



Ohio Federation Newsletter 2021

NATIONAL ACTIVE AND RETIRED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

SEPTEMBER 2021

OHIO FEDERATION UPDATE

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President's Report Status of the Ohio Federation

To: All Ohio NARFE members,

With all that has happened in the last 18 months and what is currently happening with this new delta variant, we may see changes in the way we live and do things. People are using various different social medias and tools to communicate with each other. It doesn't matter if it's family, friends, or business associates. We are all finding ways to communicate with each other. There are many of us that remember the old way we communicated! Telephone "party lines", where you had to wait for your neighbor to finish their phone call before you could use the phone to make your call. Today, many of us have our phone with us to make calls, text, check email or 'FaceTime' a friend or family members. More on new ways/ tools to communicate later.

Federation Membership Status – In Ohio we have 2,439 chapter members and 2,288 National-Only (N-O) members for a total of 4,727 NARFE members. This is only .003% of the number of federal workers and retirees living in Ohio (140,000+). If each of us recruited one new member we would be over 9,500 strong. The more members we have, the stronger our voice is in Washington DC. It is my experience, many current federal employees don't realize that anything our congressional representatives take from our retirement benefits today, it also affects them the day they retire.

Next is the chapters status - We currently have 29 chapters. We are losing chapters every year and all have closed due to lack of chapter leadership. Currently two chapters are in the process of closing with completion by the end of this year. Unless we change the way our chapters do NARFE business, our chapters may not survive. It is hard to have chapters if you do not have leadership to support them.

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That said, Federations are in the same situation. We also are losing our leaders! This year we reduced the federation from nine districts to six districts. Over the years we went from 54 chapters to 29 chapters. Again, due to no new leadership! Currently three of the six districts are without a District Vice President (DVP). We also need a membership chairperson for the Federation, to assist chapters with membership issues. We need to start thinking outside the box and figure out how to get our membership involved again.

National-Only members (N-O) -You are our members of NARFE that are not associated with a local chapter. YOU have all the benefits as the chapter member except the services provided by the local chapter to their members. I know with almost 2300 N-O members there are many of you that could make a good leader for our organization. If you are one that even thinks you might be a good leader, you probably are! All you have to do now is ask someone in a leadership position about becoming a leader or if you want contact me via email or phone to find out more information. Maybe one thing you can do is shadow an officer so you can see what is involved for yourself! As a N-O member you already have the right to submit your name for any federation officer position. If you decide to run for a district vice president position you must live in that district to run for that position.

A DVPs basic duties are to keep chapter and N-O members current with NARFE issues. You may be asked to update chapter members. Most of the time it is on membership and legislative concerns. Our DVPs are paid for certain expenses by the state federation 10% funds. The federation does a lot of communications via email / online meetings so it reduces the amount of time we need to spend traveling to and from meetings. An email is highly recommended for ease of communication.

So, what can we do?

Here are some ideas I have thought about and would like to have feedback from you, the membership, on what you think of these ideas or if you have an idea yourself that may help or assist our membership;

Provide training on current / new communication tools at NARFE HQ dealing with legislation, membership, and the use of the website.

How to access the reports for our chapter leaders.

How to be a Congressional District Leader (CDL). The national office needs each federation to create these positions. This is to improve the communication between the Representatives and our local membership within each Congressional District (CD).

Inform the membership of ALL the perks of being a NARFE member. There are webinars, how to be a recruiter for our organization, Legislative action center for contacting your congressional representation in congress, Letters available to edit to make them your own and email, or printout and mail to them.

Most important is our own website, www.narfe.org/OH

NARFE Membership Drive.

This year's drive started Sept 1, 2021 through Dec 31, 2021. Each member that recruits a new member will receive \$10.00 plus you are eligible to win other prizes. In past years you received one entry for each new member you recruit. You can't say anymore "I am just not sure how to go about recruiting". At NARFE website there are new tools members can use to introduce active and retired federal employees to NARFE.

Go to www.narfe.org

From the homepage *mouse over* 'For Members' on the menu bar & *select* 'Officer Resources'.

From the list of topics *click* 'Membership Officer Resources'

Scroll down. Under 'RECRUITMENT' *click* 'NARFE Membership Recruitment Resources'.

