

# **AIR FORCE SERGEANTS ASSOCIATION**



## **DIVISION 3**

### **NEW MEMBER RECRUITING HANDBOOK**

August 2015

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide general guidance for effective new member recruiting activities. Chapter membership committees and recruiters should use this to assist with recruitment and retention efforts. This guide is just that, and its purpose is to help every AFSA member to be a successful recruiter and grow our association. Suggestions/comments concerning this handbook are encouraged and should be forwarded, in writing, to the Division 3 President for consideration.

Tools:

AFSA Fact Sheet  
AFSA Brochures (various)  
AFSA International HQ Produced Brochures

Programs:

Recruiting and Retention Programs  
Recruiting and Retention Recognition Programs



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# INTRODUCTION

The Air Force Sergeants Association was founded in 1961 by four Air Force NCOs who recognized the need for an organization to represent the voice of all enlisted personnel to America's elected and military leaders. AFSA founders Benny McGehee, Lee Thompson, Virgil Perry and Don Ward established the association.

The information in this handbook has been gathered from many successful AFSA recruiters and reflects years of recruiting experience and knowledge. This handbook is intended to provide the background needed to succeed as an AFSA recruiter. Each recruiter must adapt a style they are comfortable with using during the recruiting process.

## **Recruiting Objectives:**

AFSA exists to provide support, education, advocacy and congressional visibility to its members and their families. Several factors contribute to obtaining and maintaining a consistent and valued voice on Capitol Hill. In order to do this we must maximize our recruiting efforts. This is across all fields of Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, Retired, Veterans, Family Members, and Associate members. The objective of each chapter membership committee, is to educate and recruit new members and to maximize retention efforts. There are several avenues available to help maximize your recruiting efforts.

1. Regular recruiting activities
  - Recruiting efforts are a continuous, all members should be involved with. Each person you talk to is a potential AFSA member
2. Take advantage of briefing opportunities
  - Explore opportunities to brief at Commander's Calls, FTAC, ALS, Newcomers Orientation, etc... to reach as many potential members as possible
3. Provide accurate information to both potential members as well as current members
  - There are several avenues to provide information to members. As you talk to people about AFSA you need to consider the generational gaps, each person has their own priorities and what may be important to your younger person may not be as important as it is to an older person. Ensure you are not leaving anyone out who could be a potential member. Capitalize on the knowledge and ideas that can be provided by retirees and new members. Remind your chapter members that everyone is a recruiter
4. Push incentive programs
  - Ensure you are educated on current recruiting initiatives offered by the International Membership Committee or consider creating a chapter specific incentive program. This is a great way to give someone instant gratification and to thank your chapter member for getting involved in new member recruiting
5. Scholarship programs
  - Educate your chapter members about the numerous scholarship programs available for AFSA members. Again, members like to see a return on investment; this is one area that we as an organization are able to give back to our members
6. Fundraising activities
  - Fundraising is a great way to get members involved and to get your Chapter recognized in the community. This doesn't mean you always have to "Make Money", sometimes it means you are raising money for a charitable cause. Get your chapter out and ensure you are projecting a positive image for OUR association



## 7. Awards and Recognition Program

- Take the time to recognize your star performers. If they are going to dedicate their time to our association then take the time to ensure they are properly recognized. There are several opportunities for this, one is through AFSA's annual awards program (Refer to the AFSA Manual 100-4(2) for more info) the other is to institute a chapter awards program. This will show your members that their efforts are appreciated

## 8. DON'T FORGET FAMILY MEMBERS!

- Everything that AFSA does on Capitol Hill to educate our elected representatives' impacts our families just as much as it does for our other members. Encourage your chapter members to bring their family members to chapter meetings, social events, and/or community service projects. Create a sense of "family" within the chapter where people come together to socialize and interact with each other." Refer AFSA Manual 100-1, Bylaw 4 – Membership, that defines requirements of the Family Member membership class

# MANAGEMENT

## Membership Committee Chairperson

The Membership Committee Chair is appointed by the Chapter President and should have an activity report to present during each Executive Council and General Membership Meeting regarding membership status and recruiting issues/initiatives.

