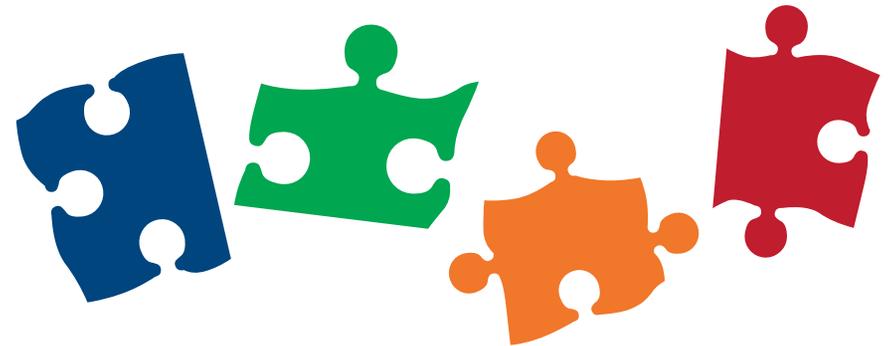




Membership Recruiting Tips



1-800-TALK-PTA
www.txpta.org

Councils or District-wide Initiatives

- ✦ Ask your school superintendent to encourage PTA membership to the district school employees in a letter or district newsletter or at a principals' meeting. Emphasize membership and strength in numbers district wide.
- ✦ Ask a well-known personality in your town to be Honorary Membership Chairman. Publicize.
- ✦ Ask the mayor to proclaim a PTA Membership Enrollment Day, Week, or Month. Publicize.
- ✦ Approach local businesses for discount coupons for goods and services and provide reproducible pages for local units to give as a membership special privilege.
- ✦ Print tray liners and place mats and ask local restaurants and fast food chains to use them. Include a number or address where people can write for PTA membership or program information.

Ways to Increase Your PTA Membership

These tips and tricks have been collected from PTAs over many years. They may inspire you, make you laugh or scratch your head. Try a few and share your best practices with Texas PTA.

- ✦ Make sure that your PTA provides value to your members. PTA membership is not a tangible product – it is a feeling and a service. Members must feel good about what they are getting for their dues dollars.
- ✦ With membership enrollment, include a questionnaire to be returned to your PTA. Ask their feelings on programs and activities; explain PTA's efforts on behalf of children; ask for their membership and participation. People who feel like they are a part of the association, take part!
- ✦ If you have a real need in your community, identify it. A cause around which people can rally is likely to increase membership.
- ✦ Use energy and enthusiasm — involve parents, teachers and students on your membership committee. Include men.
- ✦ Have a "Grandparents' Day" where students bring real or adopted grandparents to school for lunch or a tour of the building. Ask them to join your PTA.

- ✦ Sponsor a PTA “open house” before school opens in the fall to visit classrooms, meet teachers, and join PTA.
- ✦ All board members should read Texas PTA newsletters and invite members to sign up to receive The Voice and Member Message.
- ✦ Display copies of National PTA’s Our Children. Display copies in the parent waiting area, teacher’s lounge, and doctors’ offices. Put a sticker on them to let readers know how they can reach you to join PTA.
- ✦ Host a family engagement program during Family Engagement Month in September, with a membership push.
- ✦ Get Connected! Contact Texas PTA with your membership totals on Get Connected Day!
- ✦ Promote your PTA via TV and radio spots. Some high schools will help you as a class project.
- ✦ Contact your educational TV channel and inquire about time during their programming to tell about the PTA. Many stations give up to 30 minutes each month.
- ✦ Display membership posters in appropriate places in your school and community.

- ✦ Plan an all-school reward -- ice cream, a free movie, etc. — when you reach your membership goal.
- ✦ Offer a discount if both parents join PTA (make sure state and national fees are fully covered and the local dues amounts for discounted members is reflected in your bylaws).
- ✦ Ask local preschool parents to join. They are full of energy and anxious to be involved.
- ✦ Don’t overlook any potential member. All members of the community have a stake in the future of all children. Tell them how they can help by joining PTA!
- ✦ Get creative; get energized; get out and do it!

