

PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

Planning a successful membership campaign relies on both active recruitment of new members as well as active efforts to retain current members.

To receive resources & support for your best possible membership campaign, your membership chair should attend all WBASNY Membership Committee meetings. The committee co-chairs are Janette Cortes-Gomez, jcortesgomezesq@gmail.com, and Heather Neu, heather.neu@gmail.com.

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I. SETTING A MEMBERSHIP GOAL

The first step in planning a successful membership campaign is coming up with your membership goal! Your membership goal can have multiple targets.

The first target is the number of chapter members will you recruit in this bar year!

Additional goals can include:

- Identifying group(s) of non-members to target and brainstorming and implementing ways to reach out to those group(s)
 - for example, does your chapter lack members from certain practice areas or types of offices? Does it lack racial, ethnic, or LGBTQIA+ diversity?
- Creating a membership committee or working group to assist the membership chair
- Developing a long-range membership development plan (in conjunction with any relevant long-range or strategic planning committees your chapter may have)

II. CREATING A MEMBERSHIP TIMELINE

June-August: SET A MEMBERSHIP GOAL! And create a MEMBERSHIP TIMELINE

- Membership chairs/officers responsible for membership should create a formal timeline and report at every board meeting
- “Goals that aren’t written down are just dreams.”

JUNE 1: kick off membership campaign!

- Small chapters without executive or administrative directors can have HQ send out your renewal letters & applications. Send HQ your letter ASAP!
- See renewal letter template in part IV

JULY 31: all applications should have been sent out

OCTOBER 1 (end of Cert. I): *strive to have 50% of your membership goal*

OCTOBER-DECEMBER: Make PERSONAL CONTACT with non-renewals

JANUARY 31 (end of Cert II): *strive to reach 100% of your membership goal* to ensure WBASNY certification & to determine your WBASNY votes & delegates

III. SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

The great thing about WBASNY is that you are part of a huge network of people working toward the same goals, including membership recruitment & retention! Below you will find strategies that have proven successful for chapters over the years – please implement what works best for your chapter!

A. RETAINING MEMBERS

The easiest and best way to retain members is to keep in touch with them! They will feel connected to your chapter and will see the value of their membership.

i. Regularly scheduled communications

Again, the easiest and most effective way to retain members is to keep in touch with them!

This does not have to fall on the membership chair alone; share these responsibilities among board members & committee chairs. Moreover, you don't need to reinvent the wheel; repurpose material from other sources, including sister chapters.

- Examples of Regular Communications:
 - Chapter Newsletter!
 - Mini-Surveys (Why did you join WBASNY?; How are we doing?; Ideas for CLEs or programs?)
 - These can be simple online polls created through programs like SurveyMonkey and distributed via your e-mail list

- Results can assist with long-range planning and program direction and should be incorporated into planning efforts
- Invitations to join social networks
- Member spotlights
- Reminders about WBASNY benefits
- Info about & invitation to local & WBASNY committees
- Recap events (with pictures!)
- Recap year
- Recap WBASNY board meetings
- Member/Board testimonials: “Why WBASNY? Why a women’s bar?”

B. RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

i. Timeline for contacting new members

When you get a new member in your chapter, it is critical that you welcome them & invite them to be an active participant!

Week 1: send a welcome letter or email

- This does not have to be elaborate. Simply welcome them to your chapter, highlight the next event, and provide them with the links to your chapter’s website, calendar, & social media accounts.

Week 2: send calendar of events

- Make sure that they know where to find the information about all the incredible events your chapter is hosting and include a personal invitation to the next event you will be attending.

Week 3: send info re WBASNY benefits

- Chapter members don't always realize that with their chapter membership, they also become WBASNY members. This e-mail will explain that connection as well as provide information about the many benefits, including discounts on practice resources & services, available to WBASNY members.

