

Local Unit Handbook

For Local
Retired Teachers Association
Unit Leaders



First Ed.
2015

**ARKANSAS RETIRED
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Parkview Towers
1200 Commerce
Suite 104
Little Rock, AR 72202

Phone: 888-929-0955
501-375-2958
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Tips for Using the Handbook

The pages of this handbook are formatted to be used with a three-hole punch and inserted in a three-ring binder.

Many pages have a footer at the bottom that includes **FILE: Description**. This is so that when additional materials are developed, users will know where to insert them into the handbook. This is also the reason there are no page numbers!

Each section includes a **RESOURCES** box at the end. This box includes additional resources found elsewhere in the handbook or on the internet. For example:

Title refers to an item in the General Resources section of the handbook

Items listed under www.artanow.com can be found on the ARTA web site

www.webaddress.com will take you to a helpful web site other than ARTA

Pages with a blue border are designed to be used as standalone handouts. You may add your own unit name and information but please do not remove the ARTA information to do so.

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OVERVIEW

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

1200 Commerce Suite 103
Little Rock, AR 72202
501-375-2958
888-929-0955
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www.artanow.com

About ARTA

The Arkansas Retired Teachers Association (ARTA) is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the professional, personal, social and economic welfare of all retired school employees.

We support the interests, independence and well-being of our members by:

- Maintaining a functional and united organization for all retired school personnel.
- Advocating for secure and improved retirement benefits.
- Advocating for health and other benefits for present and future retirees.
- Educating and informing members about issues and opportunities that affect their interests and well-being.
- Encouraging the continued association of retirees with their peers and communities through educational, social, civic and community service.

The Arkansas Retired Teachers Association was established in 1939-1940. We currently have approximately 12,000 members in 67 active units around the state. ARTA membership is open to *all* retired school personnel.

The Arkansas Retired Teachers Association is currently staffed by three part-time employees. Our office is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or you can reach us as follows:

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

Parkview Towers
1200 Commerce Street Suite 103
Little Rock, AR 72202
501-375-2958
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office_arta@att.net
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The ARTA Directory, which includes contact information for all staff, officers and board members, area directors, state committee chairs, and local unit presidents, is published annually in the Fall issue of the INTERLINK newsletter. You may also download a copy of the latest edition of the directory any time from www.artanow.com.

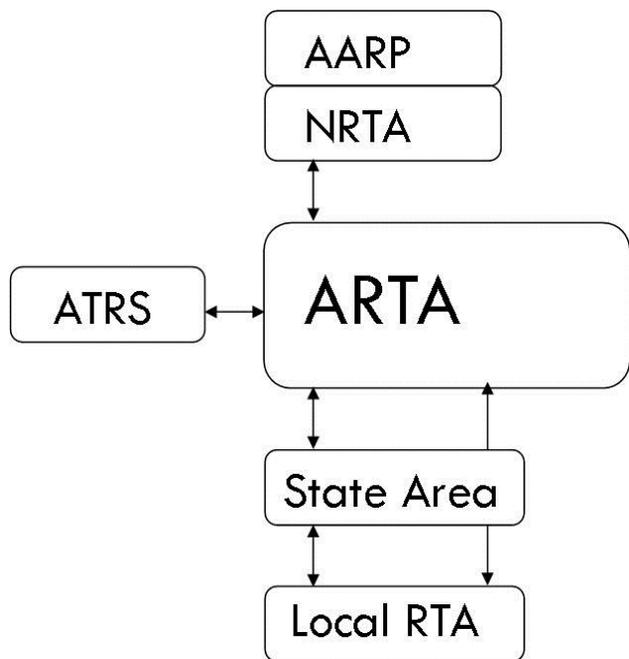
ARTA Organization

ARTA is an independent, non-profit organization with a specific mission. We also maintain cooperative relationships with other organizations as appropriate.

ARTA is the Arkansas Affiliate of the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA). As such, we have access to training and other resources, as well as a national network of RTAs. NRTA is a division of AARP. AARP members who wish to join NRTA can do so at no extra charge.

The Arkansas Teacher Retirement System (ATRS) is the pension fund for retired school employees, from which retirement benefits are paid. ARTA works cooperatively with ATRS to share information with members about the status of the fund, proposed legislation affecting the fund, etc. They are two separate organizations.

ARTA is divided into six membership areas as follows:



AREA I

Benton, Carroll, Crawford, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Madison, Newton, Polk, Pope, Scott, Sebastian, Washington, and Yell Counties

AREA II

Baxter, Boone, Cleburne, Fulton, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Marion, Searcy, Sharp, Stone, Van Buren, White, and Woodruff Counties

AREA III

Clay, Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Greene, Lawrence, Lee, Mississippi, Phillips, Poinsett, Randolph, and St. Francis Counties

AREA IV

Clark, Columbia, Hempstead, Howard, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Montgomery, Nevada, Ouachita, Pike, and Sevier Counties

AREA V

Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Calhoun, Chicot, Cleveland, Dallas, Desha, Drew, Grant, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Union Counties

AREA VI

Conway, Faulkner, Garland, Hot Spring, Lonoke, Monroe, Perry, Prairie, Pulaski, and Saline Counties

Some state and local RTA members belong to the Arkansas Education Association (AEA) Retired Section. ARTA is not formally affiliated with the AEA, although we may coordinate with them on issues of mutual interest or concern.

Local RTA Units

ARTA supports the establishment/maintenance of a local RTA unit in every county. The units are organized much like the state organization, with some variation:

- Calendar year is July 1—June 30
- Have elected officers and standing committees
- Hold regularly scheduled meetings
- May collect annual membership dues

Local RTA units serve two main functions—first, they serve as a liaison between ARTA at the state level and individual retirees at the local level, and second, they unite retired school employees at the community level for the purposes of personal and professional development through social activities, community service and outreach programs.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information and resources to help local units perform both functions for the benefit of their members.

In addition to the information provided here, ARTA also provides the following resources to assist local units:

- Computerized lists of current and potential ARTA members, if available
- Printed copies of State By-Laws and Constitution
- ARTA Directory
- INTERLINK newsletter mailed quarterly to ARTA members
- ARTA representation at local unit meetings as appropriate
- ARTA website, which includes a Calendar of Events, commonly-used forms and more
- Email notification list and Facebook page to share information between state and local organizations
- Recognition of local achievements at the annual state convention and in ARTA media
- Other information and support to local units as needed

In return, ARTA asks local units to provide us with some specific information several times each year:

- A list of officers and committee chairs for each year
- A copy of your unit yearbook
- An Annual Report

***Please note that maintenance of the ARTA Membership Database is ongoing.
Membership updates are requested / encouraged throughout the year.***

Roles & Responsibilities

The President is responsible for the overall leadership and administration of a local unit. Examples of your role and responsibilities include:

1. Act as ARTA's primary point of contact for your local unit
 - Receive materials and supplies from ARTA.
 - Distribute materials and supplies to others as needed and in a timely manner.
2. Establish and maintain an effective organizational structure
 - Identify officers, committee chairpersons and others with specific duties.
 - Hold periodic meetings with chairpersons and officers; communicate regularly between meetings.
 - Ensure that officers and chairpersons understand their specific duties.
 - Ensure that others in charge of specific duties or activities have needed supplies and support
3. Demonstrate leadership and accountability
 - Obtain information and reports from committees in a timely manner.
 - Make sure reports and materials requested by ARTA are completed and submitted on time.
 - Contact, and encourage members to contact, elected officials regarding legislative activity that concerns the retirement system, health insurance, and other topics of interest to members other older citizens.
 - Encourage participation in local and state meetings and activities.
4. Help ARTA help you
 - Provide ARTA with newsworthy articles and constructive suggestions for the newsletter and social media (web site, Facebook, etc.).
 - Encourage members to utilize the ARTA website and Facebook page.
 - Encourage members to subscribe to the ARTA email notification list.
5. Make it FUN
 - Get to know all of your members, even those who are less active.
 - Find ways to utilize the skills and talents of ALL members.
 - Plan a variety of programs and activities that keep members as engaged as they want to be without too much pressure.
 - Publicize your meetings and activities to both members and the community at large.
 - Represent your unit at meetings and events.

REMEMBER: If your job looks like a chore, no one else will want it next year!

Unit Yearbooks

Local units are encouraged to produce a yearbook to be shared with members and the ARTA staff and leadership. This compilation of your unit's important information has multiple uses:

- It is an excellent tool for keeping your membership informed.
- It requires pre-planning, in detail, for an entire year.
- It helps you build a balanced program for the year.
- It serves as a reference from year to year, aiding in continuity without repetition.
- It spells out specific duties and the person (s) responsible for them.
- It allows for effective communication between members.
- It is a requirement for recognition of unit achievement by ARTA.