- ✦ The potential membership will be made up of several different groups. Give membership information to different committee members with instructions and deadlines to contact the various groups — individual classrooms, families, teachers, community groups, students, businesses, etc.
- ✦ Approach community businesses to join PTA. You may establish a “special” membership just for businesses. Remind them that it is the PTA of their community and their customers.
- ✦ Present an award, certificate or “Proud PTA Supporter” decal to businesses that support the PTA. Items available at Texas PTA’s store.
- ✦ Ask for a “Membership Minute” on the agenda of every PTA meeting all year. Keep the message before them!
- ✦ Distribute an information sheet to members and prospective members telling them what they get for their membership dues — local, state and national.
- ✦ Distribute copies of your budget to all members to show how their \$ are spent to benefit children and members.
- ✦ Make sure money has been allotted within the budget for the promotion of membership and programs that benefit your membership.

- ✦ Use newsletters to keep members informed when funds are raised and how they are used.
- ✦ Include a letter of welcome, PTA materials, and a membership envelope in the principal’s office for distribution when a new family comes to register.
- ✦ Have a “Membership Kick-Off” event — make it festive and fun!
- ✦ Be persistent with follow-up.
- ✦ Consult with local businesses about the possibility of printing “Join PTA” on cartons, boxes or bags.
- ✦ Partner with your principal to encourage PTA membership to faculty and families.
- ✦ If you have a “Welcome Wagon” in your town, ask the representative to distribute PTA information.
- ✦ Ask businesses to support PTA on their marquees or signs for a short period of time, such as during PTA Family Engagement Month.
- ✦ Set up a PTA membership table at kindergarten round-ups and secondary school orientations — encourage parents to become members from cradle to career.

- ✦ Give special considerations to non-English speaking families. Make translated materials available and be conscious of different customs.
- ✦ Reserve preferred seating at school events in the auditorium for PTA members.
- ✦ Meet early with your committee to set a membership goal. Make it realistic and don't give up until you pass the goal!
- ✦ Set up PTA membership booths at sporting events, music events and other community activities.
- ✦ Either mail or send home with students an invitational letter with a return membership envelope attached to make joining PTA easy.
- ✦ Challenge each board member to recruit at least one new member who has never been a PTA member.
- ✦ Offer a door prize to members only at your PTA meetings — must be present to win!
- ✦ Place an ad in your local newspaper promoting PTA and membership. Ask a local business to sponsor the ad.
- ✦ Ask local businesses to make a “pitch” for PTA membership in their regular ads.

- ✦ Consider distributing one special issue of your PTA newsletter to all residents in your school area.
- ✦ Important! Always tell your PTA story in terms of definite goals and achievement rather than in bland, general statements.
- ✦ Use every talent available to promote membership. Ask a journalist to help with letters and articles, an artist for posters, sketches and logos, businesses for access to a copy machine, etc. Put a “Help Wanted” ad for talent in your newsletter.
- ✦ Remind meeting attendees that only members make motions and vote — have them sign a separate sign-in sheet or column. Request that members show their cards when voting.
- ✦ Distribute membership information and dues envelopes at parent drop off on the first day of school and pick up the 2nd day.
- ✦ Keep members involved. Mail a letter to all members (following the major enrollment) addressed to them by name. Welcome them to the your PTA, reminding them of the next meeting. Include a member survey.

- ✦ Many PTAs have a teacher's luncheon or appreciation activity sometime during the year. Use this opportunity to give special recognition to staff members who serve on your board of directors or have contributed to your PTA in some way beyond the call of duty.
- ✦ Give away a token with each membership, such as a sticker, button, pin, pen, or pencil inscribed with your PTA's name.
- ✦ Place a membership table at every school entrance. Place tables strategically so people must pass by to enter meetings or events.
- ✦ At open house, place a table manned by a member of the committee or parent with a child in that classroom at each classroom door.
- ✦ Give special coupon incentives with membership. Ask local business to assist by providing discounts on products and services.
- ✦ Put PTA stickers on mailboxes of all staff members who join PTA.
- ✦ On the first day of school, place a small flower or welcome back gift and hand written invitation to join PTA on each teacher's desk. Don't forget other staff members.

