when the club joined GFWC, not the date when the club was founded. GFWC was founded in 1890. Therefore, 1890 would be the earliest year used to calculate an anniversary, even when a club had been founded prior to that time.

To request recognition of a club’s milestone anniversary, contact [GFWC@GFWC.org](mailto:GFWC@GFWC.org) or mail your request to GFWC Membership Services, 1734 N Street NW, Washington, DC 20036, ATTN: Anniversaries. Please allow a minimum of 3–4 weeks to process your certificate request. The request must include:

- Complete name of the club.
- Anniversary year being celebrated (25, 50, 60, 70, and every five years thereafter).
- Date (year and month, if possible) when your club federated with GFWC.
- Name and address of current club president.
- Name and address where certificate and letter should be sent.
- Club’s deadline for receiving the anniversary certificate.

## RECRUITING MEMBERS

Communities across the country and around the globe benefit from the work of GFWC club members every day. One of the most important goals we have is to continue to move forward. New members can be found everywhere we go, the key is to share GFWC with everyone!

During recruiting season, ask every member to bring a friend to your prospective-member event or first club meeting, reaching out to women from various parts of the community. Reward members for bringing in new members—make a game of it! For example, every member who brings a guest to a meeting could receive a free ticket for the next month's raffle. If the guest joins as a member, her host gets five free tickets. Ensure the raffle item is something everyone will want, such as a gift certificate for the mall or a popular restaurant. Regardless of the outcome, recognize all members who participate in recruitment.

Neighbors, friends, co-workers, and relatives all deserve the chance to be a part of GFWC, because GFWC has, does, and will continue to change lives and communities for the better. Recruiting is vital to GFWC success, so it is important that we invite and encourage women to join our clubs.

Recruiting and welcoming new members is an ongoing process that requires the focus and commitment of everyone. The most important aspect of recruitment is the determination to succeed. Without dedication and follow through, no recruitment campaign will be as successful as it could be. The process must have the full support of every club member and be viewed as a shared responsibility.

### PARTICIPATE IN GFWC'S "HATS OFF TO MEMBERSHIP" RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

Recruitment is a year-round process and the campaigns and reporting of new members reflect this fact. A club that recruits three new members during each season will end the year with 12 new members! Clubs can plan creative membership recruitment campaigns and events around the many national awareness issues and commemoration days that are aligned with GFWC Special Programs and Community Service Programs. The possibilities are endless when we look for diversity.

Always include Federation facts, food, and fun at any recruitment event! Clubs that are successful in securing three new members from their recruiting efforts will be featured in *News & Notes*. Send the name of the recruiter and the contact information of the new active, dues-paying members to your State Membership Chairman. Only this Chairman can order the recognition pins and circles from GFWC Headquarters. Questions about GFWC Star Recruitment Pins and Circles should be directed to your State Membership Chairman. Clubs should maintain accurate recruiting records that can be passed from one Administration to the next.



### "HATS OFF TO MEMBERSHIP" RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

Join GFWC clubs nationwide in our popular membership recruitment campaign



June, July, and August

**RETENTION**  
**"Staying in the Game"**  
Report due September 1



September, October, and November

**RECRUITMENT**  
**"EXPLORING for NEW MEMBERS"**  
Report due December 1



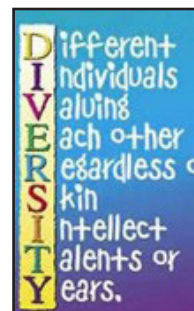
December, January, and February

**MENTORING**  
**"BUILDING the CONNECTION"**  
Report due March 1



March, April, and May

**RECOGNITION**  
**"Celebrating the Victories"**  
Report due June 1



### **SET GOALS FOR GROWTH**

If your club starts a new year with a decrease in members, recruit to restore your numbers. Set a goal for growth! Consider asking committed members to help increase GFWC membership by attaining three new members for the club each year.