Week 4: welcome phone call

ii. Other strategies to recruit & retain new members

- Publish a membership brochure
- Assign each new member (or 1-3 year member) to a board member, who will make contacts when they join (or renew) and to make specific invites to big events
- Identify new members via name tag at events so members can introduce themselves
- Identify sustaining members via name tag at events to incentivize joining at that level
- Publish the names of new and sustaining members in your newsletter and introduce them at bar functions
- Host a reception for non-members and/or newly admitted attorneys or law students
- Offer a CLE program discount certificate to new members

- Offer a reciprocal dues incentive to members of other bar associations. A good idea to increase diversity in your membership is to offer this dues incentive to minority and specialty bar associations.
- Target new admittees
 - Offer dues discount to newly admitted attorneys
 - Host a reception for newly admitted attorneys
 - Offer law student membership
 - Offer court walkthrough and practical skills CLE programs for young attorneys

C. SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FROM CHAPTERS

- **Have applications & payment system (card reader, device with wifi) or QR codes at every event**
- **Personal contact is best to get new members & renewals!**
 - Staten Island: sending text re renewal & asking if can email membership link
 - Staten Island: send Holiday Cards with QR code to renewal page
 - Westchester: years of working with Pace Law students paying off as they graduate & join
 - Westchester: membership committee started a “buddy system” assigning buddies to younger members
 - Rockland: male membership committee member reaching out to other male attorneys to join
 - Reward members who recruit new members
 - Orange-Sullivan: members got entry for Amazon gift card for each renewal they were responsible for
 - Hold a membership phonathon
- **Have board members and committee chairs select specific non-renewals to follow up with & get them to renew**
 - Have membership chair create a non-renewal list & bring it to every board meeting
 - Rochester: created a google sheet for board members to select non-renewals, update contact info, log outreach, etc.
 - Engage past presidents & membership chairs and other influencers to reach out
- **Incentivize new & returning members**
 - Rochester: renewals by a certain date entered into raffle for a \$200 spa certificate (in-kind sponsorship)
 - Mid York: a generous member is subsidizing WBASNY portion of membership fees for members facing financial hardship, so their dues can be waived
 - Adirondack: looking into getting branded “swag” for members
 - Consider “early bird discounts” before August or September
- **Don’t forget to encourage “sustaining memberships”**
- **Consider online membership renewal**
 - NY: launched new membership system on website where people can update online (each member logs in with email & sets up new password to get to own profile, pay

dues & update contact info, add committee choices; can also get to members only sections which has newsletter archives); WBASNY is engaging in discussions to see if provider, TAG Online, will offer discount to chapters

D. EVENT IDEAS

A great way to encourage membership is to hold great events!

As we come out of Covid, don't hesitate to reach out to members to see where they're at – would they attend in-person events? Outdoor? Masked only? Send an email survey/poll!

- **Partner with other chapters for events**
- **Unique networking opportunities**
 - Central: Breakfast at the Bar, a monthly networking event for women in the legal profession
 - “Chamber chats”: small events with a judge
- **Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Programs, ideally held monthly**
 - Hold luncheon or dinner programs
 - Consider virtual, in-person, or hybrid events
 - Sponsor “brown bag” luncheon at bar office or courthouse
 - Co-sponsor CLE events with other professionals, such as CPAs, realtors and paralegals, or other bar associations
 - Go beyond your membership for CLE faculty (for example, recruit law office economics and management presenters from local consulting firms and office equipment vendors)
 - Use WBASNY offerings (available on the WBASNY website)
- **Pro Bono Projects**
 - Support existing pro bono activities by recruiting new members
 - Highlight pro bono programs in association newsletter and media
 - Honor members who provide pro bono services
 - Cooperate with local charitable organizations by providing the volunteer services of your members
 - Run a legal clinic (consult with WBASNY regarding insurance requirements)

IV. SAMPLE LETTERS/EMAILS

Your annual membership letter/email is your sales pitch to potential and current members! It's your chance to entice them to join or renew by highlighting the great things about your chapter, in a concise & compelling way!

A. SAMPLE PROSPECT LETTER

Dear [name]:

I hope you'll take a few moments to consider the unique advantages you'll enjoy as a member of [Chapter name], a chapter of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York.

