**[STATE & BRANCH TOOLS](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/state-branch/)**

**Membership Matters: A News Hub for Leaders**

**June/July 2021**

*Resources, tips and tricks for AAUW state and branch leaders*

**Bragging on Branches (and States!)**

Cheers to Five-Star Success

When AAUW launched the [Five-Star National Recognition Program](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/initiatives/5-star-program/), we were thrilled to be able to honor the hard work of our branches and state affiliates.

Since then, more than 100 branches and 10 states have improved the world for women and girls by creating new programs and scholarships, launching fundraising efforts, and meeting with their elected officials. And you found ways to do it creatively during the deadliest pandemic in a century.

As we prepare to restart the program in Fiscal Year 2022, AAUW would like to thank every branch and state that participated and set the standard for Five-Star success. We look forward to celebrating your achievements again in the next fiscal year.

Stay tuned for the announcement of our virtual Five-Star National Recognition and Celebration event this summer!

Meet Our Latest Five-Star Awardees

We applaud the following branches on their Five-Star achievements this month: (Indiana) Indianapolis; (Texas) North Harris County; (Virginia) Hampton, Winchester. Congrats also to these star-earning states: AAUW of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Massachusetts.

And huge kudos to the AAUW affiliates that attained all five stars, including AAUW of California (at the state level) and the following branches: (Alabama) Talladega County; (California) Long Beach, Palos Verdes, San Clemente-Capistrano Bay; (North Carolina) Greensboro; and (Pennsylvania) Carlisle.

**Success Stories**

Get inspiration and advice from this month’s five-star branch leaders.

**AAUW OF CALIFORNIA**

**Engage your Competitive Spirit**

“AAUW of California’s board of directors decided in July 2020 to collect the data required to become a five-star state and challenged our branches to do the same through our publications *Board to Board* and *California Connection*.

We easily accomplished our goals and verified them in many of the areas of focus, although confirming that 90% of our 119 branches held 2-4 strategic-plan-related programs was challenging in the COVID-19 world. We read all the newsletters and conducted a survey of the branches. We learned that our resilient and creative branches embraced Zoom meetings and designed mission-based programs that reached not only their branch members, but also neighboring and sometimes distant branches.

We love competition and have begun our planning to become a five-star state in 2021-22.”

–Dianne Owens, president, and Sandi Gabe, president-elect

**AAUW CRYSTAL LAKE AREA (ILLINOIS)**

**When Life Gives You Lemons ...**

“By April 2020, our branch canceled all programming and began conducting business virtually due to COVID-19. During our June budget discussions, we fully grasped the challenge we faced as we attempted to set goals and plan during the time of pandemic uncertainty. A positive can-do attitude was needed.

After reviewing the Five-Star Program criteria, our board decided that completing the program would provide focus, bring us together, and keep our members engaged. Luckily, previous leadership laid the groundwork. We had already updated our strategic plan, named a public policy chair, and taken other steps to energize us.

We got organized. Using AAUW’s Five-Star webpage, we created a work plan and learned from successful branches. We identified members willing to complete tasks and met our deadlines. Using Zoom was essential and yielded broader attendance for mission-focused programs like our visit with Congresswoman Lauren Underwood.

Participating in the Five-Star Program can stave off stagnation or veering off of your mission. It promotes best practices in governance and fosters stability. The adversity of the past year inspired us to cross the finish line in 2021, but thankfully the same work can be accomplished without a pandemic—we highly recommend it.”

—Jackie Eberle, communications/publicity chair

**News & Resources**

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Resources

Need ideas for programming this summer? AAUW’s [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plug and Play Programming](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/dei-toolkit/plug-play-dei-programming/) can help branches create programming and events around the topics included in our [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Toolkit](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/dei-toolkit/).

For tips on how to center diversity, equity and inclusion in your advocacy, check out some of [AAUW’s past webinars](https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/webinars/) on how to use the toolkit in your work, including the June 17 event, “Understanding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.”

Free Memberships: Don’t Lose Them

If your branch has any remaining free memberships from this year’s [Shape the Future campaign](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/state-branch/shape-the-future-campaign/), make sure to redeem them by the extended deadline of July 31.

AAUW Gatherings: Put Safety First

Many members are understandably eager to return to in-person affiliate gatherings, but it’s important to follow all city, state and county guidance and be mindful of the risks. The pandemic isn’t over, and many of us regularly engage with young people and others who do not yet have access to the vaccine. It’s also worth remembering that virtual gatherings bring flexibility to your branch and allow you to expand your reach to new groups.

AAUW Welcomes New Legacy Circle Members

We gratefully acknowledge these visionary AAUW members and supporters who have recently joined the Legacy Circle: **Carol G. Holzgrafe** (California) and **Jeannie G. Webdell** (Missouri). By making a planned gift to AAUW National, each has embraced equity for future generations of women and girls as part of her personal legacy.

If you have included AAUW National in your estate plans, please contact AAUW Director of Advancement Heather Miller at 202.785.7766 to let us know so that we may celebrate you, too!

Finance Officers Must Respond — Don’t Lose Your IRS Tax Status

All AAUW-affiliated entities must file a tax return with the IRS each year. If your annual gross receipts are normally $50,000 or less, you can file Form 990-N. Alternatively, we can do this on your behalf if you complete the group exemption form in the [Membership Services Database](https://ww3.aauw.org/login/?redirect_to=/aauw_redirect/wp_redirect_msd.php) now through October 15.

STEMEd for Girls

Help spread the word about [STEMEd for Girls](https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/stemed-for-girls/), a free virtual summer program created exclusively for girls in grades 9 through 12—with a particular focus on girls of color—and for the parents, guardians and caregivers who support their dreams and aspirations. Sessions run from July 7 through August 18. Please share with your networks!