Every member should have a personal goal:

- Individual members should invite at least one prospective member to a club meeting each year.
- Club presidents should aim for a net gain of three members each year.
- District Presidents should set a goal of one new club each Administration and share information and success stories to encourage other Districts.

### **IDENTIFY PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS**

Wherever you go, you are likely to meet someone who will be interested in your GFWC volunteer service. Prospective members are everywhere!

- At the office: Invite a co-worker who has expressed an interest in a project you are working on to accompany you to a club or project committee meeting. Keep her special interests in mind and point out where her talents could be helpful.
- At social gatherings: Neighbors, friends, friends of friends, and even former members are all people who might want to assist with the projects your club is doing. Follow-up with a phone call or email invite. Consider getting the Membership Chairman involved too.
- At community meetings: Women who volunteer or work with other groups, such as PTA or a garden club, or others who show an interest in community improvement, are also good prospects. Never hesitate to talk about the projects that our club is working on and ask them to lend a hand or get involved.
- At local schools: School administrators, teachers, and other parents who have benefited from your club's programs, projects, scholarships, and other initiatives are good candidates. Schools are also a great opportunity for recruiting Juniorette members or forming Juniorette clubs.

Think of other places and ways to find members. Reach out to diverse groups and explore options for working together. Share news about club events and projects through online services, such as "MeetUp," or on social media for friends and family to see. Consider partnering with other local organizations on a common cause. Wear your pin—you never know who might ask about GFWC.

### **PLAN A RECRUITMENT EVENT**

After identifying a list of prospective members, one of the most effective ways to connect them with your club is to host a recruitment event. There are many options for an event, from an afternoon social held in the home or garden of a member, to a quick and easy "mix and mingle" at a local restaurant or café. Many clubs are discovering that a hands-on-approach can be both fun and fruitful.

Research shows that clubs that plan relevant, stimulating, and meaningful projects that contribute to the growth of individuals and the community are the most successful at attracting new members. Consider looking at the GFWC Special Programs and Community Service Programs for ideas and then choosing a simple but poignant project to feature at a recruitment event. Here are a few ideas:

- Create homemade cards or write encouraging messages to deployed servicemen or local nursing home residents.
- Collect comfort items for a domestic violence shelter and invite the shelter's manager to offer thanks and provide a brief synopsis of the shelter's work.
- Ask members and invitees to donate a book and make no-sew tie pillows at the event to be contributed to a program for underserved children.



### **SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT EVENT TIPS**

Consider these tips before planning a recruitment event:

- Begin planning well in advance, at least three months before the event.
- Dedicate a club meeting to brainstorming for the guest list and ask members to bring lists of potential invitees.
- Consider holding award ceremonies in conjunction with the event, showing that the club appreciates and rewards participation.
- Keep the event short, informative, and interesting. Do not inundate guests with too much information.
- Choose a date and time that will appeal to your target audience, accommodating those who work or have childcare concerns.
- Select a venue that is easy to locate. Avoid crowded public areas.
- Provide the Membership Chairman's contact information for follow-up questions.
- Send invitations a month before the event, including the "when, where, and what," along with information on how to RSVP.
- Let invitees know they can bring a friend, which might make them more comfortable.
- Provide club members with the RSVP list prior to the event, so they know who will be there.
- Prepare by downloading and printing GFWC materials or order Living the Volunteer Spirit brochures from the GFWC Marketplace.
- Provide nametags for members and guests.
- Have a designated greeter to welcome guests at the door.
- Have all guests sign in and ask them to complete a Membership Profile (created by the club).
- Introduce each guest and ask them if they would like to say a few words.
- Begin and end on time. Have fun and create a welcoming environment.
- Ask invitees to join the club, if club bylaws allow.
- Follow up with each attendee after the event with a phone call, email, or handwritten note.

