

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES



**Proven Techniques to
Increase the Membership
of Your Post**

A Message from Your National Membership Chairman

Dear JWV Member,

Membership recruitment and retention are the responsibility of all JWV members. My responsibility is to see that you have the proper tools to assist you with this ongoing effort to help JWV grow membership wise and financially. This allows us, in the long term, to fulfill our mission of serving veterans, active duty military personnel, and their families and to support Israel. We need your help to accomplish this.

During the past three years, we have seen our membership loss go from an average of 12% annually to what appears to be around 2% at this time. By actively utilizing the tools provided in this booklet, it is possible to have zero loss this membership year and put us in position to have real growth during the next membership year.

This booklet is provided as a resource for all JWV members to use. There are strategies listed herein for everyone. Recruiting and retention can be as simple as inviting someone to join, or reminding them to pay their dues.

These strategies were compiled from suggestions made on recent membership teleconferences. They have been used by posts around the country to successfully recruit and retain members.

I hope you will join me in building JWV's membership so that we can continue our mission as stated above.

Sincerely,

PDC Robert Richter
National Membership Chairman

New Member Recruitment Strategies

One of the keys to recruiting new members is visibility. You must be active in your community and publicize your post's events and accomplishments. If veterans do not know about your post, then you will not be able to get them to join. With this in mind, here are some strategies for you to use in your recruiting efforts.

- Have a post member give a presentation on JWV at your local synagogues. The week of Veterans' Day is an excellent time to approach your Rabbi and request time to speak about JWV at a service. During your presentation, make sure to ask the veterans in the congregation to stand and be recognized for their service. Provide the veterans with membership applications during the Kiddush and invite them to attend your next meeting.



- Host an event with a guest speaker at a local restaurant and invite members of the community to attend. Publicize your event in your local Jewish and secular newspapers and on community online forums.



- If you live near a military base or service academy, develop a relationship with the chaplains and leadership. Consider sponsoring an Oneg Shabbat to identify potential members. Since “in-service” membership is free, it is an easy sell.

- If your post has the funds, offer an incentive for veterans to join. You can offer reduced first year dues, or present new members with a post baseball cap or shirt at their induction.



- Make your community aware of the good work that your post does. Develop a contact list of local media outlets and send photos and press releases of your post activities.

- Be active in your community by participating in parades, school programs, scouting troops, and other public programs.



- You should be aggressive when you are recruiting, and don't accept excuses for why the potential member shouldn't join. Be prepared to give reasons why JWV is important to you. See National Commander Pickard's list on the last page for suggestions.

- Never give up on a prospective member. If a veteran is not willing to join, stay in contact and continue your relationship. Someone not willing to join now may be interested in the future.



Retaining Members

Retaining the members you currently have is just as important as recruiting new ones. To retain members, you need to keep them interested and involved in the activities of your post.



- When new members come to their first meeting, you want to make sure they are introduced to the other members in the post. Appoint someone in your post who will be responsible for greeting new members and providing them with a brief orientation on the activities of the post.

Walking into a room full of unfamiliar faces can be intimidating for some people. You want to make them feel welcome, or you may not see them again.

- Your post meetings should be more than just a social hour. You want to plan activities to keep members interested. This is especially important to retaining younger members. Plan on having a speaker on a topic of interest to your post members. The speaker might be a VA official, a military representative, a politician, or a military or Jewish historian.



- Plan regular community service projects for your post. People join JWV to make a difference in their communities. Your post can visit hospitalized veterans, support a scout troop, or volunteer with a youth organization.



- Prepare your members for positions of leadership in the organization, and encourage all members to be involved in the operation of the post.
- After you receive your January roster, look under the “member year” column to identify who has not yet paid their dues for the year. You should make a personal appeal to each one of these members. You can approach the member at a meeting, make a phone call, or send out a personal letter. If you are sending out letters, make sure to include a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. You want to make it as simple and easy as possible for the member to pay dues. If someone who regularly attends meetings is not on your roster, make sure they know that they owe dues.



“Why JWV is Important to Me”

By NC Robert Pickard

1. JWV is the voice of the American Jewish veteran on Capitol Hill. Lobbying efforts by JWV make a difference.
2. Over 50 Jewish men and women have been killed in action in the wars since 9/11. JWV honors their sacrifice at annual Memorial Day services across the country.
3. JWV has a seat at the table with top government officials and is respected by other veterans' groups. As a member of The Military Coalition, JWV joins with organizations representing over 5.5 million veterans, military personnel, and supporters to advocate for issues of importance to veterans. Our own executive director, COL (r) Herb Rosenbleeth is President of this coalition.
4. JWV is quick to speak out against anti-Semitism. When Hitler came to power in the 1930s, we organized a huge march and demonstration in NYC. JWV went to American Nazi HQs in 1978 when the Nazis threatened to march in Skokie, Illinois. JWV leadership met with the Secretary of the Air Force to assist in helping to stamp out anti-Semitism at the Air Force Academy.
5. We offer reward money for information that leads to the arrest of perpetrators of anti-Semitic acts.
6. Our museum documents and preserves the contributions of Jews in America's armed forces.
7. JWV volunteers are recognized for their service to hospitalized veterans and logged nearly 50,000 hours of service in the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service program last year.
8. JWV is a steadfast supporter of Israel. We sponsor an annual Allied Veterans Mission to Israel to promote support for Israel in the veterans' community.
9. Presidents of the United States have personally thanked JWV for the service of its members.
10. JWV was a leader in the successful fight to have service records reviewed to determine whether Jews were denied the Medal of Honor due to bigotry.



Need Materials for Your Next Membership Drive?

*For Applications and Recruitment materials
contact Greg Byrne in the JWV Membership
Department at: gbyrne@jwv.org.*