Here is where you can find valuable and downloadable, recruiting information such as; 'recruitment email template', a NARFE elevator speech, membership ad (in pdf format) to use online or to printout just to name a few. Complete details of the membership program is also located in this area. This information is also on page 46 in September's issue of the magazine.

Tim Gartner

Ohio federation President

NARFE WEBINARS are a great recruiting tool!

When a member joins NARFE all the webinars are free.

NARFE provides expert guidance on federal benefits issues directly affecting current and former federal employees, as well as tips and tools to help ensure a safe and secure retirement for the federal community. Webinars are free to NARFE members. They are an excellent resource.

If you haven't seen one please check out the two for September.

To B or Not to B: Is Medicare Part B Right for You? Wednesday, Sept 15, 2 p.m. ET

You're 65 and healthy, so your FEHB plan alone may be fine now, but Medicare specializes in caring for you as you age. Why not combine the two? Join us as federal benefits expert Tammy Flanagan gives you an in-depth look at your coverage options under FEHB and Medicare Part B, as well as the impact one has on the other when you combine them. This one-hour webinar will help you weigh the pros and cons and determine which option is best for you—we'll even show you how to enroll!

Sponsored by Aetna

Understanding TSP Funds and How To Diversify For Your Life Stage. Thursday, Sept 30, 2 p.m. ET

The asset allocation strategy for your TSP retirement funds can make or break your financial goals. To be successful you need to understand the relationship of risk to return and how diversification can balance the two. Mark Keen, CFP, will show you how to weigh risk versus reward and use goals, risk tolerance, and time horizon to guide your investments, diversify your funds, and get the most out of your TSP.

Important Dates to remember:

Membership Drive 9-1-2021 thru 12-31-2021

Dec 1, 2021 - Bylaw amendments due

January 25, 2022 Candidate OH-3

April 29-30, 2022 Ohio Federation State Conference

Federation President Meeting August 9-13, 2021

This was supposed to be the State Federation President in-person meeting in San Antonio, Tx. The Wednesday before we were to fly out, NARFE National emailed all of us that because of a high rate of Covid19 Delta Variant in the county San Antonio is in. The hotel and NARFE cancelled our in-person meeting. The meeting was then set as an online meeting for the 10th through the 12th. This also was used as NARFE HQ's "Annual Meeting" to satisfy our Bylaws.

Here are the Topics that were decided on from the Presidents that sent in a request to be placed on the agenda. The Texas Fed President was the Chairperson for the President's meeting. I am not sure how or who made the decision of what topics would be discussed but here they are. I was in group 1. Here is what was decided in our group. If you have questions or comments on any of these topics, please contact me via email or phone. My responses are also on the federation website www.narfe.org/OH under the "Federation President's meeting" 8/10-12/2021.

Topic #1. What needs to be done to make the Automated Management System, AMS meet chapter and Federation needs?

Group 1 Findings and Recommendations

Provide Chapters/Federations with access to select/print a list of deceased members.

Concern that the M-112 report is inaccurate. Ensure this information is valid.

Hire a database manager

Some Fed Presidents stated members of closed chapter are missing. Needs this issue resolved.

Federation Presidents need an M-112 for National Only members so that we know what is happening with these members (new, dropped, transferred, etc.)

National-Only member recruiters need to be recorded in the M-260 report.

Zip Code report is no longer available online. Only way to update is by F-46 form. Makes it hard to keep current when chapters/federations have no access to what is currently on record.

2. Should we retain the present One Member One Vote on bylaws and candidates before conferences or should we modify the bylaws and return to the convention model with all voting at the conventions? If we change, how would voting be conducted?

Group 1 Findings and Recommendations

NARFE Executive Board Candidates should address the membership at the Biannual Conference and

Amendments/Resolutions should be presented at the Biannual Conference so that discussion and debate can occur.

All NARFE members can attend in person or virtually and then voting on the candidates and Amendments/

Resolutions would occur after the Conference.

3. How can NARFE increase its non-dues revenue?

Group 1 Findings and Recommendations

The group tabled this issue because more information is needed on how much money can be taken in without impacting our not-for-profit status. We need a NARFE legal recommendation.

4. How can we better recruit and retain members? What steps should NARFE leadership take in meeting with union leadership to facilitate access to union members?

Group 1 Findings and Recommendations

Take advantage of and make contacts during Open Season Health Fairs.

On the local level, engage with unions representing Federal workers by piggy backing on lunch and learns or other activities.