### **REFERRALS FROM HEADQUARTERS AND FACILITATING TRANSFERS**

The GFWC website is often visited by women interested in joining a volunteer community service organization. Typically, an email is received by GWC Membership Services. These potential members have already taken the first step in learning more about GFWC; they are already interested in information about clubs near their home. The hard part is done! Here is what happens next:

- When Membership Services receives an email inquiry, a return email is immediately sent, and the original email is forwarded to the State Membership Chairman.
- The State Membership Chairman (or Junior Membership Chairman, if appropriate) contacts the local club president and provides her with the prospective member's contact information.
- If your club is contacted, do not let this promising lead slip away. A quick phone call or email is all it takes to acknowledge the person's interest and provide an invitation to a club meeting or event.

Likewise, when a loyal member is relocating to a new community and must leave your club, help her contact GFWC Membership Services so she can connect with a GFWC club near her new location. It can be easy to put aside an effort to find a new club during a move, and once she becomes busy with new activities and commitments, a valued member could be lost.

### **CELEBRATE CLUB MEMBERS' RECRUITMENT SUCCESSES**

Star Recruitment Pins and Circles are incentive rewards for successful recruiters. The first five awards, recognizing those who have recruited five to 29 new members, are small star-shaped pins with a butterfly clasp and small chain that attaches to the stem of the GFWC Member Pin. Members who have recruited 30 or more members will be awarded a color circle to wear behind their star pins. Awards are cumulative and can cross Administrations. There are 10 levels:

- Recruiters earn a white star for five to nine new members.
- Recruiters earn a red star for 10 to 14 new members.
- Recruiters earn a blue star for 15 to 19 new members.
- Recruiters earn a silver star for 20 to 24 new members.
- Recruiters earn a gold star for 25 to 29 new members.
- Recruiters earn a white circle for 30 to 34 new members.
- Recruiters earn a red circle for 35-39 new members.
- Recruiters earn a blue circle for 40-44 new members.
- Recruiters earn a silver circle for 45-49 new members.
- Recruiters earn a gold circle for 50+ new members.

Send the names of your club's successful recruiters and the names and contact information of the new, active, dues-paying members to your State Membership Chairman. Only this Chairman can order Star Recruitment Pins and Circles.

### **WELCOMING AND MENTORING NEW MEMBERS**

#### **APPOINT A CLUB MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN**

While it is true that all members should be involved in the recruitment process, each club should have one person who is willing to step up and take the lead on membership efforts. Electing or appointing a Membership Chairman is an important step to recruiting new members and can make a world of difference to the future of your club. The Membership Chairman should be:

- Organized and efficient.
- Motivated and enthusiastic.
- Knowledgeable and positive about the club and GFWC.
- Comfortable speaking in public.
- Outgoing and happy to meet new people.
- Willing and able to delegate responsibility.

Engage new members by:

- Offering a ride to club and committee meetings and project sites.
- Organizing a seating plan, such as grouping by favorite color, to mix new and seasoned members.
- Conducting an icebreaker at the beginning of each meeting or several times a year.
- Inviting them to travel with you to a District or State Federation meeting.

Consider these suggestions for integrating new members into the club:

- Hold a special initiation or induction ceremony for new members and present them with a GFWC member pin. (GFWC Marketplace offers pins and a GFWC Ceremonies Guide.)
- Encourage a class of new members to plan and execute their own service project under the guidance of an experienced member.
- Find out what skills, talents, and abilities each new member offers and is willing to share (e.g. computer skills, artistic talents, knowledge of specific program or advancement areas, etc.).
- Teach new members about the club and GFWC. Host new member orientations, set up Big Sis/Little Sis or other mentoring programs, and welcome them to each meeting and encourage their participation in discussions and project activities.

### **GROUP ACTIVITY FOR AQUAINTING NEW AND SEASONED MEMBERS**

To retain members, everyone must be excited about the club and its opportunities for personal growth and friendships. Pairing experienced and new members to meet and share ideas and expectations is a good way to accomplish this task. Below are sample questions for a strategic “getting to know you” exercise, but think creatively and adjust them for your needs. Choose thought-provoking questions that will offer new ideas and goal-setting opportunities for the club.