1. Appointing a Membership Committee Chair
  - a. Must have or strive to achieve extensive AFSA knowledge
  - b. Must be energetic, outgoing and willing to talk
  - c. Must be able to organize an effective membership team
2. The Membership Committee Chair must provide the Chapter President with periodic updates on chapter membership activities
  - a. Upcoming membership drives
  - b. Current chapter strength
  - c. Upcoming professional development briefs
3. Ensure that there is a representative from the membership committee present at every chapter event
  - a. This will provide an opportunity to touch base with individuals that may be curious to what AFSA is about.
  - b. It also give you a stage to present AFSA to a large group of potential members
4. Establish recruiting goals
  - a. Setting a membership goal will help give you a recruitment number target.
  - b. The goal should be refined at a minimum to how many members your chapter needs to recruit each month/quarter. The goal should be conveyed to your chapter members at every chapter meeting to encourage them to help achieve this goal

## Membership Committee

Developing the Membership Committee is critical to chapter recruiting and retention successes. This committee should continuously strive to improve recruiting and retention methods. Remember, not every person is recruited the same, find out what each person's focus is, whether it be education, pay, benefits or retirement. The Membership Committee is essential to the chapter, nothing else the chapter does will





succeed if membership growth and sustainment are neglected. Remember to utilize your Communications team, Executive Council and HQ resources when implementing your Membership team. The committee must be focused on the recruitment of new members and to teach chapter members how to recruit & retain members. All members of the committee should be knowledgeable about AFSA, the following are key areas:

1. Be knowledgeable of support available from AFSA International Headquarters:
  - Legislative Platform and legislative advocacy issues
  - Member Benefits offered to all members
  - Upcoming Division and International convention locations and dates
  - Available website resources and how to find them
  - Recruiting material and accessing membership rosters
2. Be knowledgeable of the chapter's:
  - Monthly and annual calendar
  - Budget, financial status, and restraints
  - Executive Council and appointed positions
  - Standing Committees and POCs
  - Recruiting activities, methods, and processes
  - Awards programs and processes
  - Veterans Service Organizations and The Military Coalition partners

### **Building the Team**

The size of your membership team will vary depending of the size of your chapter and base. The typical committee should consist of roughly 5-8 people. Try to ensure you have a cross-section of committee members of different ranks and from different organizations. Your committee should be structured as follows:

1. Committee Chair (Appointed by the President)
2. One or two members to manage the membership rosters
  - a. Must be highly trusted – they will handle PII type material
  - b. Able to update bad addresses, rank updates, change of chapter assignments
  - c. Provide listings to committee member of those who have lapsed or are about to lapse
3. Assign one member to handle retentions
  - a. Track soon to expire members using the four-month and other rosters
  - b. Initiate 100 percent expiring member contact
4. Dedicate one member to coordinate all membership drives
  - a. Set-up membership booths at high traffic areas (DFAC, BC, Commissary, etc...)
  - b. Members must engage, sitting and not “working” the crowd will yield very poor results

If your Membership Committee is set up properly, your membership numbers will reflect. Remember, recruiting and retaining of member needs to be a constant endeavor. It does not stop after an event or membership table is taken down. You recruit every day in the way you handle your business. Reflect positively on AFSA and your chapter.

### **Membership Plan**

Develop a membership plan that is specific to your chapter's needs. Be sure to include a strategic vision on



how to achieve your membership goals. Be sure to include a detailed plan for membership drives and how to work soon to expire members. This will ensure you can set the table correctly for your membership committee. Consider the following points:

**1. Membership Follow-up**

- a. E-mail – send a personal email thanking them for becoming a member, and providing additional information, social media sites, Exec Council roster, chapter calendar, etc...
- b. Phone calls – call your members and thank them for their membership
- c. Newsletters –chapter newsletter should always include a membership article
- d. Follow-up – is a crucial in reaching out to potential members you talked to during a briefing or recruiting event. A follow-up message serves as a reminder to the member that you want them to be involved with your chapter. There may be times when you brief at an event and there may not be time allotted for Q&A, a follow-up is a good way of reaching out to the audience you just briefed

