



AAUWMI 2025 Branch Retention Plan

Every branch's Membership VP and committee should select and accomplish a couple of items on the list during the branch year, depending on the branch's culture. As branch members, we are "family." Retaining members is like keeping the family together!

1. Create a Welcoming and Inclusive Culture

- **Build a Sense of Belonging:**
 - Cultivate an atmosphere where all members feel valued and welcomed.
 - Host regular social gatherings, icebreakers, and team-building activities to help individuals form connections.
- **Celebrate Diversity:**
 - Ensure that diversity and inclusion are key components of your culture.
 - Acknowledge and celebrate cultural, demographic, and professional diversity within the branch.
- **Onboarding and Integration:**
 - Pair new members with a mentor or "buddy" to help them integrate into the branch and understand its workings.
 - Regularly check in with new members during their first few months to ensure they feel connected.

2. Recognize and Appreciate Contributions

- **Regular Acknowledgment:**
 - Publicly recognize members' contributions during meetings, events, or through newsletters and social media. Simple acknowledgments go a long way in making people feel appreciated.
- **Awards and Incentives:**
 - To spotlight exceptional efforts, implement a recognition program with awards such as "Volunteer of the Month" or "Outstanding Contribution."
- **Milestone Celebrations:**
 - Celebrate member anniversaries, birthdays, or significant milestones within the branch (e.g., 1 year of service). Host appreciation events or send personalized thank-you notes.

3. Provide Opportunities for Growth and Development

- **Leadership Opportunities:**
 - Offer positions on committees, boards, or project leadership roles to create pathways for leadership within the organization. This gives individuals a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

4. **Communicate Consistently and Transparently**

- **Open and Regular Communication:**
 - Use newsletters, emails, and social media to regularly update members on branch/State/AAUW activities, upcoming events, and volunteer opportunities.
- **Feedback Channels:**
 - Create open feedback loops and a suggestion box where members can share their experiences, challenges, and suggestions. Act on this feedback to show that their voices are heard and valued. This could be through a designated email account or a designated committee member.
- **Two-Way Communication:**
 - Ensure that communication is not just top-down (board to members). Encourage participation in decision-making processes through surveys and suggestion boxes.

5. **Enforce Purpose with Alignment to AAUW Mission**

- **Reinforce the Mission:**
 - Regularly remind members of the AAUW mission and vision and the impact of their contributions. When individuals understand the direct effect of their efforts, they are more likely to stay engaged.
- **Show Success Stories:**
 - Highlight stories of the AAUW and branch impact on the community. Use testimonials or videos to show how the work has made a difference. This can motivate members to continue their involvement.
- **Provide Meaningful Roles:**
 - Ensure that members' roles align with their skills, interests, and passions. Offer flexibility in roles to keep them aligned with personal goals and values.

6. **Build a Strong Community and Member Relationships**

- **Social Events and Networking:**
 - Organize informal gatherings such as dinners, coffee meetups, or virtual hangouts to strengthen relationships.
 - Encourage networking opportunities within the organization to help build members' support systems.
- **Encourage Collaboration:**
 - Involve members in collaborative projects that allow them to work together toward shared goals, such as craft and stitchery projects. This fosters teamwork and enhances relationships.
- **Community-Building Initiatives:**
 - Develop programs that allow members to engage with the community you serve, e.g., schools. Participating in community-focused projects creates a sense of ownership and commitment to the mission.

7. **Provide Clear Paths for Ongoing Involvement**

- **Diverse Engagement Opportunities:**
 - Offer varied ways to stay involved, such as short-term projects, ongoing programs, or leadership roles. Flexibility in engagement helps accommodate members' changing schedules or commitments.

- **Continual Invitations:**
 - Invite members regularly to participate in new projects or initiatives. Offering new and exciting ways to engage keeps things fresh and prevents stagnation.
- 8. **Offer Flexibility and Accommodate Members' Needs**
 - **Virtual Engagement:**
 - Offer virtual engagement opportunities (e.g., virtual meetings, webinars, or remote volunteer roles) for those who cannot attend in-person events.
- 9. **Exit Interviews and Retention Feedback**
 - **Exit Interviews:**
 - If a member decides to leave, conduct an exit interview to understand their reasons and gain insights into potential improvements. This feedback is crucial for future retention strategies.
 - **Monitor Engagement:**
 - Track attendance, participation levels, and feedback to spot early signs of disengagement. Address concerns before they lead to loss of interest.
 - **Retention Surveys:**
 - Conduct periodic surveys to measure member satisfaction and gather insights on how your branch can improve retention efforts.
- 10. **Build a Strong Emotional Connection**
 - **Create a Supportive Environment:**
 - Offer emotional support and show empathy when members face challenges. This strengthens their emotional connection to the branch and the AAUW organization.
 - **Passion Projects:**
 - Encourage members to lead projects that they are passionate about.