Create groups of equal numbers of seasoned and new members and ask:

#### **SEASONED MEMBERS**

- If you could do last year again, what would you do differently?
- What advice do you have for new members?
- What club accomplishment(s) are you most proud of?
- What has GFWC membership added to your life?

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

- What would you like this club to mean to you a year from now?
- What ideas do you have for community service projects?
- What personal or professional accomplishment are you most proud of?
- What talents or interests do you want to share with the club?

Allow 15 minutes or more for small group discussions and then gather the groups together to share highlights. Typically, it is more effective for seasoned members to report first, followed by new members.

### **MENTORING NEW MEMBERS**

Mentoring is an effective way to encourage the involvement of new members. Clubs can designate mentors as “Federation Buddies” or “Big Sisters.” The job of a mentor is to explain the “who, what, and how” of club work, so new members understand the club’s structure, activities, affiliation with GFWC, and how each part relates to the others. To find mentors within the club, find enthusiastic, committed members who are interested in helping and supporting new members. Some basic qualifications for a mentor include:

- A high level of interest and knowledge about the club and GFWC.
- The willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and energy to be an effective mentor, including offering a GFWC Orientation before the club year begins.
- The openness to share some common interests, such as hobbies, family situations, business connections, etc.

Mentors can be assigned before or after a new member is welcomed into the club. Establish some guidelines, such as when the mentoring period begins, what it consists of, and how long it extends. Here are some basic tasks that are typically part of a mentoring relationship:

- Accompanying the new member to club meetings and other functions; making them feel at home.
- Introducing the new member to the club and individually to members.
- Staying in touch to encourage participation and engagement.
- Sharing information on the GFWC programs and special projects of the club.
- Explaining club rules, routines, customs, and traditions.
- Encouraging a connection to GFWC and attendance at District, State Federation, Region, and GFWC meetings and events.

**GET AN EARLY START ON RETAINING MEMBERS**

The process of retaining club members can never start too early. The addition of new members signals the start of the most critical part of any membership plan—new member retention. The first year is the most crucial in a GFWC clubwoman's membership. New members must immediately feel they can make a meaningful contribution to the club and community. By inviting and encouraging new members to be involved, you will build loyalty and commitment to the club's service projects and GFWC's mission. At the end of a new member's first year, let them know how much you appreciate their work and enthusiasm. Then, continue to build a solid foundation by asking for their feedback. Did the club meet their expectations? What did they enjoy most about their membership? How would they like to participate in the coming year?

**ESTABLISHING NEW GFWC CLUBS**

GFWC clubs and individual members are encouraged to look for opportunities to build a new GFWC club or federate an existing, non-GFWC club. The Membership Chairmen should be well-versed on the points of the GFWC resource, "How to Build a NEW GFWC Club." An existing GFWC club can sponsor any type of club. A Woman's Club might sponsor a collegiate club at a local university or a Juniette Club at the high school. A Junior Woman's Club might start a cyber club. Whatever the case, State Membership Chairmen and the GFWC Membership Services Department will be glad to provide assistance as needed.

**GFWC MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES**

Before federating a new GFWC club, it is important to understand the many GFWC membership categories specified in the GFWC Bylaws, as well as those defined by membership practices. The following types of clubs are recognized by GFWC.

**ACTIVE****WOMAN'S CLUBS**

These clubs are clubs that are not otherwise designated as Junior, Juniette, International, or National Clubs. This group constitutes the largest portion of active membership.

**JUNIOR WOMAN'S CLUBS**

These clubs hold active membership status and participate in the regular programs of GFWC. Junior Clubs vary in age range and not all states have Junior Clubs or membership categories. Some State Federations have an age cap on Junior membership, while others do not. At the GFWC level, Junior Clubs are represented by the GFWC Director of Junior Clubs, a nationally elected officer who serves as a member of the GFWC Executive Committee for one Administration and presides over all Junior functions at GFWC meetings.

