

## **KEEPING A CHAPTER ACTIVE**

The following are excerpts from a document prepared by former Region VII Vice President Betty Lucero-Turner, with added comments by former National Secretary Elaine Hughes:

### **Chapter Leadership:**

- ❖ Inspire trust, respect and approachability.
- ❖ Stay connected to other chapter leaders and be accessible.
- ❖ Express responsiveness to the interests of the members.
- ❖ Recognize when assistance is needed, and ask for help.

### **Chapter Culture (dynamics):**

- ❖ Recognize the dynamics of the chapter members (the makeup of the membership).
- ❖ Turn resistance to change into a welcome challenge when warranted.

### **Identifying Volunteers:**

- ❖ Approach potential volunteers to come forward to take on tasks.
- ❖ Provide guidance when necessary.
- ❖ Capitalize on a member's expertise, experience and knowledge. Remember, members have varied backgrounds and can offer assistance in many areas of NARFE management.

### **Communication:**

- ❖ Communication is a top priority in keeping chapters active.
- ❖ Always communicate with leadership and members and to share information.
- ❖ Take advantage of the latest technology in choosing your methods of communication.

### **Empowering Members:**

- ❖ Encourage members to become involved in advancing NARFE's mission.
- ❖ Remind members to stay informed and up-to-date on critical issues facing the federal community.
- ❖ Spend time discussing the issues at meetings and make sure members understand the importance of their involvement in grass-roots advocacy.

### **Importance of Mentoring:**

- ❖ Leadership succession is an important link in keeping chapters active.
- ❖ Invest the time and energy in educating and teaching potential leaders.

### **Leadership Teamwork:**

- ❖ Teamwork is critical to a successful chapter.
- ❖ Teamwork inspires and is key to achieving the goals of a successful and active chapter.

## **Where do you want the chapter to go?**

- ❖ Evaluate the needs of the chapter.
- ❖ Keep in mind the importance of membership prospecting, recruitment and retention.
- ❖ Create a strategic plan. Such a document need not be complicated, so keep it simple!
- ❖ Set attainable goals that are specific, measurable, realistic and timely.
- ❖ Obtain agreement and/or buy-in from chapter members.

## **Legislative Responsibilities:**

- ❖ Take an active role in promoting NARFE's legislative agenda.
- ❖ Stay informed about critical legislative issues.
- ❖ Contact your respective members of Congress, and develop relationships with the representative and/or senator and their staffs.
- ❖ Remember to thank our congressional allies.
- ❖ Keep in contact with those members who are not necessarily supportive. NARFE voices must be heard.

## **Other Suggestions:**

- ❖ "Coffee clusters" – Members meet informally to discuss NARFE issues and to stay informed in lieu of monthly meetings.
- ❖ "Shared responsibility" – Having two members share a position lessens the burden of responsibility.
- ❖ Joint chapter meetings – Periodically join with another chapter that shares the same congressional district or to undertake a joint project.
- ❖ Chapter mentoring – Those chapters that remain active may be able to assist chapters that are inactive or on the verge of closing.
- ❖ Chapter meeting schedules – If monthly meetings no longer seem to be feasible, assess your chapter's attendance and gauge your members' preferences to determine if an alternative meeting schedule better meets their needs.