**2. Don't forget to recruit the Family Members**

- a. Benefit reductions and entitlement changes impact the family just as much as the military member
- b. Remind them about AFSA scholarships programs
- c. Get Family Members involved in chapter events and community service projects

**3. Materials Every Recruiter Needs**

- a. 10 Reasons Why. (both Active duty and Guard/Reserve)
- b. AFSA Fact Sheet
- c. Current Legislative Platform and updates
- d. Membership Applications
- e. Personal business cards – created on home computer or ordered through AFSA
- f. Identify all \$\$ provided to the military and civilian communities

**4. Electronic Files.**

- a. Membership applications
- b. Membership rosters
- c. Brochures, flyers, Legislative Platform
- d. Membership transmittal forms

**5. AFSA HQ Web Site [www.hqafsa.org](http://www.hqafsa.org)**

- a. Bi-Weekly AFSA Updates, Headline Roundup & Washington Report (print/carry copies)
- b. Legislative bills that AFSA is supporting
- c. Promote the Legislative Action Center, it is a great tool for our members to use and contacted elected officials

**6. New Member/Returning Member Envelopes:** Create an envelope with the following:

- a. Membership Application
- b. Chapter Welcome Announcement
- c. Member Services Brochure
- d. Chapter meeting minutes, location, time, date, etc...
- e. Each recruiter should have access to all recruiting forms/support materials

AFSA pamphlets and brochures can be ordered through AFSA's web site, or by calling their toll-free number. All brochures are free of charge. Be careful, though, the list of brochures available is extensive

and will require an adequate amount of storage room. It is recommended to use these as needed. You can also store the brochures on central file and e-mail/print them as needed.

### **Use Technology to your advantage**

To stay relevant today you have to adapt to the new generation of potential members. In order to do this you need to be educated on the use of social media. Joining the world of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram will not only keep you in touch with younger members, and it will also allow you to highlight your chapter's events and accomplishments. It is an easy way to connect with other chapters to see what they are doing and let them see what your chapter is doing. Social media is a great way for members that move to your base to reach out and get involved with your chapter.

1. Twitter is a handy tool that allows you to quickly notify people of upcoming events and give updates when needed. If used correctly this format can help you stay in contact with your chapter members.
2. Facebook is essential; every chapter should have a page. Every Membership Committee member should have admin access to post updates. The pages should be updated continuously; this is where teamwork with your communications team is crucial. Photos speak volumes to what your chapter is involved with. If you have smart phones take pics and then instantly upload them to your chapter's social media site.

## **RECRUITING OPERATIONS**

### **Talking About AFSA:**

Know your audience before starting your presentation. Know what your focus is, whether it is speaking about The Military Coalition, education, healthcare, pay, or retirement. Your presentation needs to be tailored differently to the audience demographic. A one size fits all recruiting approach does not work, be flexible in delivering your message.

### **Talking To Commanders:**

Leadership starts at the top. Each Chapter President should schedule a meeting with the wing commander and command chief shortly after their arrival. The focus of the meeting is to discuss your chapter's activities, membership efforts, and AFSA's legislative efforts. This is a quick way to get them on your side.

The following outline is suggested:

1. Purpose: To brief leadership on key issues relating to AFSA membership and to obtain permission to conduct recruiting/membership activities. To make leadership aware of the *tangible* and *intangible* benefits of belonging to AFSA.
2. Chapter Objectives:
  - a. Promote camaraderie and esprit de corps in the community by providing community service activities
  - b. Support and complement the base's quarterly and annual awards programs through sponsorship of an award or other related program needs
  - c. Provide a viable mentoring platform between Senior NCOs and junior airmen
  - d. Enhance and complement the commander's Voter Registration program
  - e. Provide chapter members visibility and recognition for their positive community support and





- activities
- f. Support and complement the PME graduation ceremonies
  - g. Explain AFSA legislative efforts both past successes and Legislative Platform
  - h. Explain AFSA's status as a Professional Organization (explain the differences between a Private Organization and a Professional Organization). Provide DOD Instruction and the CSAF's letter supporting AFSA as a Professional Organization. Be cognizant that some commanders may not be aware of the differences. Know the difference in the definition, and if it comes up, help to identify the things that AFSA does versus other "private" organizations.