**JUNIORETTE CLUBS**

These clubs are composed of young women in middle school or junior or senior high school with an age range from 12 to 18 years old. Juniette members can have voting privileges at the GFWC Annual Convention, are eligible for awards, and have state reporting responsibilities, like other active clubs. Juniette Clubs must be sponsored by a Woman's Club, Junior Woman's Club, District, or State Federation. It is recommended that each Juniette Club have a GFWC Advisor. For guidelines on establishing a Juniette Club, refer to the Juniette Club Handbook at [www.GFWC.org](http://www.GFWC.org).

**NATIONAL CLUBS**

These clubs are clubs that have a nationwide membership composed of Past Region Presidents, Past State Presidents, and Past State Directors of Junior Clubs from one Administration. The GFWC Booster Club, composed of friends and relatives of individual members, is also a National Club. All National Clubs pay per capita dues to GFWC.

**MEMBERSHIP****INTERNATIONAL CLUBS**

These clubs are composed members who reside outside the United States that pay per capita dues to GFWC.

**ASSOCIATE****NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

These organizations are national in scope and their work is germane to GFWC programs.

**INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES**

These clubs, federations, and associations are composed of members who reside outside the United States. Their work is germane to GFWC programs and they pay flat-rate dues. If you or someone in your club has an international connection, consider facilitating the creation of a GFWC International Affiliate Club. For assistance, contact GFWC Membership Services and the Chairman of the GFWC International Liaison Committee, who is responsible for maintaining communications and a strong bond with these clubs.

**SPECIAL INTEREST CLUBS**

Special Interest Clubs are active clubs paying per capita dues that function in different ways than traditional clubs.

**COLLEGIATE CLUBS**

Colleges and universities often face the same challenges as traditional communities. A collegiate club functions in the campus setting and provides service opportunities that accommodate the student lifestyle. Juniorettes who have graduated from high school can maintain their GFWC affiliation with a Collegiate Club.

**CYBER CLUBS**

This new type of club is designed for members who want to engage in volunteer service and membership opportunities but cannot attend meetings. Club business is transacted through electronic means. Some traditional clubs may even have "cyber members" who attend meetings via Skype, Zoom, or other electronic means.

**SINGLE ISSUE CLUBS**

GFWC offers a diverse array of Special and Community Service Programs, but clubs alone determine their work. It is okay for a club to work on a single issue.

**WORKPLACE CLUBS**

Members who work together already have something in common and often spend many hours together. They have the flexibility to meet during work breaks, such as at lunchtime or outside of work. Meetings scheduled just before or after work can be very convenient.

**RETIREMENT COMMUNITY CLUBS**

Retirement Communities often gather retirees together from various states. Connecting with other clubwomen offers a ready group of friends with common interests.

**IDENTIFY A CORE GROUP OF MEMBERS FOR A NEW CLUB**

Form a statewide New Club Formation Team to identify and evaluate possible locations for new clubs and facilitate the establishment of clubs across the state. Using a state map, mark cities and towns that have a club with a blue circle and those that do not with a red circle. Consider these ideas when looking at the areas you have mapped out:

- Identify communities within 25 miles of an existing club, for ease in sponsoring and mentoring a new group.
- Ask current members if they have relatives and friends in other communities that would be interested in joining and/or forming a new club.
- Look for a growing suburban area, which could have a higher proportion of new residents.
- Determine a location for a GFWC Special Interest Club, such as a school, university, workplace, or retirement community.
- Identify clubs that were once affiliated with GFWC that might reconnect. Create an opportunity to share information about new GFWC programs and remind them of the benefits of belonging.

## **THE FIRST MEETING**

The sponsoring club should help determine the location of the first club meeting. Look for an easy-to-find, neutral location, such as a library, community center, or museum. Avoid venues with religious and/or political connections. Choose a site that is appropriate for the expected number of attendees. A room that is too small will feel cramped, while one that is too large will make a great turnout seem paltry.