Yearbooks are customized and formatted to meet your local needs. They may be a one- or two-year book. Elements of an effective yearbook include:

- Mission statement or motto, goals and objectives.
- Membership information, including dues if any.
- Local officers and committees chairs, with names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.
- State officers and staff, with names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses (this information can be obtained from the ARTA office or web site if needed).
- Outline of annual program, with theme, speaker, location, date and time.
- Planned activities, such as a membership drive, community service project, holiday celebration, etc.
- Local by-laws or constitution (samples available from ARTA upon request).
- Information about ARTA and how to join the state organization.
- Membership roster, with contact information, membership status (local, ARTA, potential, new), etc. Be sure to leave enough space to add new members throughout the year.
- Other information as space permits, such as birthdays, charter members/past presidents, elected officials, graphics, blank/notes pages, etc.

While various committees may contribute to the development of the year book, and the Public Relations Committee is often assigned the task of producing it, the president should take responsibility for ensuring that state and area leaders receive copies. Please provide a copy of your yearbook to your Area Director and to the ARTA office by October 1st of each year. For two-year books, please send the second year's inserted pages or a note stating that it is a two year book. Copies may be mailed or delivered electronically to:

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association
Parkview Towers
1200 Commerce Street Suite 103
Little Rock, AR 72202
office_arta@att.net

Annual Reports

Local units are encouraged to submit an annual report to ARTA each year. Report packets containing instructions and forms are distributed to the Unit Presidents at the Area Spring Conferences. If you will not be able to attend your area meeting, please designate a person to pick up the packet for your unit.

The purposes of the report are to:

- Summarize the activities and accomplishments of your unit for the year
- Enable ARTA to appropriately recognize the accomplishments of units and individual members at the annual state convention
- Assist ARTA staff and leaders in effectively planning for the next year

Once you receive your packet, you will need to work with various committee chairs to compile the information. Completed reports are due in the ARTA office by June 15th of each year.

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If you prefer to submit your annual report forms electronically, contact the ARTA office to request that the electronic files be sent to you via email. Electronic forms can be saved to your computer, completed and saved, then submitted to ARTA as an email attachment.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND SCANNED REPORTS OR VIA FAX.

Officers and Committees

In addition to the president, the officer positions described below are common to most local units:

- Vice President—works with the president and substitutes for the president when necessary. May become president by automatic succession if unit operates on a plan of automatic succession.
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Unit Committees are the means by which members serve the community and the unit. The appointment of the committee chairmen (except for a Nominating Committee), is usually the responsibility of the unit president. Local units are encouraged to establish the same committee structure as ARTA:

- Membership—ARTA and Local
- Program
- Informative-Protective Services
- Health Services
- * Legislative
- * Community Services
- * Public Relations
- * Grants/Scholarships

Local units may also have other committees or the above may be divided into sub-committees, where members have specific assignments. Some variations or examples include:

- Historian/ Scrapbook
- Hospitality/ Courtesy/ Refreshments
- Yearbook
- Sunshine/ Compassion/ Memorials
- School District Liaison
- * Parliamentarian
- * Telephone/ E-mail/ Social Media
- * Volunteer Coordinator
- * Chaplain/ Devotional/ Music

More detailed descriptions of each committee and their specific responsibilities are given in the following sections. In general, committee chairmen:

- Hold regular committee meetings.
- Recruit committee members.
- Develop, with committee, goals and plans for the year.
- Delegate specific tasks to committee members.
- Motivate committee members to do the work of the committee.
- Oversee and coordinate the activities of the committee.
- Work with other committee chairmen to see that overlapping topic areas are well coordinated.
- Initiate the evaluation of the committee's programs, projects and effectiveness.
- Write committee reports for the unit President, Board and membership.
- Present committee reports as requested.
- Communicate with ARTA to coordinate state and local committee goals.
- Attend ARTA sponsored meetings and workshops as designated.

Working with Other Unit Committees

The President is responsible for the overall administration and functioning of the unit. He or she will rely on other officers and committee chairmen to develop plans, carry out tasks and report back to the membership. Each committee chairman will have his or her own responsibilities. Again, these duties will be made much easier when they utilize their committee members and coordinate with other committee chairs.

Just a few of the many ways that committee chairs can work together for the benefit of the unit:

- The Program Chairman works cooperatively with all other committee chairmen to develop and coordinate the year's program schedule.
- The Program Chairman works cooperatively with the Membership and Public Relations Chairmen to keep the interest of current members, attract new members, and inform the community about unit programs and activities.
- The Membership Chairman coordinates with the Program, Community Services and Public Relations Chairmen to make sure that membership information is available at project sites, meetings, etc.
- The Legislative Chairman works with the Informative-Protective and Community Services Chairmen to provide legislative information which will impact unit members and older citizens of the community.
- The Health Services Chairman and Informative-Protective Chairman coordinate with the Community Services Chairmen to provide relevant health information and service to the community.
- The Public Relations Chairman stays informed of each committee's activities so that meetings, events and accomplishments can be publicized, stories or articles about legislative or community issues can be placed with local media, and coordinated materials or messages can be developed.

You may want to copy this page and share it with each committee chairperson along with the information for each committee area.

Leadership Development

The success of a local unit depends on volunteers with outstanding leadership skills. While retired educators may have developed and used many of these skills during their professional careers, being a leader in a unit may require a volunteer to brush up on these skills or even develop new ones. Consequently, providing unit members with an opportunity to renew and enhance the skills of an effective leader is an important activity of your unit.

Unit Commitment to Developing Leaders

In your efforts to accomplish the on-going work of the unit, commitment to developing leaders is sometimes overlooked. AS a result, when the need for qualified leaders arises members may feel ill prepared to volunteer.

Units that have made leadership development a priority are more successful in filling leadership positions with qualified candidates. They have accomplished this by:

- Delegating responsibility and authority for this activity. Sometimes the Board and Executive Committee assume the task. In other units it the responsibility of a standing or special committee.
- Developing position or job descriptions for each key volunteer position.
- Providing adequate resources.
- Conveying a sense to all members, especially those who are new, that everyone with leadership skills are needed and wanted.
- Identifying all members in the process of identifying and recruiting qualified leaders.

Identifying Potential Leaders

Once you have developed a list of qualifications for each key leadership role in your unit, you will need to identify members who exhibit those qualities.

- Regularly ask members to complete a basic inventory of their skills and interests.
- Personal observation allows you to become acquainted with unit members and to suggest ways for them to use their skills and talents.
- Delegate responsibilities to members so that they have opportunities to gain confidence in their ability to lead and direct others.

Recruiting Leaders

Greatest results occur when individual are approached by the unit leader most directly related to the position being filled. In other words, the person vacating the position is often the best qualified to answer questions and to prepare a successor to fill the position.

Training Leaders

Members who accept leadership positions in the unit have a right to receive training which will help them to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their new job. This includes both content and skills development.

An in-depth study of the content related to topics such as ARTA, health care, community service, informative and protective services and retirement planning provides the new leader with essential background information.

This background information can be enhanced with training to renew and improve general management skills. Opportunities should be provided for new leaders to lead meetings, supervise volunteers, plan and oversee projects, manage time and paper, resolve conflicts, develop and manage budgets, and communicate effectively.

Before offering training, be sure to ask the new volunteers what they need to learn. Then develop your workshops to respond to those needs.

Recognizing Volunteers

Regardless of the level of responsibility or authority, all volunteers want and need to be recognized for the work they do. Recognition is the volunteer's assurance that his or her duties and accomplishments are valued. Recognition can be as simple as a "thank you" or praise for a job well done, or it can be elaborate and done with much fanfare.

To help develop volunteers' confidence in their leadership abilities, it is important that they be recognized publicly. If you feel that a volunteer has performed well in chairing a committee, let other members of the group know it. The next time you assign a volunteer to a leadership role, point out his or her past accomplishments and indicate your support.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to recognize a volunteer by offering him or her a leadership position. This is an excellent way to continue to develop leaders to take on even more responsible positions and to ensure that the group's top leadership is filled with experienced and committed volunteers.

Developing volunteers to assume leadership positions takes time and effort. But it is the best investment in the future success of your unit and the most important legacy you leave behind as a leader.

More resources for the effective administration of a local unit and its committees are included in the following sections and on the ARTA web site, www.artanow.com.

RESOURCES

MEMBERSHIP

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

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office_arta@att.net

www.artanow.com

ARTA Membership

ARTA is a voluntary membership organization. Membership is open to all participants in the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System as well as to interested individuals who pay the appropriate dues.

Dues are currently \$28/year (Annual Member), \$2/monthly deduction (Continuing Member) or \$240 (Life Member). The membership year is from July 1 to June 30. Members can join at any time but dues are not prorated.