### **Addressing the Tiers**

Ensure that when approaching an individual or group you have researched your audience. You cannot talk to SNCO's about AFSA the same way you talk to Airmen. When you begin a conversation, ensure that you are listening because people will give you clues as to what they are interested in. Figure out the motivation for their service then tie that back into how you are recruiting. For example some people are interested in education (talk about the TA re-institution and what role AFSA played), or maybe it is health care benefits (talk about medication charges at the Pharmacy). No matter what the situation everyone is motivated by something, active listening and solid conversation will reveal that motivation.

### **Talking To Senior NCOs:**

Motivation for a SNCO is going to be different than it would be for an NCO or Airmen. SNCO's are going to be more concerned with retirement, health care, and education benefits, transferability of the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Have the conversation to find out what people are expecting, this will give you a recruiting starting point. A SNCO is going to be interested in the benefits that they were promised with they made the decision to make the Air Force a career. Explain that AFSA has a full-time presence on Capitol Hill focused on educating members of Congress and advocating for your benefits. They've earned their retirement and benefits for themselves and their families. Show them how they play a critical role in keeping their benefits by becoming an AFSA member. Younger Airmen look up to Senior NCOs and eagerly want leadership, advice, mentorship and direction. SNCO's can provide that leadership and positive example by joining ASFA. Refer to AFI 36-2618:

AFI 36-2618, Chapter 5, General SNCO Responsibilities: Para 5.1.9. states: SNCO's should meet and strive to exceed, the standards levied upon all junior enlisted Airmen and NCO's. Part of the standard is outlined in Para 4.1.8, Continue professional development through on and off-duty education. "Join Professional Organizations and participate in organization and community events through volunteerism."

1. Use membership incentives: Command Chief, Chief, and First Sergeant stickers; Command Chief and First Sergeant notepads (stationary); other local or Chapter obtained items that are inexpensive and could be paid for by using the new member recruiting rebate. The Chevrons store is also a great place to obtain the AFSA items. This is great "Swag" and will give new members "instant gratification" for joining AFSA.
2. At times you will come across someone who says "I used to be a member". Find out what happened and find out how you change their opinion of AFSA. Often you will find people that may have had a "bad" experience at a previous chapter. Do your part to let them know what your chapter focus is and build a relationship with them. Be able to recognize (from facial expressions, body language, etc.) when it's time to give up, and spend your time with someone else who is more likely to join and will be a member that your chapter will *want* to have in the organization. Keep in mind you are not going to recruit everyone.



3. Remember to notify the new member when your next membership meeting is. Ensure the member is added to the chapter distribution list to receive updates on chapter events.
4. Provide all new members with a membership envelope that includes the following: Member Services brochure; AFSA Fact Sheet; AFSA's Legislative Platform, meeting minutes; chapter Calendar, newsletter; social media, and executive council POCs.

### **Talking To Mid-Tier NCOs: Enlisted Enhancement Course, NCO Academy:**

Mid-Tier NCO's are very important to AFSA because they are first-line supervisors that have the most interaction and direct influence with younger Airmen. This group serves as a vital link between Airmen and SNCOs and set the example for the younger Airmen. NCOs are usually the largest sections of base populace to recruit new members from. This group share both Airmen and SNCO ideologies as they are concerned with education benefits and are in the early stages of establishing their career goals. Getting Mid-Tier NCOs involved with your chapter's recruiting efforts is important as they have access and are able to prompt fellow NCOs and younger Airmen to join. This group's inherit responsibility is to support the base and community involvement which is a great opportunity for getting more active members. As you speak to NCOs about joining AFSA find out what issues are important to them (pay, retirement, medical, education, Commissary).

