

TRI-CITY VOICE



The Tri-City National Active and Retired Federal Employees chapter hosts a booth at Ames NASA research center. Michael Wright

Community

Tri-City federal employees association works to protect benefits

By: AVA ACHARYA 📅 January 13, 2026

April of 2026 marks 50 years since the establishment of the **Tri-City Fremont Chapter** of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE). But, after half a century, the chapter's leadership fear that they are losing access to the community they serve.

Tri-City NARFE works to ensure former and current federal employees have access to their full benefits by offering resources to navigate the red tape creating these barriers, according to the organization's first vice president, Kathy Kelley.

Barriers that Kelley is very familiar with, as she wishes she had utilized this support when she retired from the VA Medical Center in Livermore in 2020.

"I didn't know what paperwork I had to fill out, and the HR department was practically empty," Kelley said. "I fumbled through it and managed to make it happen, but I had to hire an outside organization to help me." Now through NARFE, Kelley works to help others avoid these pitfalls.



The Tri-City National Active and Retired Federal Employees chapter installs officers in 2006. Lucy Yee

NARFE provides assistance from experts who understand the benefits afforded to former or current federal employees. This includes medical care, education rights, sick leave and vacation time, retirement planning and social security benefits, Kelley said.

The national organization advocates directly for bills such as the Social Security Fairness Act, which expanded pension benefits for federal employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System. On a local level, NARFE also provides representation in congress through their Advocacy Action Center.

But Kelley fears that current federal employees are not aware of NARFE as a resource. In the past the nonprofit organization worked with the United States Office of Personnel Management to provide resources to federal employees, especially ones approaching retirement. But this is no longer the case.

"The National HR offices within each federal facility stopped inviting us to their healthcare fairs," Kelley said. "NARFE used to be able to go into the facilities and say 'Hey, we're here.' We're not able to do that anymore."

The Tri-City Chapter has also struggled with finding a consistent meeting location. Until a couple of years ago, NARFE met monthly at the Age Well Center at Lake Elizabeth.

"We were very active [there] and then they decided that we were political and said that we cannot meet there," Kelley said. "So we've been bouncing around." Currently, NARFE meets monthly at the Masonic Home in Union City.

"What the organization is focusing on right now is trying to get the word out that we're here," Kelley said.

For more information visit narfe.org/chapter1494.