As a membership organization, ARTA relies on volunteer members, part-time staff, and stable membership dues to accomplish its goals and objectives. We strive to keep operational expenses as low as possible while still serving the needs of members. Opportunities to increase revenue are limited to our staffing capacity and must be in keeping with our overall purpose. It is also important to note that ALL retired educators in Arkansas benefit from ARTA's efforts to improve the general welfare of members.

The best way for ARTA to effectively accomplish its mission is to not only maintain our membership base, but to consistently increase it. A strong base provides a pool of volunteers to serve on committees and in leadership positions. It also serves as a statewide communications network and provides the majority of the funds used for operational expenses. Growing our membership will not only strengthen our base, it will provide all Arkansas retired educators with a stronger voice.

Individually we strive to be heard, but collectively, we cannot be ignored.

Membership Committee

The purpose of the unit Membership Committee is to recruit, retain and regain members. The committee will need the cooperative support of all unit leaders and the general membership in order to be successful. Specific responsibilities of the committee include:

- Develop an annual/ ongoing Membership Campaign Plan for both ARTA and the local unit.
- Present the Membership Campaign Plan to the unit members and enlist their cooperation.
- Work with appropriate committees and individual members to develop membership recruitment materials.
- Work with the appropriate committee chairpersons to coordinate membership efforts with their activities.
- Communicate with the state membership committee chairmen and area leadership to coordinate state and local membership goals.

Develop a Membership Campaign Plan

STEP 1.

Set membership goals:

- Short term goals for the membership year based on your current membership and the number of prospective members available for recruitment.
- Long term goals; i.e. how can you help ensure that educators retiring five or more years from now will think of your unit first as a good organization to belong to in retirement?
- Remember those who have dropped out. Try to find out why and work with other unit leaders to address problems.

STEP 2.

Develop the prospective member list using resources such as:

- Local school administrators may be willing to provide a list of employees who plan to retire during the current year. If the school's administration will not share the list, you may have a committee member assigned to check the school board minutes after each meeting, as these minutes are public and must be open for public examination.
- Related organizations (active teacher's association, school service employees' association, administrator's association, etc.) may share a list of their employees
- School districts, the state retirement system and insurance/benefit providers conduct pre-retirement meetings each year. Request a few minutes on the agenda to talk about joining ARTA and the local unit. Ask the host if they will share the registration list or sign-in sheet or if you will need to collect names and contact information of your own.
- Recently retired members will often know who is retiring from their former schools.
- ARTA may be able to share information about new retirees upon request.

STEP 3.

Develop reasons for joining both the local unit and ARTA. People tend to join organizations that are beneficial to them personally:

- Financial benefit—for example, your unit works with ARTA to ensure the soundness of, and better benefits from, the state retirement system.
- Social benefit—prospective members will be joining a warm, friendly group that enjoys having a good time together.
- A purpose—some people will only join an organization that has a serious purpose. Let prospective members know that your unit is actively involved in the community. Be able to give them specific examples.
- See *Benefits of Membership in a Retired Teachers Association*

Develop a Membership Campaign Plan

STEP 4.

Develop various methods for contacting prospective members. Choose the best method (s) based on the resources of your unit, your community and the various people you are trying to recruit:

- Personal contact is often cited as the most effective membership recruitment strategy.
- Telephone contact is most effective with members who appreciate the personal contact and may just need a person to encourage him join or remind her to renew.
- Email contact can be a useful when used in conjunction with other methods. For example, you might send an email reminder about an upcoming meeting to a prospective member with whom you have already spoken or you could send an email reminder to all members when it is time to begin membership renewal. Personalize email messages so that they are not seen as “spam” or otherwise intrusive.
- Personal visits may be effective in some units. Remember to make an appointment, keep the visit brief and positive, and to follow up with a thank you note reminding the person of the next unit meeting.
- Mailing is an efficient way to reach a large number of people. Send a letter customized for the prospective member. Include other items such as:
 - * Membership brochure/ application with stamped return envelope
 - * Formal invitation and notice of the next meeting
 - * A ‘request for personal visit’ return postcard
 - * One-year complimentary membership card (new retirees)
 - * Year’s program (date, time, location, speaker/theme) on a post card that can be kept in a wallet or on a refrigerator
- Placing membership materials or posters in locations throughout the community can provide added visibility for your unit. Some of these are: school offices and lounges; community colleges and universities; library reading rooms; senior centers; health care centers; nutrition sites; recreation and fitness centers; and many others. In placing materials, remember:
 - Local unit brochure or fact sheet, with application form
 - Recent copy of unit newsletter
 - Unit Yearbook
 - Copy of *Benefits of Membership in a Retired Teachers Association*
 - ARTA brochure or fact sheet
 - Recent copy of INTERLINK newsletter
 - Copy of ARTA Organization with acronym chart (refer to Overview section)
 - Invitation or information about how to find and join your unit/ARTA on Facebook

MEMBERSHIP TOOLKIT or NEW MEMBER PACKET

Assemble a packet of materials developed by your committee, the unit Public Relations Committee, ARTA, etc. that can be shared with new and potential members:

- Local unit brochure or fact sheet, with application form
- Recent copy of unit newsletter
- Unit Yearbook
- Copy of *Benefits of Membership in a Retired Teachers Association*
- ARTA brochure or fact sheet
- Recent copy of INTERLINK newsletter
- Copy of ARTA Organization with acronym chart (refer to Overview section)
- Invitation or information about how to find and join your unit/ARTA on Facebook

Develop a Membership Campaign Plan

- * Ask permission before placing materials
- * Visibility is more important than simply having the materials at the site. Choose locations that are not already overrun with materials
- * Give priority to sites that will reach the people most likely to join your unit
- * Monitor sites to assure that materials are replenished in a timely fashion

STEP 5.

Retain members you have recruited. A member's degree of satisfaction will depend on the unit as a whole, but the Membership Committee can take some specific steps:

- Welcome each new member. Individual members might have a personal escort to make introductions at the first meeting, or units may hold a special welcome meeting when many new members join at the same time.
- Involve the new members immediately. Find out what interests each new member has and try to arrange for him or her to serve on the preferred committee or be given a specific task.
- Communicate with all members. Use the newsletter, social media, and telephone/email network so that members are informed about projects, social events and meetings. Some members will need special invitations from other members to participate.
- Keep track of members by maintaining a database of information such as name and contact information; dues payments; ARTA membership status; unit committee assignments with applicable years served; offices held, with dates noted; awards received for unit service; volunteer hours; attendance. This data, carefully maintained, can alert the committee of members who may be losing interest.
- Recognize a job well done. Everyone likes recognition for his or her contributions, especially when it is done on a volunteer basis.

STEP 6.

Report on and evaluate the membership campaign. The unit president and board, as well as the ARTA state chairman, will want to know the final outcome of the campaign. You will also want to evaluate the six basic steps to see what, if anything, you will want to do differently next year.

10 Rules for Good Listening

Sample recruitment/invitation letters are available
from ARTA by request

www.artanow.com

ARTA Membership Infographic (printable poster)

RESOURCES

Membership Recruitment—Best Practices

1. Have both a short term and a long term plan for identifying and recruiting new members. Make a conscious effort to address groups of active teachers so they will know who you are and why they should join your organization when they retire. Assign one or more members to connect with those who will retire during the year by attending school board meetings, pre- retirement meetings, retirement parties, etc.
2. Research has shown that people do not join their retirement organizations because they either confuse it with the state pension system or because they have other interests in the early part of their retirement. After about three years of retirement, they are more inclined to join, so contact with them should continue for several years.
3. Personal contact is still best, and can be even better if used in conjunction with another method to reinforce the information or relationship. Utilize as many methods of communication as possible to make your organization visible and inviting to prospective members. Based on age and generational experience, people are more likely to respond to their preferred form of communication, even if it is not your preferred method.
4. Be willing to try something new. Rotate meetings between locations. Change the meeting time—an occasional evening meeting or event may attract prospective members who continue to work part time. Open a meeting to the public—charge a small fee if you need to help cover the expense. If you charge for an event, make the price slightly higher for nonmembers so you can later invite those identified prospects to join your organization.
5. Publicize your organization, not just your meetings. Prospective members are more likely to join an organization that has a presence in the community, not just a convenient meeting time. Share the activities and efforts of your membership so that others can see what you are doing to help others, have fun and stay active.
6. Know your membership demographics. Research tells us that the older generation of retirees (65-80) prefer traditional methods of communication, enjoy monthly meetings, may not have as much disposable income, and are unable to participate in as many activities. They are not likely to have worked past age 60. Younger members (50-65) are more likely to find a second career after retiring, use computers regularly, are inclined to support causes, have strong recreational interests or active hobbies, and prefer informal and episodic activities to regular meetings. Survey your membership periodically to evaluate how your programming and service projects can best meet the needs of both current and potential members.
7. Be able to articulate the benefits of membership. Every member should be able to tell a prospective member about the financial, personal and social benefits of joining the organization and give specific examples of how he or she has personally benefitted.