1. Ask them if they would like to learn additional communication, leadership, and motivational skills that will help them in nearly all areas of their life?
2. Ask them if they are satisfied with their paychecks and benefits?
3. Ask them if they know of the only legal way to create change that can positively impact their careers and livelihoods?
4. Ask if they were willing to pay someone to give them full-time congressional lobbying support for their careers and livelihoods? How much would they be willing to pay for this service?
5. Appeal to their future needs – separating, going to school, benefits of networking.
6. Mention AFI 36-2618, Chapter 4, General NCO Responsibilities.
7. Provide new member envelopes and offer coins at the end of your briefing for those who sign up.

### **Talking To Airmen: FTAC /ALS Outline:**

The primary objective here is to get the Airmen energized about AFSA. Your approach must be upbeat; dynamic, and fast-paced. Get them involved by asking the audience questions and responding to their input. Don't forget to appeal to your audience and start off by engaging the audience and asking questions:

1. **Start by getting a feel for your group:** Ask whether they are planning on a career or if they are married. Don't be surprised if you don't get many raised hands.
2. **Ask how many will be in the Air Force for only one enlistment?** If they are only planning on one enlistment, they are probably primarily concerned with education. Direct your conversation to Tuition Assistance, Post 9/11 GI Bill, or veteran benefits. This will hopefully get them engaged in conversation.



3. **Ask the audience if they know what AFSA does?** Ask how many have shopped off base? How many know people who will receive a retirement benefit after 20 years of honorable service to their company? How many employers pay full tuition, or provide full medical benefits for themselves and their families? A majority of benefits are a result of professional organizations such as AFSA--we educate Congress. This secures the entitlements you were promised when you enlisted.
4. **Ask the audience if they know how quickly and easily it is for those benefits to be changed.** Elections are held every two years. Just one session in Congress or a downturn in the economy can change our benefits and entitlements. Protect yourself and your family's income! When Congress needs to save money it is easy to come after our benefits. Just because we retained benefit does not mean we will not have to fight to preserve them in the future.
5. **Strength In Numbers:** When providing congressional visibility, numbers are what it's all about! AFSA's membership strength is around 100,000 active members. We need to continuously recruit new members to grow the membership strength in order to provide congressional visibility for the things that are near and dear to us. Congress responds to large numbers, particularly when they are well-organized and registered voters.
6. **Chapter's provides access to networking opportunities!** Being and member puts you in touch with other members from around the base. Many senior leaders from around the base attend monthly AFSA meetings. This is an excellent way to find a mentor that can help you become successful in your career. Senior NCOs and responsible, well tenured NCOs usually lead our chapter's activities. This is a great opportunity for you get involved and learn how to lead activities and be part of a well-respected team. This is a great opportunity to obtain mentoring and advice from those who were once in the same place you are now!
7. **AFSA is a great way to help your career:** There are ways to set yourself apart from your peers. One way is to get actively involved in chapter events. That involvement will also help when it comes time for award packages as well. This will help increase your chances for winning BTZ and increasing your paycheck as well. The letters of appreciation and certificates of recognition for your participation in chapter activities will provide additional support for positive personnel actions. (i.e.: awards and decorations)
8. **AFSA has a professional web site!** AFSA International Web Page provides continuous support and updated information on what AFSA is doing for you: [www.HQAFSA.org](http://www.HQAFSA.org). The Legislative Action Center provides instant contact with elected representatives. There are several resources available to chapters that can benefit recruiting, retentions and organizational knowledge.
9. **How would you like to meet the history-makers, the movers and shakers of our great Air Force!** Other base organizations have a purpose, but AFSA has a much bigger impact. AFSA can surround you with legendary Air Force leaders such as our former CMSAF. These Chiefs are doing all they can to listen to your concerns, to mentor, to set standards, and to continue to guide this Air Force. We'd like to take several airmen to the Division and International Conventions. These are permissive TDYs and will not be charged leave.
10. **Offer them the Airman's coin!** Give them a coin when they join. Whether it is a Chapter coin or an AFSA coin. Give them something to say thank you and welcome to Chapter. Airmen love to get things that show you care, and you should they are part of your Air Force family.
11. **How many in the audience are married?** This is a great opportunity to team up with your spouse in an organization and develop common goals! Spouses can obtain the same representation as military members; remember our Family Members are just as important as the Active member. Encourage members to bring their spouse and children to chapter events.

