



Attracting Women of Diversity

Having entered the 21st Century, our Republican Party must evaluate our past, present and future. Have we accomplished our goals? Is our nation heading in a positive direction? Do our elected officials and our Party reflect the diversity of our nation?

For years, the Republican Party has announced its "Big Tent" philosophy; i.e., there is room for all Americans who believe in the Party's principles to become part of the GOP. However, when one takes a look at the Party structure either at the national or the grassroots level, one sees that the racial and ethnic composition has been slow to change.

To truly be a strong, vibrant and effective political party, we must represent people from all walks of life – regardless of sex, age, culture or ethnicity. With our national grassroots network of 100,000 women, the National Federation of Republican Women has an opportunity to play a key role in reaching out to all communities and attracting diversity at the local, state and national level. In other words, NFRW can put the Party's money where its mouth is by developing a special membership drive to bring more Republican women of African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino and Native American backgrounds into its federated clubs.

Make Diversity a Priority

The most important step in any project is ensuring you have the support of your membership. No action plan – regardless of its quality – will succeed unless you are determined and enthusiastic and have decided the project is a priority. Remember, a successful diversity outreach requires more than talk. It requires action. Your state federation or local club must have a group of members who will be continuously striving toward this goal. Diversity outreach cannot be a one-time project. It must be an ongoing process that is involved in all aspects of your club or state federation.

- ◆ Set recruitment goals (this is not affirmative action or a quota effort). Each club/ state federation should set goals to bring in these women as new members.
- ◆ Appoint a chair to lead this effort.
- ◆ Develop a plan, including a committee, events, coalition meetings, etc.

Building a Coalition

- ◆ Local club and state federation presidents (as well as individual members) should attend heritage month meetings in their local areas – you'll be surprised how many Republican women of color will appear. To increase effectiveness, have a woman of that heritage attend with you so that she can introduce you. This is key!
- ◆ Attend church events.
- ◆ Attend other organizations' meetings, including the NAACP, SGA, United Methodist Women, etc.

- ◆ Sponsor minority and/or underprivileged children at events such as circuses, educational programs, school field trips, camps, etc.
- ◆ Attend Republican rallies, fundraisers, etc., especially in areas where a high number of racial and ethnic groups reside. Local club and state federation presidents should make every effort to attend these events to meet and network with minority women.
- ◆ Get involved with community service projects that include women of diversity and/or in neighborhoods that you are trying to reach. This demonstrates your genuine concern and interest.

Network, Network, Network

Obtain lists of Republican women of diversity from:

- ◆ Republican National Committee
- ◆ Local Republican committee – most state and county GOP chairs are very familiar with the Republicans in their area
- ◆ Volunteer lists from local campaigns
- ◆ National Republican Hispanic Assembly
- ◆ NFRW Outreach Committee

Showcase Women of Diversity

- ◆ Recruit women from various racial and ethnic groups to run for public office. There are many talented women who want to run but they do not know where to go. NFRW could provide the necessary grassroots network and experience to ensure a successful campaign. We must promote our campaign schools and assistance to more women of diversity. Having more Republican women of diversity in public office speaks loud and clear – we are inclusive and welcome ALL women to our Party and our Federation!
- ◆ Include women from different backgrounds in the Federation's meetings – either as panel members or keynote speakers – at local, state and national meetings. This again clearly demonstrates our inclusive spirit.
- ◆ Does the Board of Directors of your local club or state federation represent the diversity of women you are striving to attract? Mentor women of all ages and backgrounds so that they are prepared to be effective leaders.

Spread the Word

- ◆ Advertise your group and its mission, programs and upcoming meetings in local media.
- ◆ Use your organization's and other political newsletters to reinforce your message of inclusion.
- ◆ Interact with the local minority media outlets – radio stations, newspapers, etc. Include them on your media distribution list and meet with the editor/station manager to discuss possible earned media opportunities. In addition, you could purchase advertising for your upcoming events.

Q & A

Answers to Your Questions on Attracting Women of Diversity

Q: Should we invite women of diversity to join our already established Republican Women's club? Or should we help them launch a Republican club of diversity?

A: This is a common and difficult dilemma. Most women prefer to work *together* – they do not wish to be separated. They believe that establishing separate clubs is an unacceptable form of raising Party consciousness. However, in other areas, women of diversity would rather have their own club, i.e., *the Hispanic Republican Women of (County)*. Talk with the women of diversity in your local area – what do they want? Remember – the strength and influence of our Federation relies on a united grassroots network.

Q: Should we produce membership materials in Spanish?

A: Many clubs who are striving to attract diversity make translation a priority. However, it is not necessary. Actually women of diversity can be angered by it and believe efforts of this nature are divisive and condescending. They speak English and are proud Americans. Also, we must remember that if your literature is translated to Spanish – what about the hundreds of Asian dialects? In addition, if you are advertising in a different language, does your club have the capabilities to translate club meetings for that individual member? For those potential members that do prefer a Spanish language effort, you can point out the NFRW's Spanish language web site (www.nfrw.org) and you can distribute the *Republican Party Principles* brochure in Spanish (available from the NFRW or the RNC).

Q: What is the best way to get women of diversity interested in the Party and the Federation?

A: Talk to them! Spending hundreds or thousands of dollars on a PR campaign aimed at women of diversity is a waste unless you also make the effort to speak to them and make them feel welcome at your meetings and events. Seek out women of diversity, take time to get to know the women behind the labels, and you will be building your membership as well as creating friendships. If you are willing to reach out the hand of political friendship, chances are your targeted group will grasp it. At the very least, they will respect your state or club for its efforts. This strategy will work for all potential members, not just women of diversity.