



## TIPS FOR INCREASING & ENGAGING FPRA MEMBERSHIP

Membership is everyone's responsibility! The key to keeping your FPRA chapter strong is engaging members and delivering value to them. Every board member and every chapter member should be encouraged to share the benefits of FPRA and invite colleagues to join. Deliver value through professional development programs, networking opportunities, community involvement and providing professional recognition for members' accomplishments.

### Membership Renewals

FPRA memberships expire on October 31, so new chapter Membership Chairs/VPs of Membership/Membership Directors are just starting their roles as the membership renewal period kicks off. To help your chapter stay strong, it is important to hit the ground running with a Renewal Campaign.

- Members will receive renewal letters in the mail by the first week of September. They can renew online or by mail. Review the FPRA membership information online to make sure you are familiar with the types of membership and can answer questions.
- Encourage all members to renew before October 31. Your chapter receives \$50 in membership dues for each Individual Professional, Institutional Professional and Allied member and \$40 for each Multi-Institutional member who renews or joins. For many chapters, these funds make up a large portion of the chapter operating budget.
- During the renewal period (September 1 – October 31) every member should receive a call from a board member. Thank them for their membership and encourage them to renew.
- Consider offering incentives for renewing, such as a gift with renewal or entry into a prize drawing. You may be able to secure donations or sponsors for the gifts or prizes – reach out to your contacts!
- You will see membership renewal promoted by the State Office via the e-newsletter and social media. Make sure you mention renewal at all meetings held August through October, include it in your chapter newsletter and post it on your chapter's social media.
- As the October 31 date approaches, the Membership Chair should call unrenewed members to find out why they have not renewed (changing jobs, moving, leaving field, financial hardship, etc.). Document these reasons so you know whether to re-approach them about membership later in the year.

- There may be members in your chapter that have been financially impacted by COVID-19. Members who are unemployed may join at a reduced rate as Associate members. Members who pay for their own Individual Professional memberships may request a payment plan by contacting the State Office.
- A \$25 late fee applies for memberships renewed after October 31. Non-renewed members are made inactive by the State Office on November 10, but you can and should continue to reach out to those lapsed members to invite them to events and encourage them to re-join.
- Helping members feel welcome and keeping them active and engaged will make renewals easier the following year. Thank members for renewing, welcome new members to the chapter and make sure to promote your upcoming chapter events and state events and webinars.

### Membership Recruitment

As soon as the Renewal Campaign ends, begin your Membership Campaign using the chapter or state theme for the year. Consider developing a research-based strategic campaign to recruit new members.

- Set a realistic, quantitative membership goal for your chapter and a timeline of how and when you will contact prospects using telephone, email, social media, direct mail, newsletter and event invitations.
- Bring New Member Applications and flyers or brochures outlining member benefits to your events. These are available in the Resource Directory on [fpra.org](http://fpra.org)
- Have greeters at your events to help guests feel welcome. Share membership information with them and follow up after the event.

## Identifying Potential Members

- Keep a Membership Target List of PR professionals in your chapter area that are not members. They may be colleagues, acquaintances, past members or event attendees. You can identify and target potential members from the communication departments at city and county government, corporations and businesses, agencies, banks, hospitals, colleges and universities, chambers of commerce, nonprofits, hotels and attractions.
- Review hiring and promotion notices in your local business publications. When the roles are related to public relations, add those people to your Membership Target List.
- Ask board members to review the Membership Target List regularly to see if there is anyone they know personally and can reach out to or invite to an event.
- Draft an email template to send to non-members that attend events to thank them for coming, explain the benefits of membership in FPRA and highlight upcoming chapter and state events.
- Diversity is key to a well-rounded membership. Be welcoming and help your chapter develop a healthy mix of new and long-term members, senior practitioners and young professionals and representatives from various industries.

## Welcoming New Members

- Develop a plan to orient and engage new members, help them make connections and get involved.
- You will be notified by the State Office when a new member joins your chapter. Keep a checklist for new members with tasks such: send a welcome email, schedule their introduction and “pinning,” assign them a “Board Buddy,” add them to your newsletter distribution list and Facebook group if you have one, post a welcome on social media, etc.
- Introduce new members at the first meeting or professional development after they join. Consider featuring bios on new members in your newsletter or social media.
- Many chapters assign each board member a list of members. The board member acts as a “Board Buddy” to these members, giving them a personal point of contact and encouraging them to attend meetings and events, answering questions and promoting chapter involvement.

## Engaging Members

- Try holding meetings at different times of the day to appeal to members and potential members that may have strict schedules. Consider having informal morning coffees, professional development luncheons and happy hour or after-hours member mixers. Hold a mix of in-person and virtual meetings and vary the location of your in-person meetings throughout the geographic area of your chapter to appeal to a wider audience.
- Try surveying members — and non-members — to see if there are specific topics related to PR they are interested in learning about.
- Celebrate members’ accomplishments such as new promotions, jobs, designations and awards in your newsletter and social media posts.
- Invite members to join a closed Facebook group only for members. While your chapter’s website and public Facebook page is the “front porch” of the chapter, the private group can be the “backyard” where confidential discussions (vendor recommendations, advice requests, etc.) can happen.
- Seasoned professionals may be less interested in professional development programming. Engage them by promoting Counselors’ Network, involving them in special events and asking for their assistance in securing high-profile speakers and sponsors, hosting a “Coffee Talk” or “Counselors’ Session,” serving as mentors, speaking to APR and CPCR candidates and judging Image Awards.