Use our personal connections to agencies to get access to Federal facilities

Offer pre-retirement seminars using NARFE experts such as Tammy Flanagan from the National level or use our own experts (members on the local level that have HR/OPM skills and expertise).

Partner with companies that offer pre-retirement seminars so that we can have an audience.

Contact OPM and GSA to get access to Federal buildings/agencies.

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5. Should Federation Presidents meet virtually in between biannual meetings? If so, how often? Who would set the agenda?

Group 1 Findings and Recommendations:

Provide access to the Federation Presidents with a list of the Federation Presidents with current email addresses and develop a way to keep it updated in real time with Federation Presidents' access. We are requesting that this list be provided by October 1, 2021 with a status report on September 15, 2021.

Utilize the Federation President Advisory Group that was approved at the 2019 Federation Presidents' Meeting to hold virtual meetings as needed. The Advisory Group would determine the agenda. Consideration should be given to including at least one member from each Region.

6. How can we get national only members to be more actively involved in NARFE?

Group 1 Findings and Recommendations:

The Federations should engage/engage/engage with National Only Members by keeping them informed and inviting them to events in the Federation.

Reminder to all Federation and Chapter Officers and Members

As individuals, we all have opinions about different issues. An exchange of different opinions in a respectful way helps us better understand our family and friends. In general, there is nothing wrong with giving your opinion as long as you also respect the other person's opinion.

When we're serving in our official NARFE capacity or at a NARFE event, however, we need to remember NARFE is a nonpartisan membership organization. As a nonpartisan organization, we are here to support/defend legislation concerning the federal employees and retirees, not a political party. To that end, as we become an increasingly polarized society, I strongly encourage you to stay on NARFE-related topics during your meetings.

NARFE's advocacy department keeps us informed on where our legislators stand on NARFE's legislative agenda. We then communicate to our legislators how and why we want them to either support or oppose an issue. As Federation/Chapter leaders we update our members on the issue, and where our representative and senators stand on the issue. This is what our members want – to be updated on issues of importance to them. Should anyone start giving their opinion on how a party stands on an issue – particularly not one on NARFE's agenda – you, as a leader, should politely remind them that NARFE is a “nonpartisan” organization not political.



ADVOCACY UPDATE

I attended **LegCon21**. This is the legislative training conference where we hear from speakers on ways to influence, impact and take action with our legislators. Due to Covid19 the entire conference was held online.

We learned that Narfe's Advocacy Strategy is a three-legged advocacy approach—Lobbying, Grasstops and Grassroots Volunteers and NARFE-PAC.

The following was presented by Marsha Padilla-Goad, Grassroots Program Manager.

Lobbying is done by NARFE's excellent headquarters lobbyists. They collaborate with staff, congressional committees, coalitions and other interest groups and bring information back to NARFE members.

Grasstops Tier 1—NARFE National President, Regional Vice Presidents. Tier 2—Federation and chapter presidents and legislative chairs. Tier 3—Congressional District Leaders and Senatorial Leaders and other advocacy leaders. Examples of Grasstops Activities 1. Testifying before Congress 2. Drafting testimony 3. Issuing statements and press releases on policy 4. Letters to congressional leaders 5. Engaging with senior congressional staff 6. Leading discussions and ensuring NARFE-supported language gets included in bills 7. Meeting with congressional, administration and agency leaders 8. Collaborating with coalitions and other like-minded groups.

Grassroots are NARFE's entire membership-Examples of Grassroots Activities by NARFE members 1. In-person/virtual meetings with lawmakers 2. Making phone calls 3. Sending email/letters 4. Engaging with lawmakers at townhalls and other community events 5. Participating in NARFE's Grassroots Advocacy Month 6. Participating in LEGcon's lobby day.

NARFE-PAC Advocacy Strategy is to support fed-friendly incumbents and candidates for Congress and to provide NARFE senior leadership and staff access to congressional leadership.

Tailoring Your Ask: How to Make the Most of Your Meeting presented by John Hatton, Senior Director, Legislative and Political Affairs.

Know Before You Go Checklist: Check out the Advocacy State-by-State Fact Sheet for Ohio, View Members of Congress Webpages, Look at NARFE's Voting Scorecard, Check out the Legislative Action Center.

The Ohio Fact Sheet will tell you how many employees and annuitants are in the state, how many annuitants are in each district and the Federal Agency presence in the district and state.