- ✦ After the big enrollment period, place a goodie basket in the staff room or school office. Add a large card thanking the staff for supporting PTA and note date for next meeting. Leave envelopes for those who may have overlooked the opportunity to join PTA.
- ✦ Customize Texas PTA's membership theme to meet your PTA's goals. Be creative!
- ✦ Utilize state membership recruiting resources found at www.txpta.org.
- ✦ Provide baby-sitting at meetings. Make sure you have responsible sitters and liability insurance in case of accidents.
- ✦ Provide a quiet homework room for children of members during meetings.
- ✦ Request PTA exhibit space in library showcases.
- ✦ Ask your school district to put up a PTA poster or display promoting PTA membership in their building during the year, especially at the beginning of school or at least during PTA Family Engagement Month.
- ✦ Have a telephone committee to remind members of PTA meetings and events. This is a great activity for senior citizens.

- ✦ Host a Welcome Back To School breakfast for faculty.
- ✦ Plant a flower bulb for each membership in school or community park flower gardens. It's a great visual reminder of the beauty and strength of your PTA in the spring. Consider a theme like "Children blossom from seeds planted today — Join PTA!"
- ✦ Arrange for a PTA float if your community has a seasonal parade.
- ✦ Consider a special "members only" event — perhaps a dinner dessert with a featured speaker prior to your PTA meeting!
- ✦ Ask for a few minutes at local government or service club (Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, American Legion, Chamber of Commerce, etc.) to explain what your PTA is accomplishing. Invite their members to join PTA.
- ✦ Make sure notices arrive home by mailing PTA information to parents.
- ✦ Recognize new members by name — introduce them at your PTA meetings.
- ✦ Create a "brag board" for display at all PTA and school events and "travel" to local businesses, city offices, or libraries to promote your PTA's accomplishments and goals.
- ✦ Thank your members and list their names in your newsletter. Add names as new members join.
- ✦ Don't forget to ask the superintendent and others in central administration departments to join PTA. Many education employees don't work at a specific school site.
- ✦ Set up a membership table during adult education classes.
- ✦ Give prizes to "sales people" who sell the most memberships during the first month of your membership drive.
- ✦ On registration days — election, kindergarten, secondary school, others — be there!
- ✦ Stage an Election Day bake sale for voters and have a membership display and application to join your PTA prominently displayed.
- ✦ You might give an award to the media in your community that publishes news about your PTA regularly — this can be a great council activity too!
- ✦ Ask local realtors to promote PTA with an ad in their publications or mailings to local homeowners.
- ✦ Slip a little "note of thanks!" in with the PTA membership card when you return it to the new member.

- ✦ Check last year's membership list against this year's. Call, email or send a reminder note to members who have not renewed their membership. Maybe they've been too busy, overlooked your request, or have a problem that needs to be heard.
- ✦ Invite dynamic speakers with timely, relevant topics to briefly speak at PTA meetings
- ✦ Produce a calendar for members with PTA and school activities clearly displayed.
- ✦ Develop programs and activities that foster inclusion.
- ✦ List a month-by-month "show your PTA membership card" privilege in your newsletter. For example, local merchants could give 10% off purchases, free soft drink with purchase.
- ✦ Provide plastic badge holders for members to "wear" their PTA card at meetings.
- ✦ Create "Join PTA, Ask Me How!" buttons for all PTA board to wear.
- ✦ Show your goal and track your membership success for all to see. Use a giant thermometer in the hall, a large jar filled with jellybeans on the office counter, or numbered happy faces in the windows, etc. Make it visible and celebrate when you reach your goal.

- ✦ Use street sign shapes as an attention getter. PTA membership "yields" results (draw a yield sign). "Stop" (draw a stop sign) and consider the benefits of PTA. There's only "one way" to get all the support you need. "Do not pass" this opportunity to be a member of an organization as strong as PTA!
- ✦ Determine exactly what you're "selling" and know who you're selling to. You may need to use different approaches for different audiences.
- ✦ Use big, bold graphics to attract attention. A big checkmark might highlight the line, "Check the things PTA is doing for you in the coming year!" Use smaller checks to make each point.
- ✦ Get straight A's from the PTA...Action, Activities, Answers, Acquaintances, Advice, Accomplishments! You could use these as newsletter headlines.
- ✦ Help new members become acquainted with each other with triads. Put members in groups of three and tell each to learn at least five interesting things about one another. Write the items on 3 x 5 cards and take instant photos of everyone and display them. Help your members know each other and feel part of the team!