[Insert your "chapter bio" (can base off WBASNY's – The [Women's Bar Association of the State of New York \(WBASNY\)](#) is the professional membership organization of choice for more than 3,500 attorneys throughout New York State, and the largest statewide women's bar association in the country. For four decades, WBASNY has been a singularly important resource for women lawyers, with professional networking, continuing legal education programming, leadership training, and advocacy for the rights of women, children, and families. Through involvement with WBASNY's 20 regional chapters and its 40-plus substantive law committees, WBASNY's members collaborate with one another on a variety of issues and perform public and community service, in furtherance of its mission to promote the advancement of the status of women in society and women in the legal profession; to promote the fair and equal administration of justice; and to act as a unified voice for its members with respect to issues of statewide, national and international significance to women generally and women attorneys in particular. WBASNY holds United Nations NGO status with the U.N.'s Department of Public Information, and Special Consultative status in association with the U.N. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). WBASNY is also a founding member of the National Conference of Women's Bar Association).]

I have been a member of [Chapter] for [#] years and have built incredible relationships with my chapter sisters! My favorite part about [Chapter] is [insert favorite event, meaningful relationship, etc]. As President this year, I hope to [insert goal].

By joining [Chapter], you also become a member the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, which we call "WBASNY," one of the most powerful groups of women and men in the country. For more than 30 years, our organization – your organization – has given attorneys in New York State their single most important arena for professional networking and advancement while promoting our mission. Whether for career changes, referrals, advice or collective action concerning the status of women in the profession, our members turn to us daily for support as they face the challenges of practicing law. In addition to these opportunities, WBASNY fulfills significant missions to secure the rights of women, children and families and to promote the advancement of women in the legal profession – one that is not duplicated by other legal or women's organizations

I hope you join us at [Chapter], for membership offers one of the most important steps you'll take in your professional life. [To join, just complete the membership application form and email or mail it to us today. If you prefer, you can join on-line at www.wbasny.org. We look forward to including you in our membership.]

Very truly yours,
President

B. RENEWAL LETTER TEMPLATE

Your Chapter's renewal letter is a sales pitch for members to continue to be part of your Chapter! It should come from your new president and:

- **Highlight the best of the past year** (this can include particularly successful events and successful nominations of members for awards)
- **Entice members with things to come** (including upcoming events and significant goals for the new president)
- **Include explicit instructions on how to renew as well as any incentives being offered for renewal**
- **Thank them for their support for all these years & into the future!**

V. WBASNY FAQs

Q. WHAT IS THE MISSION OF WBASNY?

A. To promote the advancement of the status of women in society and of women in the legal profession; To promote the fair and equal administration of justice; and To act as a unified voice for its members with respect to issues of statewide, national and international significance to women generally and to women attorneys in particular.

Q. WHY JOIN WBASNY?

A. WBASNY is the professional membership organization of choice for women who have attained or aspire to leadership in the practice of law in the State of New York. For more than three decades, WBASNY has been the single most important resource for women lawyers' professional networking and development; moreover, members receive benefits of value not only to their careers but also to their personal lives. Just as importantly, WBASNY is the only statewide bar association whose policy focus is on protecting the legal rights of women. Through involvement with local chapters and over 42 active statewide committees and task forces, WBASNY members collaborate with one another on a variety of issues and perform much needed public and community service, to promote the advancement of the status of women in society.

Q. WHY DO WOMEN LAWYERS NEED A WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION?

A. Statistics tell the story as to why women lawyers need their own bar association. Women have not progressed in the profession to the extent that they should have. Women lawyers continue to be paid and promoted less than equally qualified men. Although the American Bar Association reports that in 2020, 37% of all lawyers and 54% of the law students are women, as of the year 2019, only 25% of partners in the 200 largest law firms in the United States were women, and only 20-25% of governance and compensation committee member, managing partners, or practice group leaders. Women are only 27% of federal judges, 32% of law school deans and 28% of corporate general counsel. For women of color, the under-representation is even greater. Women of color make up only 4% of partners in the 200 largest law firms and only 7% of federal judges. There are many reasons for this, including the lack of family-friendly workplace policies, over-emphasis on hourly billing in private practice, and lack of effective mentoring. WBASNY continues to take a leadership role on these issues.