The first meeting is extremely important. Bring a variety of GFWC membership and promotional materials, such as brochures, program information, model bylaws, parliamentary briefs, and membership applications, plus some light refreshments. Make every effort to be organized, friendly, and cheerful. Many first-time attendees will be nervous, so greet everyone warmly and ensure they have a name tag. First impressions count!

Decide ahead of time who will chair the meeting—the State Membership Chairman, a State Federation Officer, someone from the sponsoring club, or an enthusiastic prospective member. Prepare an agenda to ensure all business is completed and provide a copy to each attendee. Appoint or elect a temporary secretary to take the minutes.

Keep it simple and be careful not to overwhelm attendees with too much information. Provide a few historical highlights of GFWC, give a brief introduction to the two Special Programs and five Community Service Programs, and stress the many benefits of belonging such as public service, personal growth and development, leadership opportunities, and valued friendships. Keep presentations short and allow time for questions and comments. Look for attendees who seem especially excited and make them part of the conversation so their enthusiasm spreads.

As the meeting concludes, ask the group if they are interested in forming a club. If the answer is yes, have them complete a membership application (with contact information) and set a day and time for a second meeting to organize the club structure. Send attendees home with print information about GFWC.

Follow up with attendees by phone, email, or hand-written notes. Encourage them to bring a friend or two to the next meeting and remind them of the day, time, and location.

## **THE SECOND MEETING**

Members of the New Club Formation Team and/or sponsoring club should attend the second meeting. Important business should include:

- Selecting a name. New clubs must include “GFWC” in their name. For example, GFWC (town name) Woman’s Club.
- Determining the club’s purpose and mission.
- Establishing the cost of annual dues. Dues should equal GFWC dues plus State Federation dues, plus District dues, plus an amount that will allow the club to run effectively.
- Deciding on officer positions. Traditionally, clubs have a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. If a club has less than 10 members a president and secretary will suffice. Also determine the term of office and how officers will be elected.
- Establishing a bylaws committee to review the GFWC model bylaws and then draft the club’s bylaws.
- Selecting a day, time, and location for the next meeting.

### **THE THIRD MEETING AND BEYOND**

There is no set formula for how the club building process should evolve. A new club can take many months or up to a year to stand on its own. Perseverance is more important than speed. Members of the New Club Formation Team or sponsoring club should continue to attend meetings to keep the momentum moving in the right direction, gradually transferring leadership responsibilities to the new members.

The third meeting is a good time to begin considering projects. Encourage members to share ideas and information in a brainstorming session. Interaction among members will increase their sense of belonging and ownership of the club. If needed, larger groups can break into smaller discussion groups, so each person has an opportunity to provide input. Once choices are narrowed, members should vote on one or two ideas that they want to act on.

### **INSTALLATION OF NEW CLUB OFFICERS**

When possible, the officers of new clubs should be installed with the assistance of the State President, District President, State Membership Chairman, and when called for, the State Director of Junior Clubs. This reinforces the club's connection to GFWC and lets new clubs and members know that they are important to GFWC.

Installations should be based on the duties of the officers as outlined in their club bylaws. Sample Induction Ceremonies can be found in the GFWC Ceremonies Guide, available from the GFWC Marketplace.

### **MAKING IT OFFICIAL—THE NEW CLUB APPLICATION AND CHARTER**

The New Club Formation Team and/or the sponsoring club should guide the officers of the new club through the application process, which is established through the State Federation. At the next state meeting, present a Charter to the new club president and other attending members and celebrate this success.

### **CONNECTING AND NURTURING NEW CLUBS**

Once a new club is formed, the State Federation should submit a New Club Form (available from [www.GFWC.org](http://www.GFWC.org)) to GFWC as soon as possible. The GFWC Membership Services Department will enter the new club's information in the GFWC database, send a welcome letter and certificate, and activate subscriptions to *GFWC Clubwoman Magazine* and other publications.