Benefits of Membership in a Retired Teachers Association

	Local Membership	ARTA Membership
Provides professional development and leadership opportunities	✓	✓
Offers fellowship with retired colleagues	✓	✓
Offers programming and information on topics of interest to retirees and older persons	✓	✓
Offers community service and volunteer opportunities	✓	✓
Is a functional and united professional organization for all retired school personnel	✓ local	✓ statewide
ARTA news and resources through a web site (www.artanow.com) and social media	✓	✓
Subscription to the INTERLINK quarterly newsletter		✓
Annual State Convention		✓
Maintains a staffed office to coordinate statewide activities and provide support to local units		✓
Group travel opportunities		✓
Member discounts and consultations—dental, vision, and other insurance products		✓
Representation at relevant committee meetings of the Arkansas State Legislature		✓
Advocates for adequate and affordable health benefits for present and future retirees		✓
Maintains cooperative relationships with the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System, AARP and other organizations to monitor mutual interests		✓
Advocates for secure and improved retirement benefits for <i>all</i> retirees		✓





THERE IS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS!

Individually , we struggle to be heard.
Collectively, we cannot be ignored.

We invite you to join your colleagues as a member of ARTA. Your support will allow us to continue our work of maintaining a cooperative relationship with the teachers' retirement system and monitoring actions of the legislature that affect it's strength and stability. May we count on you?

For the latest information about the Arkansas Retired Teachers Association,
visit www.artanow.com



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THERE IS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS!

Individually , we struggle to be heard.
Collectively, we cannot be ignored.

We invite you to join your colleagues as a member of ARTA. Your support will allow us to continue our work of maintaining a cooperative relationship with the teachers' retirement system and monitoring actions of the legislature that affect it's strength and stability. May we count on you?

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*Do something today that
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LEGISLATIVE

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

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Little Rock, AR 72202
501-375-2958
888-929-0955
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www.artanow.com

Legislative Advocacy

ARTA is a professional not-for-profit organization. In order to maintain this status, we cannot endorse or monetarily support candidates for public office. We *can* educate others about the needs and concerns of members. We can also advocate for or against legislation that affects our members and the members of ATRS or other retirees in Arkansas. Any "lobbying" efforts are limited to specific pieces of legislation of interest or concern and are typically focused on statewide issues.

While ARTA provides a political voice for our members, local units and individual members are encouraged to become involved in legislative advocacy at all levels on topics of interest or concern.

ARTA serves as a political voice for our members while encouraging them to advocate for their own interests as well.

Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee provides leadership to the unit members in promoting and monitoring legislation that will affect unit members and all older persons. Unit legislative committees are aware of the needs of retired educators and other older persons and are familiar with the legislative and community decision-making processes. They are able to affect public policy by educating members and public officials about the issues that are of importance to members and other older persons and by effectively mobilizing support or protest for legislation that affects retired educators and other older persons. The responsibilities of the Legislative Committee are:

- To become knowledgeable about the legislative process, and the most effective means of participating in that process.
- To establish good working relationships and rapport with legislators, their staff and other key figures in government.
- To establish a local presence in county, city councils, and other responsible bodies or agencies in the community, and to successfully advocate for local programs of importance to mid-life and older citizens.
- To coordinate with other unit committees on aspects of legislation which relate to their committees, such as the Informative and Protective Services Committee, the Health Committee, etc.
- Communicate with the state committee chairperson to coordinate state and local goals.

10 Rules for Good Listening

www.arkleg.state.ar.us
[www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/
advocacy-toolkit/](http://www.ncoa.org/public-policy-action/advocacy-toolkit/)

www.artanow.com
Pocket Glossary of Legislative Terms

RESOURCES

Legislative Advocacy by Local Units

- Know the names and contact information of each of your elected officials.
- Get to know them well enough that you can call them by their first name. If you taught them in school, remind of this fact.
- Visit with them and have them visit your local unit, even in an off-legislative year.
- Invite candidates for office to speak to your unit in an election year. Develop a candidate questionnaire for candidates.
- Develop a candidate questionnaire specific to your community/district or in cooperation with the state legislative committee.
- Organize or participate in voter registration drives. Encourage voting. Provide transportation for those who need it to vote.
- Establish an active Legislative Committee. Have it report to the unit regularly. Encourage all members to assist the committee as requested.
- Invite a speaker who is knowledgeable about the legislative process to speak to your unit at least once a year.
- Know how to research the contents of a bill and follow its progress through the legislature.
- Review the proposed municipal, county or township budget to examine the allocations in areas such as health care services, programs for the elderly public safety, housing and other issues of importance to unit members and all older citizens.
- Host a panel discussion with representatives from multiple parties or stakeholders on an issue of importance to your community members.
- Review the activities of community boards and commissions responsible for setting policy affecting the older members of the community.
- Be aware of and ready to utilize all of the resources at your disposal when a call to action is needed—telephone committees, email lists, newsletters, active school employees, local media, social media (Facebook), other organizations with similar membership or interests, etc.
- Collect information and share your analysis of how proposed legislation will affect older members of the community.
- Encourage local members to join ARTA to receive information directly via printed materials, email notification/social media and the ARTA Legislative Committee.
- Remember that the larger your active membership, the more successful you will be in your legislative efforts as well as in other programs.



Effective Communication with Elected Officials

1. Know what you hope to accomplish – are you simply sharing information, or will you be asking them for something? If you are asking them to do something, be specific, and make sure it is something they can actually do – provide leadership, sponsor legislation, vote for specific legislation, meet with constituents in the community, etc.
2. Choose a method of communication – a request to vote for a bill can be done with a phone call or short email. Longer, more complicated messages should be presented in writing or in a meeting.
3. Explain why you are relevant – you are relevant to elected officials because you live, work or serve people in the areas they represent. Be able to show the connection.
4. Understand your audience – Learn about an elected official's position on your issues before you contact them. They may already be sympathetic or supportive.
5. Frame your message – It also helps to know something about the issues an elected official feels strongly about, even if they aren't the same as your own. Look for ways to frame your message in ways that make sense to them. For example, if you want to talk about health care costs with someone who is very interested in fiscal issues, talk about your issue as an investment, or perhaps the long-term costs of not addressing an issue now.
6. Develop a compelling story – It's good to have facts, figures and statistics to support your position, but it is also important to bring a human perspective. Let them know how the policies they are considering directly impact their constituents. Relate the concerns of others as well as your own experiences and feelings if appropriate.
7. Be prepared, but do not feel the need to be an expert – Do your homework, but keep it real. Don't use excessive technical jargon. Know when to admit "I don't know" and offer to follow up with the information. Be open to counter arguments but do not become argumentative.
8. Listen well – remember that you are there to build a relationship. You should be listening, looking for indications of the elected official's views and finding opportunities to provide good information. If he or she has been supportive in the past, be sure to acknowledge your appreciation during the course of the visit. If the opposite is true, try to be positive. Some day, on an issue of importance to you, s/he may come through. In the meantime, your visit may prevent the official from being an active opponent.
9. Don't stay too long – Try to get closure on your issue. If you hear what you had hoped for, express your thanks and leave. If you reach an impasse, thank him/her, even if disappointed, and say so. Leave room to continue the discussion at another time.
10. Follow up – be sure to send a thank-you note after an extended call or visit. Be sure to include additional information if you were asked to provide it. If commitments were made during the visit, repeat your understanding of them. If staff members were present, write to them too, as they can often be important allies. This follow up will earn you the attention of, and potentially more support from, the elected official.



The Legislative Advocate

The Role of an Advocate

- To **educate** legislators about an issue or concern
- To **inform** them using facts, figures and examples
- To **communicate** clearly and briefly
- To **ask** for their assistance and their vote
- To **monitor** and track their activities
- To **hold them accountable** for action/inaction
- To **build** relationships for now and the future

The Advocacy “DOs”

- Get to know them—build a relationship
- Contact them to express your concerns/ideas
- Use brief facts/figures; be clear and concise
- Know your issue and stay well informed
- Show common courtesy/politeness; tell the truth
- Offer to assist with their issues or concerns
- Thank them for their time and attention
- Follow up with information/confirmation and a note of thanks

The Advocacy “DON’Ts”

- DON’T be afraid to talk to them or let yourself be intimidated
- DON’T waste their time or energy if unprepared
- DON’T assume they understand your issue
- DON’T be rude, discourteous or threatening
- DON’T promise more than you can deliver
- DON’T give up on a negative reaction or “NO”
- DON’T forget to thank them for their time and attention



PROGRAM

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

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Program

The Program Committee prepares a yearly plan of programming that will meet the goals and purposes of the unit, meet the needs and interests of the members, and attract new members. Examples of specific responsibilities for the committee are:

- To organize and oversee the development of a program plan for the year.
- To invite, or coordinate the invitation of, special speakers and presenters for unit meetings.
- To coordinate with the unit president or other unit leaders to arrange the welcome and introduction of special speakers, presenters and guests.
- To work with the Public Relations Committee to ensure good publicity in advance and following unit meeting programs.
- To work out with the secretary and treasurer correspondence and fund dispersals related to unit meeting programs.
- To evaluate the programming with a simple survey at the end of the year —

*Did this year's programs meet your needs?
If not, what kind of programs would meet your needs?
Did this year's programs provide a wide enough variety?
What specific programs would you like to see next year?*

If your unit meets every month, encourage each committee to be in charge of a monthly Program each year.