- ✦ Personal discussions or calls are the most effective and productive way to win new members. A call shows sincere interest in the individual. And it provides you with a chance to learn how that individual feels about your PTA.
- ✦ Some neighborhood newspapers accept free ads. Why not run an ad to encourage joining your PTA?
- ✦ Never let a meeting go by without making an appeal for membership. Set up a table for selling memberships in your library, the bank, or local supermarket. Have a membership table at all PTA and school functions.
- ✦ Display membership awards received at meetings or hang them in the school.
- ✦ Use an enclosure to catch attention. If you're sending an envelope, enclose a piece of string to tie on a finger as a reminder to join PTA.
- ✦ To find out what your members are thinking, paste a penny to the top of your member survey. Offer them "A penny for your thoughts".
- ✦ Pat your PTA on the back for a job well done. Develop a line art ad that may be placed in school papers, shopper newspapers, and other newsletters. Use a headline like "We're Bragging!" followed by, "We wanted to be subtle, but decided that we are really doing too many good things for kids to be low key..."
- ✦ "Everyone will be a star for 15 minutes" according to one saying. Consider profiling a different PTA member in each issue of the PTA newsletter or ask the school newspaper to do so.
- ✦ Try this headline on your next recruiting letter. "5 million people can't be wrong!" Go on to tell that the PTA is the largest child advocacy association in America
- ✦ Outline pieces of a puzzle with a headline such as, "The PTA helps the pieces fit together." Your copy can then follow with, "Does being a parent sometimes have you puzzled? We can help you put the whole picture together."
- ✦ For those who say they don't have time, ask them to sign a "CALL ME ONCE" sheet. Ask parents to volunteer just once during the year. They can relax about the time commitment and still be part of PTA. Being called for help for only a few hours one time seems manageable for even the busiest person.
- ✦ Recognize classes with 100% membership enrollment.
- ✦ When a member recruits another member, enter their name in a drawing for door prizes at selected meetings.
- ✦ Ask stores to place membership brochures or envelopes in their school supply aisle.

- ✦ Attract attention to your second request letter by crumpling it up, then flattening it out and writing in red across the top, “I’m sure this got lost in the pile of back to school paperwork!”
- ✦ Demonstrate how much of a bargain PTA is. Compare membership fees to those of other local associations. Or, figure out how much your fees are each day. For instance, if membership fees are \$5, that comes to only a little over a penny per day.
- ✦ Arrange for discounts to athletic events to those who have PTA membership cards.
- ✦ Sponsor academic events, spelling bees, math competitions, etc., and admit spectators with their PTA membership card.
- ✦ Promote Reflections and decorate the school with children’s artwork. This will draw a big crowd and provide a great opportunity for membership promotion.
- ✦ Focus on instrumental and vocal students. Sponsor a concert with a big PTA membership night.
- ✦ Remember to use existing billboards to promote your membership drive. Perhaps a business might donate or provide funding to rent a portable signboard.
- ✦ Train a “speaker’s bureau” group to go to various groups and speak about the benefits of PTA. Perhaps a parent, teacher and student could speak together.
- ✦ Give an award to PTA members who don’t miss a meeting all year.
- ✦ Have a PTA sponsored craft fair — only members can exhibit and sell their wares. If you charge admission, give a discount to PTA members.
- ✦ Have a “new parent coffee get-together” — for parents of kindergarten and first graders to deal with first day trauma and an opportunity to join PTA.
- ✦ Place a star beside the names of parents and staff that are PTA members in your PTA sponsored phone directory.
- ✦ Establish a special grandparents award — for the grandparents most actively involved in your PTA.
- ✦ If you honor members with Texas Life Membership or receive a PTA award, submit a write-up to your local newspaper.
- ✦ Distribute membership dues envelopes to each board member to sign up new members.

- ✦ Encourage friendly challenges or competitions between schools of similar size or within your district. Split the cost of a “traveling” trophy.
- ✦ Have a prize drawing at each PTA meeting for anyone bringing two additional people to the meeting. First timers may like what they see and wish to join!
- ✦ Send a Valentine to PTA members – “We love our members”.
- ✦ Budget money and encourage your membership chair to attend state and Area leadership conferences.
- ✦ Establish a special grandparent program. Retired community members can share their talents.
- ✦ Ask the drama class to present a short membership skit about what PTA does for kids at a PTA meeting or school activity.
- ✦ Have a parents’ day out once a month or on an early release day. PTA members may leave children for a free afternoon — staffed by other members -- on a volunteer, rotating basis.
- ✦ Ask the Chamber of Commerce to encourage local businesses to display posters for joining PTA as school begins in the fall.

