Affiliate Tips

Making the Most of AAFCS Membership
Your Affiliate’s Passport to Success

Building the Case for On-Boarding*
Affiliate leaders often work diligently to secure new members for their affiliate roster. However, in many cases, there is no plan of action to welcome the new member and guide them through the myriad of opportunities open to them as a member of AAFCS. Frequent interaction with new members during the first 90 days is vital to create a long-term relationship with your members.

Establish Member Resource Guides
Current members with knowledge and a passion for the profession would be excellent member resource guides (MRG) to assist these new members. Utilizing the skills of current members would increase significantly the return on investment for a new member. The ultimate goal is a passionate member who will renew their membership again and again— because they are gaining value for the time and money invested— a member for life.

Onboarding Goals:
1. The initial goal is to make new members feel welcomed into a group of passionate professionals practicing in numerous settings.
2. Assist new members to identify the many professional development opportunities available to them as a member, including, but not limited to webinars, association meetings, online course offerings, community partners, and leadership opportunities.
3. Provide enough evidence to new members that their membership is valuable enough to renew another year.

The Eight-Step Process
1. Affiliates receive list of new members from AAFCS Headquarter staff.
2. The President and/or Membership chair initially welcomes new members.
3. Membership chair or her/his designee works to implement the on-boarding process. (On-boarding Chair)
4. Solicit current members who are passionate about the profession and would be willing to work as a Membership Resource Guide (MRG) for a new member. Maintain a list so assignments can be made as new members are added. Where possible, the MRG should have the same practice area as the new member.
5. The MRG contacts the new member and they set up a time/method to communicate. The agenda is theirs to create.
6. On-boarding Chair should check periodically with MRGs to see if assistance is needed and if the new members are welcoming suggestions and getting the most out of their membership.
7. Since this isn’t intended as a formal mentoring program, there is no suggested time to stay in touch with a new member; however, it is helpful if the MRG stays in touch with a new member through their first renewal period.
8. At the time of membership renewal, there is a survey tool to use with MRGs and new members that will assist affiliates in determining if their on-boarding process is working and possibly providing ideas that could be added.

*On-boarding is a term used by human resource managers to describe the process of helping new employees transition into a job and assimilate into the organizational culture.
Content for Member Resource Guides

What can the MRG share with “their” new member? Get started with these suggestions!

- Design a welcome package for new members—be creative.
- Provide networking opportunities.
- Introduce new member to live as well as archived AAFCS Webinars.
- Give an overview of how to access/use the AAFCS Journal and use the AAFCS website.
- Make new members aware of scholarships, grants, and fellowships from AAFCS as well as from their affiliate.
- Introduce new member to professionals across the country.
- Recommend advanced study options.
- Share advantages of attending affiliate conferences as well as AAFCS.
- Suggest ways to fund professional development opportunities.
- Encourage new member to apply to participate in the AAFCS Leadership Academy.
- Introduce new member to community membership options.
- Share AAFCS history if new member is not aware of historical science background; view YouTube on Ellen Swallow Richards.
- Share how the profession is strong in STEM as well as STEAM.
- Share tips on advocating for their program.
- Share favorite leadership books, themes.
- Suggest volunteer opportunities in the affiliate as well as at the national level.
- Provide resume assistance.
- Share why you have remained an AAFCS member.
- Share AAFCS organization structure and acronyms used.
- Recognize new member achievements.
- Share AAFCS initiatives such as FCSfit and Dine-In Day.
- Organize a new member group chat.
- Initiate a ZOOM breakfast (or any meal) with affiliate president for all new members; consider this with an AAFCS Board member, too.
- Organize a new member book club.
- Design a new member portal on affiliate website.
- Communicate culture of the profession early and often.
- Share past e-newsletters—affiliate and national.

If “Membership Resource Guide” doesn’t fit your affiliate, consider:
- Brand Ambassador
- Membership Buddy
- New Member Coach
Determining Success!

Evaluations are always important!

After the membership resource guide (or whatever term you choose) has had several months up to a year to be in contact with the new member, contact the MRG and each new member to determine the level of success and how the program might be improved.

The Affiliate Membership Chair (or President) can determine the most effective way of soliciting feedback. Below are several questions to guide the evaluation. Please feel free to expand or change the questions as you wish. This feedback is for the Affiliate to determine the success in the program.

A telephone or in-person conversation might be the easiest. or you can send an email or printed survey.

Feedback from the membership resource guide (MRG) and new member is the goal!

Possible Survey Questions

- What was the highlight of this year for you?
- What other resources or information would have been helpful?
- Would you do this again for another new member in the future?
- What did you gain from this experience?

Some free online survey tools include
- Google Forms
- Mailchimp (free tier has more limited options)