**Take the time to ask if there are any questions.** If there are none, you can lead off by reminding your





audience that membership is strictly voluntary but emphasize the importance of being a member of a professional organization. At this point you can re-emphasize the difference between a professional vs private organization, and if AFSA is not the professional organization of their choosing then encourage them to find one that meets their needs (VFW, American Legion, DAV, etc...). Hopefully, by now, your audience should be completing the membership applications for you.

**NOTE:** Many airmen want to become immediately involved. Be prepared give them your contact information at the conclusion of your briefing.

### **Guard and Reserve:**

Develop a specific Guard and Reserve member briefing. While much of what we have talked about still applies, members of the Guard and Reserve have issues that are specific to their service. Guard and Reserve units have been activated and deployed as much as the Active Duty Airmen. Activating a Guard or Reserve unit can create a lot of havoc and concern on its members and their entitlements change when they are activated.

Do a little homework and research legislative bills that impact Guard and Reserve members, to include sponsoring congressmen, what was the last action taken on the bill, etc. These are all available on the AFSA International Web Site. What are some of the issues? Reserve retirement eligibility from 60 to 55; VA benefits, TRICARE, and commissary benefits regardless if it is a drill weekend or the unit is activated; corporation tax benefits for those who hold a job for the reservist/guardsman during deployments. Finally, recruiting in a Guard and Reserve unit may require more flexibility on the part of the recruiter – because they must schedule their activities when the unit is available.

## **CHOOSING A RECRUITING LOCATION**

### **Recruiting Locations**

Choosing the right recruiting location is paramount to success. Find a place that has high visibility and a lot of people traffic. Stay out in the open and don't hesitate to stop someone with a question. This will peak their interest and give you an opportunity to start conversation. Do not stand or sit behind the membership table. Stand at the corners of the table to make the one-on-one contact as people walk past your table. Standing behind the table creates a barrier between you and potential new member. Below are some key locations that could be useful recruiting spots:

1. Commissary/BX
  - BX size may limit your exposure. Select a main entry point to maximize your visibility. Try to coordinate this venue with another event such as a store sale (Black Friday), gift wrapping or voter registration event
2. Dining Facility
  - This is a great location to set up a membership recruiting booth. Everyone needs to eat, and the Dining Facility is a great place to reach-out to recruit new members. Make sure your booth includes both junior and senior enlisted members to help with the recruiting process
3. Commander's Calls
  - This is a great opportunity to talk both AFSA and The Military Coalition. Keep it simple





because you may be limited to a few minutes to speak. Be brief and concise, and talk about AFSA's impact to all Airmen. Remain visible after the CC Call is over to talk to people and hand out membership applications

4. Off-Base Locations (i.e.: Wal-Mart)

- Inform the general public about AFSA and the lasting impact of your chapter's community service efforts. Look for opportunities to find local businesses that may want to support your chapter with a donation

## CLOSING

Always keep recruiting in your mind. We must constantly our techniques must constantly evolve to recruit new members. Keep your practices current and relevant. As times change so do individual interests. In order to maintain our presence on Capitol Hill and preserve our benefits we need to speak with one loud voice. We need members added to our rolls in order to increase our strength in numbers. The only way to increase our strength is for all members to make a concerted effort to build our organization by adding new members and retaining existing members. Talking to people about AFSA is the best way to make our association grow. **Bottom Line:** our members are the association and without members we would have no voice to protect the benefits that military members have sacrificed so much to obtain.