- Membership — June/September
- Legislative—May/October
- Community Services—ongoing
- Informative-Protective Services—November
- Public Relations—ongoing
- Health Services—February
- Grants — March/April

Units that do not meet every month can still invite committee representatives to present a report or share information at each meeting.

GENERAL TIPS:

- Dynamic programming attracts and retains members
- Vary programs by topic and presentation style
- Make use of ARTA, AARP and other such organizations' resources such as speakers and publications
- Encourage committee participation in programs
- Encourage member participation in programs
- Make use of many resources—local, state and national
- Plan and publicize programs well ahead of time

Attracting New Members

While your yearly programming is developed with your members' needs and interests in mind, it can also be a great way to attract new members for your local unit. Keep in mind that dynamic programming is essential to attracting and retaining members.

- Vary your program topics and speakers—while February may always be Heart Month, you don't have to invite the same person to give the same information in the same way. Include presenters from within your organization and from without. Discuss topics from the perspectives of both new and long-time retirees. Think of a creative way to present useful information.
- Vary the presentation style—mix speakers with activities, presentations with discussions. Give attendees a way to participate. Have enough time for fun and fellowship in addition to business and programming.
- Vary the meeting location—have several communities in your county take turns hosting the meetings. Alternate between a restaurant and a pot luck.
- Vary the meeting times—if your base membership is only interested in a midday meeting with lunch, try adding one or two evening or weekend activities. Remember that some retirees continue to work or care for family members but may be able to attend at other times of the day or week.

It is also important that you publicize your monthly programs not only to unit members, but to potential members and the community at large. Work with other unit committees to:

- Create an At-a-Glance postcard of your yearly program to send to potential members.
- Personally invite potential members or individuals within the community to programs you have developed for the public.
- Create a Facebook page or other way to share information about your unit with members and non-members alike.

Generating Funds

Ideally, unit membership dues should cover the cost of meetings, supplies and equipment, printing and postage, reimbursement for certain member expenses, etc. Some units also cover the costs of sending representatives to state and area meetings and conventions. Units may supplement these funds by accepting contributions for specific items or projects such as refreshments, special gifts, flowers, etc.

Units that want to substantially supplement or increase their funds may want to consider fundraising activities. The Program Committee can play a key role in developing and organizing unit programs that can also serve as fundraisers. These programs might be unit programs that are made open to the public, or they might be programs that are created specifically for the public with assistance from the unit membership.

FUNDRAISING PROJECTS:

- Entertainment—films, concerts, speakers, shows, dance events, demonstrations, readings
- Recreation and sports tournaments or clinics—golf, chess, bridge, bowling
- Parties—game night, dinner party, themed meal
- Sales—bake sales, arts & crafts, rummage sale
- Tours—houses, museums, gardens, industry
- Classes—genealogy, creative writing, computers, photography, cooking, container gardening
- Services—toy repair, holiday gift wrapping,

Examples of Monthly Programs by Theme/ Focus

- July Yearly Planning
- Appoint committees
 - Set membership goals
 - Get updates from participants in summer programs you have sponsored/supported
- August Getting Acquainted
- Distribute survey sheets or personal data sheets to collect information, opinions, and ideas (see **Sample Interest Survey** included in Blank Forms section)
 - Installation of new officers, recognition of outgoing officers
- September Financial Planning
- Pre-retirement planning
 - Panel discussion on wills, trusts, deeds, asset protection, etc.
 - Invite representative from AARP to speak
- Welcome new members
- October Legislative
- Overview of candidates running for political office
 - Distribute surveys on legislative concerns for the next legislative session
- November National Education Week
- Partner with local school to celebrate/recognize importance of education
 - Discussion of continuing education opportunities available for older adults
- December Holidays
- Musical programs by children's group, specialty choir, members, etc.
 - Christmas in other lands or unusual holiday traditions
 - Distribute gifts or favors to nursing home residents or members who are homebound
 - Invite people who are homeless or otherwise alone to be a part of a unit holiday dinner
- January Broaden Our Horizons
- Travel talks/opportunities
 - Retired serviceman as speaker
- February Heart Month
- Healthy lifestyles, nutrition and exercise
 - Special health needs of the elderly

Examples of Monthly Programs by Theme/ Focus

February Black History Month

- Highlight achievements
- Historical presentation

March Women's History Month

- Honor women who have made important contributions to your community
- Display of women's unique talents in arts, crafts, quilting, etc.

Begin publicizing grants and scholarships

April National Volunteer Week

- Honor outstanding volunteers
- Invite participants from community service programs you have sponsored

National Library Week

- Intergenerational reading program
- Book club/review

Election of officers for next year

May Older Americans Month

- Program using talents of older members
- Present awards to person of all ages for contribution on behalf of older persons

Legislative

- Committee report on the last session of the state legislature

June Family Time

- Reception for new retirees
- Presentation on genealogy or scrapbooking
- Presentation on using social media and technology to stay in touch with family members

Sample Planning Worksheet for Local Units

For more unique monthly themes:
www.nationaldaycalendar.com
www.holidayinsights.com
www.daysoftheyear.com
<http://healthfinder.gov/NHO>

RESOURCES

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

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Community Services

The Community Services Committee leads the unit in providing needed services to the community. The work of the committee provides an opportunity for retired personnel to continue their involvement in the community and to receive recognition for their contributions. The committee also initiates involvement of unit members on community boards, councils, and other local groups that make policy and provide services for all older people in the community. Some responsibilities of the committee may be:

- To identify the needs in your community that can be met by unit programs.
- To establish working contacts with appropriate service agencies and organizations in your community.
- To develop, present and implement a comprehensive Community Services Action Plan for the unit that includes each unit program or project.
- To provide leadership and accountability for projects undertaken by the unit.
- To coordinate with other committee chairpersons on aspects of community service which relate to their committees.
- To communicate with the state committee chairperson to coordinate state and local goals.

PROJECT EXAMPLES:

- Scholarship programs for local students and teachers
- Grants to local schools and teachers for projects or supplies
- Partnerships with local service organizations to provide food, school supplies, basic care items and other assistance to children, the elderly or other needy residents of the community
- Collection Drive for specific items, such as winter coats, shoes, school supplies, Christmas toys or baskets, etc.
- Book/Dictionary Projects to provide materials to children or classrooms
- Literacy/Tutoring Programs for early childhood classrooms, libraries, or at-risk youth
- Social/Educational programs for shut-ins, nursing home residents, etc.
- Spelling Bee, Essay Contest, Poster Contest, or other competition in a specific area
- New Teacher Outreach—cards, cookies or other encouragement to first-year teachers
- Educational Exhibits at health fairs, community fairs, etc.
- Partnerships with local organizations on community projects (parks/gardens/trails), recreational programs, educational programs, historical preservation, etc.

Develop a Community Service Action Plan

STEP 1.

Determine community needs that might be met by your unit

- Committee members may already know of specific needs in the community which are not being met. A survey of members may also be helpful.
- Senior center staff, church leaders, social service agencies, and school principals are also reliable sources of knowledge about community needs.

STEP 2.

Determine unit resources—Evaluate community needs in terms of what the unit is able to support. Consider:

- Interests of members
- Number of people needed to plan/staff a project
- Amount of time needed to support a project
- Special skills or abilities available/ required
- Length of the project (ongoing or one-time)
- Donations expected from unit or individuals (financial or items)
- How many projects can be supported by your committee and the unit?
- Which project or projects are most worthy of support?

STEPS 3 & 4.

Plan and implement each project or program

- What is to be done?
- Why is it to be done?
- Where will it be done?
- When will it be done?
- Who will do it?
- How will it be done?
- How will we tell others about it?

Each plan should be written down and presented to the board and the unit membership. A well conceived plan, with clear organization and clearly defined volunteer jobs, will make the implementation phase easier for the committee, and will make participation easier for unit members.

The components of the plan shown above are discussed on the following page.

