

Building a Better Membership Plan Part 2: Steps for Retention

2025 American Gourd Society Leadership Summit

Purpose:

Listed are key steps to create a clear, effective action plan for keeping your chapter's membership. The plan will identify how to keep current members engaged and measure the progress the chapter is making along the way.

1. Training and Orientation Program (Adult-Focused)

Welcome Packet

- Info about the organization's mission
- Basic gourd-growing/art guide
- Calendar of adult-focused events and workshops
- Discounts or "members only" benefits (tutorials, newsletter, class discounts, early registration, etc.)

Mentorship

- Pair new members with experienced members for the first 3-6 months.
- 2-3 hour beginner workshop (weekend mornings or weeknight evenings)
- Hands-on starter project and tutorial designed for adults: pyrography basics, coloring, etc.
- Short talk about gourd growing for those interested.

Vary Monthly Workshop Types

- Rotate between gourd growing topics (Spring/Summer) and gourd art techniques (Fall/Winter).
- Emphasize adult skill-building and personal project development.

2. Engagement and Retention For ALL Members

Active Participation and Growth Opportunities

- Offer leadership paths early on (opportunities to lead demos, serve on committees, or help plan events)
- Volunteer roles should be low-pressure and suited to busy adults.

Recognition and Benefits

- Feature members on social media and in newsletters.
- Offer small perks (discounts to workshops, early access to events).

Clear Value

- Regularly remind members what they are gaining for their membership fee (education, community, access to resources).

3. Evaluate, Adjust and Improve

- **Quarterly Surveys:** Short surveys and member check-ins. Ask members what's working and what's not.