Member's Background (Bio) will show committee assignments, personal biography (prior public service?) and interactions with NARFE.

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Are they on Relevant Committees? House Oversight and Reform, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, House Ways and Means, Senate Finance, House and Senate Appropriations, Financial Services and General Government Subcommittees, House and Senate Budget Committees, House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

At a normal LEGcon before the pandemic we would go to Capitol Hill and meet with our Senators and Representative. Due to COVID19 we had our meetings via Zoom. You might think meeting online might not be as effective but I felt just the opposite. NARFE's advocacy department set up all of our meetings for us and at a designated time we logged on and met. In the past it sometimes felt hurried because we had to walk from building to building. By being online I felt it went very smoothly and I had their undivided attention.

I had four separate meetings. I met with a Legislative Aid from Senator Brown and Senator Portman's offices and one from my representative in District 12, Troy Balderson. I also met with Brad Wenstrup from District 2 because a meeting had been set up with a representative from the Cincinnati chapter who was unable to attend.

There were three key issues we discussed: WEP/GPO repeal or reform, Fair COLAs and Protecting FEHB from Postal Bill Threat. I felt all the meetings went well and would highly suggest doing more of these Zoom type meetings in the future.



Support the Fair Cola for Seniors Act of 2021

Tell congress it is time to switch to the CPI-E

In 2021, federal retirement annuitants and Social Security beneficiaries received a 1.3 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). The BLS determined this COLA using the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), which measures how urban wage earners and clerical workers under age 62 spend their money. As a result, seniors continue to get short-changed by the annual COLA.

Postal Service Reform Act of 2021

Newly introduced postal reform legislation, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2021 ([H.R. 3076/S. 1720](#)), risks increasing premiums for federal employees and retirees enrolled in Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program plans. The bill, if passed into law, would create a new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) program starting in January 2023. Contact your lawmakers and ask that they withhold support for the bill unless changes are adopted that protects FEHB participants from an increase in premiums as a result of this legislation.

Support Reform of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), HR 2337

Are your Social Security benefits unfairly reduced because you earned a federal annuity through a career of public service? Tell your representative how he/she can help fix this longstanding problem today by cosponsoring the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act of 2021, [H.R. 2337](#), to reform the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

Checks and Balances

Hello Ohio Federation Members -

The State/Federation Board did receive a 'quick glance' financial report for the period of April 16-June 30, 2021. President Tim Gartner has authorized that the BOARD would receive a quarterly financial report.

Thanks to Joe Leisz the previous federation treasurer for the smooth transition – Joe mailed all the pertinent treasurer items Priority Express Mail on Friday, May 14 and it did arrive by Saturday May 15 at 11:30 a.m.

A sincere thank you to Joe, Tim, Sandy, Diana and the resource person at our financial institution for all they did to get the accounts and statements set for this term.

With the possibility of Chapter closings, I will be prepared to cooperate with all duties that involve the office of State Treasurer.

Thank you

Be Smart. Be Safe

Lynnette Rarrick

OHIO CHAPTER NEWS



Toledo chapter 0226 presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Robert D. Michalak for his dedication as chapter treasurer. They also presented him with the new Logo Pin and Past Treasurer pin.

CONGRATULATIONS



5th UPMA National Convention Sandusky, Ohio August 14th - August 20th, 2021 Kalahari Resorts & Conventions 7000 Kalahari Drive Sandusky, OH 44870

Ohio Post Masters and Managers of America



We attended the UPMA National Convention Saturday, August 14th through Tuesday, August 17th as vendors representing NARFE National.

We made contact with approximately 100+ attendees each day. The majority of attendees were already NARFE members and retired. Almost 100% thanked us for attending their convention and for what NARFE was doing for our members. They said they get really good information from NARFE and especially appreciate what the Legislative Department is doing.

We talked to attendees about the postal reform bills. We want to thank John Hatton, NARFE’s Director of Legislative and Political Affairs who sent us the NARFE Issue Brief ‘U.S. Postal Reform In The 117th Congress’ so we had the latest information to convey.

Tim Gartner—NARFE Ohio Federation President
Sandy Gartner—NARFE Ohio Federation Legislative VP



Two of NARFE’s major sponsors ‘GEHA and BlueCross/BlueShield were there representing the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program.