Develop a Community Service Action Plan

What is to be done

Your plan should be as specific as possible based on the needs you have found. For example, “We will provide tutoring to children in grades 5-6” is much clearer than “We will offer tutoring after school”. Members are likely to be more supportive if they know what is being asked of them.

Why it is to be done

A simple statement of why this is a worthy project for the unit is important to having unit members accept and support the project.

Where it will be done

The project location will determine some members’ willingness to work on the project. Is it accessible? Is it safe? How will they get there?

When it will be done

In the case of a one-time project, a timeline of the implementation and execution of the project will be useful. A flier with the date, time and location of the project will also serve this purpose for both members and the public.

In the case of an ongoing project, specify if it repeats weekly, monthly, or as needed. Will it take place at a specific time of day or can members do it on their own time?

Who will do it

Committee members are the primary workers on service projects, but unit member involvement is crucial to the overall community service action plan.

1. Divide the project into clearly defined stages or a sequence of steps.
2. Assign committee members responsibility for various stages of the project.
3. Involve unit members at each step of the project. Have enough people to carry out each step.
4. Specify a process for reporting back to the committee and the unit at various stages of the project.

No one member of the committee, or the chairman, should ever be responsible for the whole project, no matter how small.

How it is to be done

- By individual effort—a one to one relationship between the unit member and the one needing the service.
- By cooperative effort of unit members—a group or team of unit members working together.
- By cooperative effort with other community groups—where the unit has identified or been asked to assist with a community need.

Develop a Community Service Action Plan

Other considerations are:

- The transportation of volunteers or of those needing the service.
- Whether or not volunteers will be reimbursed for any expenses related to the project.
- Finding a facility, if it is not provided.
- Providing supplies for the project.
- A budget for the project.

How others will know about it

- Present the project plan to the unit members for their approval and support.
- Coordinate with other committees to identify recipients of services, generate publicity, identify members with needed contacts or skills, or to request specific additional assistance.
- Tell the state committee chairperson or the ARTA state office about your project so that we can publicize it for you or share it as an example for other units.

STEP 5.

Evaluate the project. For short-term projects, an evaluation can be conducted at the end of the project. For long-term, or ongoing projects, hold periodic evaluations. Some sample questions to help you evaluate the project:

- Did the project meet the unmet need you identified? (If not, list possible reasons why it didn't, and what can be done to change that in the future.)
- Did the project contribute to community improvement? How?
- Did the project receive positive recognition in the community?
- How adequate were the plans used to select and implement the projects? How can these be improved?
- To what extent were members involved?
- Did the project benefit the unit in any way? How?
- How effective was your committee? What might improve the effectiveness of your committee?
- Did the project receive continued member interest and support?
- If funding was necessary, did you have enough? Can you identify additional sources of funding for future projects?
- Can, or should, the project be repeated?

SAMPLE Record of Volunteer Service (blank)

RESOURCES

INFORMATIVE-PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

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www.artanow.com

Informative-Protective Services

The Informative-Protective Services Committee promotes the well-being of retired educators by helping them obtain the services and information they need to solve, or avoid, financial and personal problems. The committee is not a social service agency. Examples of specific responsibilities for the committee are:

- To establish contacts with persons, organizations, and agencies in your community that have access to information or perform useful services for mid-life and older citizens.
- To identify and develop a list of members' needs on special topics that could be addressed by the committee.
- To coordinate with other unit committee chairpersons on aspects of informative and protective services that relate to their committees.
- To communicate with the state committee chairperson to coordinate state and local goals.

POSSIBLE NEEDS/ TOPICS:

- Consumer issues—product safety, warranties, housing costs, funeral planning
- Crime—fraud detection, home safety, Internet safety, personal safety
- Disabilities—access to community facilities and services
- Driver education
- Education—continuing education, tuition discounts
- Emotional and mental health—community resources and costs
- Energy conservation
- Environmental issues
- Finances—taxes, Social Security, banking costs and services
- Health care—costs, availability
- Housing—affordability, weatherization, safety
- Insurance
- Legal affairs
- Long-term care—services and costs
- Food—food insecurity, home meal delivery, community lunch program
- Pension—provisions, changes
- Recreation
- Transportation—driver education, public transportation
- Widowhood
- End of life planning

Develop an Informative-Protective Services Action Plan

STEP 1.

Conduct a member survey to identify possible needs. Ask about members' own needs and interests. Be sure to include a space for members to tell you about another retired educator who may be incapacitated or otherwise unable to express his or her own needs.

STEP 2.

Research the resources. Have committee members compile information from multiple sources. In addition to human resources, be sure to include sources for books, pamphlets, brochures, etc. Include local, state and national resources.

STEP 3.

Plan unit programs. Unit programs are usually informational programs about topics in which members have expressed interest. A qualified speaker or official materials can provide reliable information on subjects of concern. In addition to regular unit meetings, your committee can use unit newsletters, social media, telephone networks, special mailings and personal visits to convey valuable information to members. Informational programs are usually preventive in nature, designed to alert unit members to information and services that will help them anticipate and avoid potential problems.

STEP 4.

Plan other activities. Your committee may want to become directly involved in providing service to meet the needs of retired educators and other older citizens.

- Telephone reassurance and friendly visitor programs are examples of services that keep homebound unit members in touch with others for practical purposes and for companionship and friendship.
- The committee could inform and assist all unit members in using an available service, such as a health fair or screening, weather radio programming, smoke alarm distribution, or weatherization program.
- Examples of problems that may require the committee's intervention include disability, sudden acute illness, recent widowhood, financial or legal difficulties, lack of mobility, alcoholism or addiction, abuse, emotional problems, and other crises or chronic difficulties. When these problems occur, committee members can provide specific services such as help in completing forms, individual counseling, transportation assistance, and/or referral to the appropriate service agency.
- Units or committees may choose to host or support a program on a topic of interest to older citizens that is open to the entire community.

STEP 5.

Evaluate programs and projects. Survey forms for participants as well as self-evaluation are important. Some suggested questions are:

- Did the program/project meet the needs you identified?
- What aspects of the program could be improved?
- Were unit members interested in and involved with the program or project?

Other questions specific to your unit/community/program can be developed by committee members.

www.artanow.com
Helpful Links (printable list)

RESOURCES

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

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Public Relations

The Public Relations Committee keeps the members and the community informed about the activities of the unit. In doing this, the committee must work closely with all other unit committees to see that unit activities receive the proper coverage. Whether large or small, every unit finds it important to have awareness and coverage of their activities. General responsibilities for the committee are:

- To work with the unit president and board to determine the unit's publicity priorities.
- To develop a year's plan for the Public Relations Committee.
- To know the work of each committee and the projected dates relevant to launching, implementing and concluding specific projects of the committee so that you can arrange appropriate media coverage.
- To establish good working relationships with local press and media.
- To communicate with the state committee chairperson to coordinate state and local publicity

Informing Members

The Public Relations Committee plays a supportive role, working with other committees to keep unit members informed about and interested in unit activities. Specific examples include:

- Prepares and distributes a unit year book (see FILE: ARTA/Local).
- Prepares and distributes a New Member Kit in conjunction with the Membership Committee.
- Prepares and distributes a unit newsletter.
- Prepares and distributes fliers or brochures to publicize a specific unit program.
- Prepares a Unit Fact Sheet for distribution to the public.
- Utilizes phone and email lists to share information.
- Maintains a social media presence, such as a Facebook page or group.

Informing the Community

Keeping the community informed about unit activities is an ongoing function of the committee. Some methods for getting the word out about the unit are described below:

Exhibits/ Posters/ Displays

An attractive exhibit or display staffed by friendly, knowledgeable volunteers can be very effective in attracting new members and drawing general attention to the unit. County fairs, health fairs and local conventions offer space for exhibits, as do shopping centers, banks and libraries. Posters or fliers may be displayed at libraries, senior centers, Social Security offices, doctors' offices, laundromats, restaurants, grocery stores, dry cleaners, hair salons and other small business.

Speakers

Unit members who are good speakers can be asked to participate in a speaker's bureau. The Public Relations Committee can coordinate with other committees to provide speakers for various scenarios:

- Give general information about the unit to outside groups.
- Publicize an upcoming unit activity to outside groups.
- Advise outside groups of the availability of speakers from the unit on specific topics.

Working with the Media

Newspapers, television, radio and the Internet can be important outlets for unit publicity. For best results, know the difference between “publicity” and “news” and choose your medium accordingly.

Routine Events

While unit meetings are not “news”, they are still publicized. Most media outlets have community calendar listings in what are known as traditional and digital formats. You may need to request that your event be placed in each separately, i.e. send a press release to the newspaper, radio and TV stations, but also complete the calendar request on their web site, if available. Don't forget to list it with your local cable provider, school district or other public access channels as well.