- ✦ Have the faculty challenge faculty from another school of similar size to a membership contest.
- ✦ Ask a local self-defense expert to conduct a special workshop for PTA members.
- ✦ Hold aerobics or exercise classes for PTA members.
- ✦ Check with your local hospital for CPR or First Aid Classes for members only.
- ✦ Each meeting, focus on different staff—such as lunchroom, custodial, office, etc., and recognize their contributions to the school and encourage them to be members.
- ✦ Ask your principal to challenge the parents or staff to 100% participation by promising something fun. One Principal moved his desk to the roof for the day, and another shaved his beard off! Both were so outrageous that even the local press arrived!
- ✦ Host a parent – teacher talent show.
- ✦ Give someone you love a PTA membership on Valentine’s Day!
- ✦ Publicize what members get for their membership dues.

- ✦ Have a tear-off application to join PTA in every PTA newsletter.
- ✦ Send a brown lunch sack home with information on healthy lunch ideas and a note that says, “PTA helps your family stay healthy. Join PTA!”
- ✦ Hold an orientation for students and parents who’ll be advancing to your campus the next school year. Invite their president or membership chair to attend and get membership started for the new school.
- ✦ Include information that goes home to parents at the beginning of school that includes last year’s PTA accomplishments along with this year’s goals and plans.
- ✦ Business Leaders Day — invite business leaders who have joined your PTA to come for special recognition and an opportunity to visit school.
- ✦ Sponsor a financial aid workshop for parents and high school seniors, and make seniors aware of the scholarship opportunities.
- ✦ Recognize new families at each meeting.
- ✦ Send PTA announcements home to be colored by children and displayed at meetings or in the hall.

- ✦ Keep a record of PTA volunteer hours and publish them in your newsletter, local newspaper or on a sign.
- ✦ Divide your board into membership teams and give them specific assignments for getting new members.
- ✦ When you leave a PTA school, make sure you take PTA to the next school.
- ✦ Give children stickers that say “PTA Meeting Tonight” to remind parents when the kids get home.
- ✦ Sponsor a contest — Have students write a sentence or paragraph “My family joined PTA because...”
- ✦ Try a “30 Day Wonder” — Can you get 30 new members in 30 days?
- ✦ Ask others to celebrate Thanksgiving for all PTA does for children by joining PTA so the harvest may be even more bountiful.
- ✦ Make a list of some of the things members get with their PTA membership and use as a handout or poster.
- ✦ Send birthday greetings to PTA members.
- ✦ Sell memberships at the PTA-sponsored concession stand or school store.

- ✦ Submit news about your PTA activities to the media regularly.
- ✦ Attend the Retired Teachers Association meeting and ask them to join PTA.
- ✦ Contact your local elected officials about membership.
- ✦ Make sure each of your school board members is a card carrying PTA member.
- ✦ Have a PTA booth at local festivals or fairs.
- ✦ Give 10% discount to PTA members on all products your PTA sells.
- ✦ Send graduates and alumni parents a letter inviting them to join PTA.
- ✦ Have a special door prize drawing for PTA student members at their dances.
- ✦ Set up a PTA sponsored homework hotline.
- ✦ Ask local realtors to include welcome from PTA to new buyers with children.
- ✦ Set your membership goal early and announce it to everyone.

- ✦ Ask TV and radio stations' program directors to include PTA in any interview or "talk" shows appropriate for parent involvement or views. Be sure to have articulate and well-informed PTA representatives.
- ✦ Hang a PTA banner outside the school or in a prominent place on a building in your community that is highly visible. Consider investing in a weatherproof banner that can be displayed year after year. Include your website address.
- ✦ Send invitations to join PTA throughout the entire PTA year. Don't stop after your major membership campaign at back to school time!
- ✦ Ask to speak for five or ten minutes at a teachers' meeting. Publicize your year's activities and encourage their participation and membership.
- ✦ Request a space for a PTA bulletin board or showcase, then keep it up to date. Post your latest newsletter and other PTA promotional materials.
- ✦ Start your membership enrollment with a neighborhood parade. Let children participate. They love it!
- ✦ Hold a poster or slogan contest for students with PTA membership as a theme. Plan the contest with cooperation of the teachers at the end of the year for next August or September.