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

**September 2022**

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

**News & Resources**

Deadline Approaching—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. We can do this on your behalf, but you must complete the group exemption form in [Community Hub](https://my.aauw.org/NC__Login) now through October 15. Login to your personal snapshot and then go to “ MY AFFILIATIONS” and click the blue button next to your affiliate name. Choose “TAX INFORMATION” and then “ ADD NEW TAX DETAILS” to complete the form. The form will ask for the principal officer, which for tax purposes is generally the finance officer. The tax period is from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. Please note that AAUW will file the Form 990-N for free. However, we have not authorized any other entity to do this on a branch’s behalf. If you receive an email from a company offering such a service, please disregard it.

Member-Renewal Grace Period Extended

The September 30 grace period for renewing members (June 30, 2022 expires) to remain in good standing has been extended. You now have until November 30 to renew branch members for FY23 and work with AAUW staff to resolve any issues for the current fiscal year. You can verify your members’ expiration status using the “Export Branch Roster” option in the Community Hub. Please report membership discrepancies to [connect@aauw.org](mailto:connect@aauw.org).

Coming Soon: Branch Donation Reports

We are excited to announce that regular reports of branch member donations will soon be available to member leaders. These reports will be emailed on a monthly basis to branch presidents/administrators, finance officers, membership vice presidents and AAUW funds chairs. They will cover contributions from the start of the year to the end of the month preceding the report. We hope to have the first reports ready for October.

How to Differentiate State Leaders on Branch Rosters

If you’re a branch leader, you may have noticed that state leaders’ names now appear on your branch rosters. We took this step so state leaders can provide additional support to leaders within their state. However, we understand the change has created some challenges regarding pulling member lists. AAUW staff have worked to improve the roster export so you can now differentiate state leaders from branch members. Under the “Export Branch Roster” option in [Community Hub](https://my.aauw.org/NC__Login), the final column ‘Is State Manager’ will now be set to ‘True’ for state leaders so that branch officers can better sort and filter them out when performing branch functions.

New, Streamlined Five-Star Application Process

In response to your feedback, we’re making some changes to our [Five-Star Recognition Program](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/initiatives/5-star-program/). To streamline the application, we’ll send a straightforward, multiple-choice survey that members will receive annually beginning this fall. These annual Branch Impact Surveys will allow AAUW to not only tout national accomplishments and programs but also share the collective impact of our work nationally alongside the local work of our branches and states. Since the first survey will cover the same time period as the most recent Five-Star cycle, we will post the updated criteria for the 2023 fiscal year to our Five-Star Recognition Program page so branches can align their programming accordingly. Next fall, when the questions reflect 2023 branch activities, responses will count toward the next Five-Star award year. If you have any questions, please reach out to Tremayne Parquet at [parquett@aauw.org](mailto:parquett@aauw.org).

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

We are excited to share the latest update on branches and their accomplishments from the [Five-Star Recognition Program](https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/initiatives/5-star-program/), which was recently extended to run through the end of July. First, we want to celebrate the following branches who have most recently achieved Five Stars for their work last fiscal year: Lompoc-Vandenberg, Morgan Hill, Napa County, Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette, Palos Verdes Peninsula, Redding, Redlands, San Fernando Valley (California), Greater Naples (Florida), Greensboro (North Carolina), Northeast Tarrant County (Texas), McLean Area, Reston-Herndon Area, Springfield-Annandale (Virginia), Appleton, West Suburban Milwaukee (Wisconsin).

We’re also pleased to recognize the following branches that achieved stars in the recognition program: California Online, Chico, Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek, East San Gabriel Valley, Gilroy (California), Elgin Area (Illinois), Charlotte, Salisbury (North Carolina), Alexandria (Virginia), Tomah (Wisconsin).

**Success Stories**

Get inspiration and advice from other branch leaders.

**AAUW Janesville (Wisconsin): Five Stars for Our 100th Birthday**

In 2018, our co-presidents began looking at our strategic plan and realized it was woefully outdated. It did not align with AAUW National’s plan; it lacked clear goals, measurable action steps, and most importantly, aspirational solutions to real problems.

Branch officers spent the summer of 2018 working on our goals. We created a new strategic plan to drive branch decisions as we approached our 100th anniversary.

When AAUW National rolled out the Five-Star National Recognition Program, we were already a step ahead because of our newly created strategic plan. One of our goals was to make sure our programs aligned with AAUW’s mission. We had also set a long-term membership goal of “100 members by our 100th year.” With these goals set, two areas within the Five-Star criteria were already being addressed.

Over the next year, our co-presidents attended AAUW National webinars on the Five- Star program. Listening to other branches report on their successes was motivating and instructional. We adopted several strategies, including using spreadsheets to track our progress.

We persisted over the past three years and moved from being a three-star branch in 2020 to four stars in 2021 and finally five stars in 2022. We are proud of that accomplishment, but even more proud of the impact our work has had on our branch and community.

Carole Salinas, past co-president

**AAUW Honolulu (Hawaii): Sustain and Adapt for Five-Star Success**

It is vital for branches to engage members and supporters in a manner that aligns with AAUW’s mission of empowering women and girls. The AAUW Five-Star Program sets out measurable, flexible and actionable goals for branch activities. The AAUW Honolulu Branch could not achieve Five-Star status without the AAUW staff’s prompt, consistent and professional assistance.

The Five-Star Recognition Program is designed to build on existing chapter and branch successes. While we initially thought it would be impossible for our branch to achieve even three stars, we realized we could get all five after we read through the online application (which is a relatively short form).

It is vital for branch leaders to adapt so they can sustain their branch while advancing the mission. We believe the role of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) branch officer will positively impact programs at our branch. Our branch recognizes the value and need for DEI in our leadership, programming and branch image. We hope that, by supporting the DEI branch officer and implementing relevant programs, our branch will be able to adapt and attract the next generation of AAUW members and supporters.

Caroline M. Kunitake, finance officer

**AAUW Dearborn (Michigan): Find Attainable Goals**

At first, I thought achieving five stars would be daunting. But as I studied the areas of focus, I soon realized that various branch members might have the answers I needed to complete the application.

First, I connected with our program team to ensure we met the criteria and were addressing our mission based on the AAUW Strategic Plan.

For the Advancement star, we chose obtainable requirements. We were able to increase our contributions to the Greatest Needs Fund and retain 90% of our membership.

For the Communications star, through the diligent effort of branch members monitoring posts to Facebook and our website, we met the requirement of making three to five posts related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

We achieved the Public Policy star by hosting a Zoom event featuring Mary Pollock, AAUW Michigan’s policy chair. This turned out to be one of our most informative events.

Lastly, for the Governance and Sustainability star, we created a succession plan to help new officers understand their role and a strategic plan, which we posted to our website.

Suggestions for other branches: Review the requirements with your members, talk to your those responsible for completing the application, and keep good records of all events and participants.

Judy Buck, president