In addition to listing your event with traditional media, look for other organizations that have a web site with such listings. Cities or towns, Chambers of Commerce, United Ways or other service organizations, libraries, medical centers and some businesses have directories or calendars on their web site to list events such as meetings or programs.

News Events

Spot news—is timely and must be used immediately. For example, a unit is hosting an event that is open to the public. Use your media contacts to promote the event.

Feature news—can be developed for use at any time. For example, the unit is working on a community beautification project. You might propose a story on the project at any time.

Social media—can be used to inform members in advance, but is also an excellent tool for showing potential members what kinds of activities your unit is doing and how much fun you are having. Whether or not traditional media covers your event, you can always post a picture or two on Facebook.

Working with ARTA

Remember to share your photos and news items with ARTA. We can help you publicize your event in advance or show the highlights afterwards on our social media platforms. Let other units around the state see what your unit is doing to generate publicity!

Find and “Like” ARTA on Facebook

<http://www.orea.org/Communications Public Relations.html>

HEALTH SERVICES

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www.artanow.com

Health Services

The Health Services Committee promotes educational and service programs centered on preventive health care and health care access and costs and works for appropriate legislative measures relative to the quality and cost of health care. Some or all of the following goals may be incorporated into your unit's health care activities: **

- To empower consumers to become more active participants in their own health care.
- To encourage the adoption of healthier lifestyles.
- To support research, legislation and regulation to improve the quality of physical and mental health services.
- To assist consumers to in coping with a complex health system while working to simplify the system.
- To contain system-wide and personal health care costs.
- To advocate for improved and increased health care services for minorities.
- To achieve universal access to acute and long-term care.
- To secure for consumers a major decision-making role in allocating resources and assuring quality of care.

PROGRAM IDEAS:

- Hold an open meeting on Medicare and Social Security
- Sponsor a blood pressure and cholesterol check at a local shopping center
- Start a caregivers' support group
- Start a walking group. Start a senior exercise program under the supervision of a local health care or fitness facility
- Develop and distribute a long-term care directory for your community
- Gather and distribute information on long-term care insurance policies in your state
- Conduct an educational forum on health care fraud
- Work with the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and/or the American Lung Association to sponsor a program to help seniors quit smoking
- Hold a seminar on the prescription drug abuse. Participate in your community's Drug Take Back Program.
- Initiate an awareness campaign about a health issue of concern/interest—stroke recognition, diabetes management, brain health, depression in older citizens, etc.
- Offer a scripted presentation on a health-related topic (see Resources at end of section)

** The Health Services Committee was originally modeled on the Health Care Committee recommended by NRTA/AARP. The goals listed were the goals of AARP's Health Care Campaign. State and local RTA's have adopted/ adapted these goals to fit their unique situations as the state of health care has evolved.

Develop a Health Care Program

STEP 1.

Determine community needs that might be met by your unit

- Committee members may already know of specific health care concerns they would like to have addresses. A survey of members may also be helpful.
- Senior center staff, church leaders, social service agencies, and others can also help you identify community needs.

STEP 2.

Determine unit resources—Evaluate needs in terms of what the unit is able to support. Consider:

- Amount of time needed to fill the need; e.g. half hour unit program vs. ongoing or external program).
- Special skills or abilities available/ required.
- The number of persons needed for the project.
- The magnitude of the need, or what the committee thinks is most important.
- Whether or not the other unit members will support your committee's efforts.

STEPS 3.

Identify and select potential programs and projects based on the information you gathered in steps one and two.

STEP 4.

Conduct the programs and projects that are approved by your Board and membership using the appropriate strategy:

- One-to-one—provide resources, guidance and encouragement for members to work individually on projects. For example, the Health Services Committee can assist members with finding a local program that provides needed services or volunteer opportunities.
- Cooperative effort—organize a team of members to work on a program or project as a unit or in partnership with another community organization.

STEP 5

Evaluate the programs and projects. For short-term projects, an evaluation can be conducted at the end of the project. For long-term, or ongoing projects, hold periodic evaluations. Some sample questions to help you evaluate the project:

- Did the program meet the needs of participants? (If not, list possible reasons why it didn't, and what can be done to improve future programs.)
- Did the project receive positive recognition in the community?

Develop a Health Care Program

- How adequate were the plans used to select and implement the project? How can these be improved?
- To what extent were members involved?
- Did the project benefit the unit in any way? How?
- How effective was your committee? What might improve the effectiveness of your committee?
- Did the project receive continued member interest and support?
- If funding was necessary, did you have enough? Can you identify additional sources of funding for future projects?
- Can, or should, the project be repeated?

National Health Observances: <http://healthfinder.gov/NHO>

Talking to Your Doctor Presentation Toolkit:
<http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/talking-your-doctor-presentation-toolkit>

See Well for a Lifetime Presentation Toolkit:
<https://nei.nih.gov/nehep/programs/visionandaging/whatis>

Brain Health as You Age Presentation Toolkit:
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/brain-health-resource>

Preventing Kidney Disease Presentation Toolkit:
<http://www.kidneyfund.org/kidney-disease/kidney-health-toolkit/>

Stamp Out Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse Tool Kit:
<https://www.ascp.com/articles/stamp-out-prescription-drug-misuse-abuse>

Healthy Living for Life Nutrition Education Curricula:
<http://www.healthylivingforlife.org/tools.php>

American Heart Association Founders Health Fair Toolkit:
http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/General/Founders-Health-Fair-Toolkit_UCM_427727_Article.jsp

GRANTS

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

1200 Commerce Suite 103
Little Rock, AR 72202
501-375-2958
888-929-0955
office_arta@att.net

www.artanow.com

Grant Committee

The Grant Committee is responsible for overseeing scholarships, grants and other special programs. Responsibilities of the committee may include:

- Coordinating with the Community Service Committee to make small grants to community organizations on behalf of the local unit.
- Planning a scholarship program, essay or poster contest, etc. at the local level by:
 - * Coordinating with other committees and the membership to raise funds for the program, determine selection criteria, choose recipients, etc..
 - * Coordinating with the Public Relations Committee to publicize the availability of the scholarship and to recognize the recipients.
 - * Coordinating with the Program Committee to include the recipients in a unit meeting or event.
- Supporting the ARTA statewide scholarship program, the Parsons-Burnett Grants, by:
 - * Promoting the availability of the scholarships to local school districts and secondary institutions.
 - * Coordinating with your Membership Committee or unit secretary to send memorials for deceased members from the local unit to the ARTA Memorial Fund, which funds the Parsons-Burnett Grant program.
 - * Encouraging individual members of the unit or the community to send memorials and donations to support the ARTA Memorial Fund.

Memorials and donations can be sent at any time during the year to:

ARTA Memorial Fund
1200 Commerce Suite 103
Little Rock, AR 72202

PARSONS-BURNETT GRANTS

Members of ARTA demonstrate their support for quality education at the elementary and secondary levels by funding incentive grants for teachers to improve their professional skills through graduate study.

Up to three \$1,500 grants, which are funded by member contributions to the ARTA Memorial Fund, are awarded annually to practicing educators based on teaching performance, academic record, application statement and financial need.

Applications are accepted each spring for grants to be awarded in late summer.

For more information or an application, visit www.artanow.com.

GENERAL RESOURCES

Arkansas Retired Teachers Association

1200 Commerce Suite 103
Little Rock, AR 72202
501-375-2958
888-929-0955
office_arta@att.net

www.artanow.com

SAMPLE Planning Worksheet for Local Units

Date	Task	Responsible
July	Appoint Committee Chairs	President
	Review membership reports and set membership goals	President/Membership Committee
	Submit photos and articles for INTERLINK	President/PR Committee
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee
	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services
August	Set program agenda for the year	President/Committees
	Prepare Yearbook	
	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee
September	Attend State Convention	ALL
	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee
October	Yearbook due October 1st (if not submitted with reports or at convention)	
	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee
November	Submit photos and articles for INTERLINK	President/PR Committee
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee
	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services
December	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee
January	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee
February	Submit photos and articles for INTERLINK	President/PR Committee
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee
	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services

SAMPLE Planning Worksheet for Local Units

Date	Task	Responsible
March	Publicize Parsons-Burnett Grants	
	Prepare for election of new officers	
	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee
April	Publicize Parsons-Burnett Grants	
	Appoint a Nominating Committee for Individual Achievement Awards	President
	Begin preparing information for Annual Reports	President/Committee Chairs
	Identify project to recommend for Outstanding Community Pro-	Community Services
	Elect new officers	
	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee
May	Publicize Parsons-Burnett Grants	
	Submit nomination for Individual Achievement Awards	President/Nominating Committee
	Submit project for Outstanding Community Project	President/Community Services
	Submit list of new officers and committee chairs	
	Submit photos and articles for INTERLINK	President/PR Committee
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee
	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services
June	Annual Reports due	
	Membership Reports due	
	Individual Achievement Award Nominations due	
	Outstanding Community Project recommendations due	
	Update Volunteer Service Record	Community Services
	Confirm/Publicize next meeting	Program/PR Committee

This sample includes just some of the planning and administrative tasks that a unit will undertake in a year. It is for reference only, meant to provide a starting point for your own planning. Feel free to add in your own community projects, planning committee calls/meetings, individual assignments, and other tasks that are unique to your unit.