It is important to orient new clubs to the benefits of belonging to GFWC during this period and continuing efforts should be made to help and guide the club through its first years of GFWC membership but not dominate its management. As a new club builds its own style based on the interests of its members, it is okay if the club model is modified and other changes are made. With the tools to succeed, and the support of the State Federation and other clubs, the new club will begin to stand on its own and thrive.

### **GFWC JUNIORETTE MEMBERSHIP**

The GFWC Juniorette Membership category was introduced during the 1966-1968 Administration of GFWC International President Carolyn Pearce (GFWC Florida), who stated, "I can think of no better means of assuring the continuity of Federation work and influence for community good that we represent than by encouraging the formation of GFWC clubs for Juniorettes.

Mrs. Pearce noted the purpose of a Juniorette Club would be:

- To contribute to a meaningful community life.
- To become aware of community problems and how they could be met.
- To learn the pleasures and rewards of working with a group.

According to GFWC Bylaws, Juniorette Clubs are comprised of young students in middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools. Experience has shown, due to differences in interests, abilities, and maturity, that clubs are most successful when organized for either middle/junior high schools or high schools, but not both.

Federating a Juniorette Club requires a commitment from a sponsoring club, which must be an active GFWC Woman's Club or Junior Woman's Club in good standing, and a dedicated club advisor. It is required that sponsoring club members accompany Juniorette Club representatives to all levels of GFWC meetings, including State Federation, Region, and GFWC.

Potential Juniorette members include the children and grandchildren of GFWC club members, students who want to engage with others to satisfy a community service requirement for graduation, and those who enjoy volunteering and working in groups with others. Juniorette members can be recruited with the assistance of a school and/or teacher, in conjunction with an organization such as the PTA, with the help of other students, and through social media.

Juniorette Clubs are established by the same method as other GFWC clubs. However, the sponsoring club and advisor are key components of the club's formation, development, and success.

### **THE SPONSORING CLUB**

- Serves as a model of leadership, cooperation, and understanding.
- Works to ensure the progress and development of the Juniorette Club.
- Provides guidance and advice on an ongoing basis.
- Encourages the Juniorette Club to assume and practice as much autonomy as possible.
- Keeps avenues of communication open in both directions.
- Recognizes and supports that schoolwork, activities, and homework have priority.
- Assumes some (optional) financial obligations, including:
  - ∅ Providing seed money to organize the club and/or support club projects.
  - ∅ Paying for or providing the club's liability insurance.
  - ∅ Assisting the club in establishing an annual budget and opening a bank account.
  - ∅ Providing other financial assistance as needed.

### **THE CLUB ADVISOR**

- Attends all Juniorette meetings and activities.
- Knows about GFWC and the State Federation.
- Understands the principles of leadership and helps meetings run smoothly.
- Serves as a liaison between the sponsoring club and the Juniorette Club.
- Enjoys mentoring young people and is patient and flexible.

For additional information, contact GFWC Juniorette Chairman Trina Behbahani at [volunteertrina@gmail.com](mailto:volunteertrina@gmail.com).

### **GRANTS**

GFWC grants are available to clubs to assist with recruitment efforts and to Districts to assist with club-building efforts. Designated for each GFWC fiscal year, which begins July 1 and ends June 30, GFWC offers \$50 to clubs for member recruitment programs and \$100 to Districts for club-building programs.

To apply for a membership grant, contact [GFWC@GFWC.org](mailto:GFWC@GFWC.org) or call 202-347-3168 to receive an application. Return the form to GFWC at least 45 days prior to the event. GFWC will award no more than one grant per club or District per GFWC fiscal year.



**AWARDS**

GFWC recognizes State Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Membership Advancement Plan projects as follows:

- Certificate to one State Federation in each membership category
- \$50 award to one club in the nation for project creativity

Award winners will be determined by entries into the Award Program. Each State Federation may submit one State Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for Membership Advancement Plan projects. Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC.



Refer to the Awards section of the *Club Manual* for more information, including the Award Entry Cover Sheet guidelines.