Equal Opportunity in the Profession
Fundraising
Judiciary/Courts

Nominations
Press and Public Relations
Professional Ethics

Q. WHAT ARE THE AD HOC COMMITTEES OF THE ORGANIZATION?

- A.** Access to Justice Issues Task Force
Advisory
Amicus Curiae
Arbitration and Mediation
Awards
Children’s Rights
Collaborative Law
Continuing Legal Education (CLE)
Conventions
Criminal Law
Diversity
Domestic Violence
Education/Title IX
Elder Law/Trusts & Estates
Employment and Labor Law
Environmental Law
ERA/Women’s Civil Rights
Family & Matrimonial Law
Finance
Foundation
Health Issues & Reproductive Rights
Immigration
Intellectual Property
International Women’s Rights
JALBCA
LGBTQ+
Newsletter
Next Chapter/Career Transitions
Sex Trafficking
Wellness
Women Judges

Q. HOW DOES WBASNY GET INFORMATION TO ITS MEMBERS?

- A.** WBASNY publishes periodic electronic newsletters, which all members receive. WBASNY also communicates with members through e-mail.

WBASNY’s web site is located at www.wbasny.org. The web site contains contact information for the officers, chapter presidents, and state committee chairs. It also provides access to regularly updated news of WBASNY’s activities, a calendar of events, and job listings.

WBASNY’s online membership directory includes a regional index by which members can be searched by location and area of expertise.

WBASNY holds an Annual Convention at a different location each year, offering well-known speakers, 8-10 hours of CLE programs, and tremendous opportunities for networking.

Q. DOES WBASNY HELP CHOOSE MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY?

- A.** WBASNY and its chapters review the qualifications of candidates at various levels of the New York State judiciary, as well as U.S. Supreme Court nominees. WBASNY is dedicated to promoting excellence and diversity in the judiciary and has been frequently commended by judges and legislators for its informed views on the need to maintain a diverse judiciary.

Q. DOES WBASNY HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION?

A. The President of WBASNY meets from time to time with the Chief Judge and Chief Administrative Judge to provide input with respect to policies of statewide significance. WBASNY members are often asked to serve on OCA boards and task forces.

Q. DOES WBASNY ENGAGE IN ANY LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY?

A. WBASNY has a very active Legislative Committee and retains a Legislative Consultant. Historically, WBASNY has taken positions on both state and federal legislation, drafted memos and prepared presentations to legislators. The chapters take a particularly important role in these activities. WBASNY's objective is to promote the passage of legislation that improves the quality of life and protects the rights of women in New York State and their families.

Q. WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF THE AMICUS CURIAE COMMITTEE?

A. The Amicus Curiae Committee provides research and other legal resources and assistance, including assisting other substantive committees in preparing briefs, to advance legal positions adopted by the Board of Directors of WBASNY. WBASNY itself has acted as amicus curiae and also joins amicus briefs proposed by other organizations.

Q. HOW DOES WBASNY CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGAL EDUCATION OF ITS MEMBERS?

A. The Continuing Legal Education Committee provides a forum for continuing legal education (CLE) on a statewide basis to the membership and focuses on areas of concern to WBASNY members. The Committee has established guidelines that are consistent with the rules of the Office of Court Administration to certify WBASNY programs as approved for CLE credit. The Committee also works with the local chapters in developing their program agendas to ensure that chapter programs are approved for CLE credit. CLE courses are given by the chapters, at the Annual Convention, and by webcast.

Q. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OTHER WBASNY MEMBER BENEFITS?

A. WBASNY has established affinity relationships with several leading companies to provide members with discounts and special offers. These companies' partnerships were chosen based on their availability to provide high quality products to meet our member's needs. Insurance products, car rental discounts, travel discounts, WBASNY consumer credit cards, discounts on legal reference materials and services, credit card processing and financial services, website solutions and development discounts, health club discounts, and conference call services are just some of the many benefits offered to members. For a complete list of member benefits, please visit the WBASNY website at www.wbasny.org, click on the membership tab and select member benefits.

Q. WHAT NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES DOES WBASNY OFFER?

A. In addition to the more than 42 active committees and task forces at the state level, each of WBASNY's local chapters has its own designated committees. Committee participation provides opportunities to work with other legal professionals on important

issues, network with colleagues, and perform public interest service. These are ample opportunities for access to role models and members.

Q. WHY SHOULD YOU BECOME A MEMBER OF WBASNY?

A. In addition to all of the opportunities and benefits offered to you by WBASNY, your contribution will mean that WBASNY can achieve that much more for women lawyers and women in all of our communities. By putting your name on our membership list and paying your chapter's (very reasonable) dues, you help ensure that legislators, OCA, and legal employers continue to take WBASNY's agenda seriously.