Effective Unit Meetings

PLACE

- Convenient location
- Adequate parking
- Accessible to wheelchairs with as few steps as possible
- Good acoustics
- Able to regulate temperature
- Availability of restrooms, sound equipment, etc.

WELCOME

Have hosts/hostess to greet members and to be alert to welcome new members or guests.

CALENDAR

Consult with membership to set meeting times that are convenient to most.

Remember to set meetings times that are also attractive to prospective members.

LENGTH

Unit meetings are generally 60-75 minutes long, with some exceptions for special meetings. Try to stick to your established time:

- Keep the introduction of speakers brief—present only enough information to establish credibility.
- Brief potential speakers on the time constraints and the purpose of having them address the unit. This will help them focus on what the group wants and needs to hear.
- Develop a detailed agenda that fits your timeframe and then follow it.
- Do not let committee reports run over their allotted time.
- Discourage members from dominating the meeting.

FREQUENCY

The number of local meetings per year will depend on local preferences. Remember that one of the criterion for a Unit Achievement Award is that a unit meet at least six times per year.

REFRESHMENTS

Always a good idea!

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AT A GLANCE: http://arteach.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/0/0/12005485/parliamentaryprocedure_at_a_glance.pdf



Sample Meeting Agenda

(A good meeting length is 60-75 minutes)

- I. Call to Order
- II. Invocation
- III. Welcome/Introductions
- IV. Reading of the Minutes
 - A. Any corrections or additions
 - B. Approved as read, or amended
- V. Treasurer's Report
 - A. Questions
 - B. Report filed for Audit
- VI. Committee Reports

Note: Committee reports should last 3-5 minutes. Every committee does not have to report. The president should check with each committee chairman before the meeting to see which committees will be giving a report.
- VII. Unfinished Business
- VIII. New Business
- IX. Program

Note: Be sure to assign a time limit for the program. Program participants need to know. For a speaker, 20 minutes with questions and 10 minutes for answers is long enough. Entertainment programs should not be longer than 45 minutes.
- X. Announcements
 - A. Report important information from ARTA or other organizations that your members need to know.
 - B. Announce important dates for next month not brought up in the course of the meeting.
- XI. Adjourn

10 Rules for Good Listening

1. Stop talking!

It's hard to listen to someone else while you are talking.

2. Put the speaker at ease.

Help him or her feel free to talk openly.

3. Show others that you want to listen.

Look at the speaker. Look and act interested. Better yet, be interested. Listen with the idea of truly understanding in mind, rather than to prepare for your response.

4. Remove distractions.

Move objects out of your reach if you will be tempted to pick them up or play with them. Don't tap on the table with your pen. Shut the door if something outside catches your eye.

5. Empathize with others.

Imagine yourself in the shoes of the other person to gain perspective.

6. Be patient.

See Number 4.

7. Hold your temper.

An angry person often misunderstands the meaning of others' words. You want to respond rather than react.

8. Avoid arguments and criticism.

These will put others on the defensive. This may result in the him or her "clamming up".

9. Ask questions.

This encourages two-way communication and shows that you are "hearing".

10. Stop talking.

This is the first, last and best advice. Everything else depends on it.



Sample Unit Fact Sheet

Your County Retired Teachers Association

- Meetings:** At City Community Center, 2468 Main Street, on the second Tuesday of every other month* at 11:45. Meetings are generally open to all interested retired, former and active school employees.
* August, October, February, April – brown bag lunch
* December, June or July – holiday potluck
- Purpose:** To help Our City's retired educators achieve dignity, independence and purpose in retirement by providing opportunities for fellowship, education and service.
- Motto:** “To serve, not to be served.”
- Membership:** Regular membership is open to all former or retired educators or employees in the nation's schools. Associate membership is open to other interested persons. Current dues are \$_____ per year. Current Active Members: 72
- Programs & Activities:** Unit sponsors the New Teachers' Welcome Program for first-year teachers in Our City's Public Schools, through which encouraging cards and surprise treats are provided throughout the school year.
Unit hosts an educational booth at the Our County Fair each fall.
Unit provides the program and entertainment at the annual Thanksgiving Day Dinner for residents of Our City's Nursing Home.
Unit sponsors the “Toys for Tots” Christmas program, through which gently-used toys are repaired and distributed to needy children.
Unit hosts the Open Forum for City Improvement each spring, which includes a panel of speakers and a Q & A session for citizens to comment on ways we can prepare our community for older citizens.
Unit provides cash awards to spelling bee winners and one scholarship to a graduating senior each spring.
Unit provides the refreshments for the Our City Public School Retiree's Party each spring.
Unit provides information and services to retired school employees to assist them with financial, medical or personal issues. This may include referral to community or state organizations.
- Other Programs:** The four regular business meetings feature guest speakers on a variety of subjects.
- Contact Info:** Current President, Mary Smith, marysmith@email.com or (501) 987-6543.

Sample Personal Data Form

Dear Member: Welcome to Name of Unit! To help you put your experience, talents, and interests to their best use in the unit, we would like to know more about you. Please feel free to fill out this form as completely as you wish. Thank you, The Membership Committee.

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Cell _____

Email _____

CIRCLE your preferred method of contact

Are you: ARTA Member _____ AARP Member _____ NRTA Member _____

How did you learn about us? _____

What is your primary reason for joining us at this time? _____

Are you: Fully retired _____ Working part-time _____ Caring for a family member _____

School/Work Experience

Organization Type of Work

Voluntary Experience

Include organizations, offices held, type of activity in which you participate(d), and accomplishments. Do not include active or retired teachers association work, as this is covered in the next section _____

Teachers Associations

Include involvement in associations for active and/or retired teachers or school employees associations _____

Hobbies and Interests

What skills and abilities would you like to use?

On what committees would you like to serve?

- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Informative-Protective Services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Grant/Scholarship | |

Please use this space to share any additional information you would like to share. (Do you play a musical instrument? Are you comfortable teaching adults or making a presentation? Do you know how to create or maintain a web site or Facebook page? Do you have audiovisual equipment the unit can borrow? Are you willing to use your vehicle for unit activities? _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Monthly Record of Volunteer Service

Name of Unit _____ Report Period _____

A form such as this may be used to record the individual volunteer hours of members. Information on this sheet will need to be transferred to the Cumulative Report or similar for reporting to ARTA. **Please do not submit all of your monthly sheets to ARTA.**

Examples of Volunteer Service:

- Volunteers in Public Schools, mentoring/tutoring, literacy programs
- Service in hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, etc.
- Childcare for parents who work, new parent programs, etc.
- Services to elderly/shut-ins (meal delivery, cards/calls, visits, transportation)
- Docent/volunteer in art gallery, museum, library
- Financial planning or income tax assistance
- Civic projects, boards/committees, election worker
- Volunteer with Red Cross, United Way, Salvation Army, etc.
- Church - auxiliary, teacher, nursery, VBS, music, etc.

Monetary donations and paid services are not counted as volunteer hours.

	Member Name	Youth Hours		Other Hours		Total
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
	Page Total					

Make additional copies of this sheet as needed for each monthly meeting.

Cumulative Record of Volunteer Service

Name of Unit _____ Report Period _____

A form such as this may be used to record/report the cumulative volunteer hours of members as reported to the Community Services Committee at meetings, via telephone, etc.

RTA members are encouraged to perform service to the community through volunteer hours with agencies such as schools, churches, hospitals, nursing homes, libraries, museums, civic groups, community interest groups or other community service providers. Examples include:

- Volunteers in Public Schools, mentoring/tutoring, literacy programs
- Service in hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, etc.
- Childcare for parents who work, new parent programs, etc.
- Services to elderly/shut-ins (meal delivery, cards/calls, visits, transportation)
- Docent/volunteer in art gallery, museum, library
- Financial planning or income tax assistance
- Civic projects, boards/committees, election worker
- Volunteer with Red Cross, United Way, Salvation Army, etc.
- Church - auxiliary, teacher, nursery, VBS, music, etc.

Monetary donations and paid services are not counted as volunteer hours.

	No. Reporting		Youth Hours		Community Hours		Total Hours
July							
Aug							
Sept							
Oct							
Nov							
Dec							
Jan							
Feb							
Mar							
Apr							
May							
June *							
Total hours							

* You will need to estimate the hours for June in order to provide totals for the Annual Report, which is due to ARTA by June 15.