



# MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT

2021

*“The Society is open to all those who seek to live their faith loving and committing themselves to their neighbor in need.”  
(Rule, Part I, 3.1)*

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## WHY RECRUIT?

The ongoing development of membership, which includes both recruitment and retention, is one of the most essential responsibilities that a new or existing Conference will face. Creating a **membership development culture** within the Society is vital to sustain the life of a Conference because a healthy Conference can meet the needs of its members and of the community it serves.

Our Vincentian membership indeed brings life to the Society and its Conferences. While our membership is the source of life, the words and actions of our members also contribute to the “quality” of life experienced by the Conference and in the surrounding community, which includes those we serve. This quality of life can be positive or negative – or somewhere in between. That is why it is so critical that we, as Vincentian family members, genuinely and lovingly care for our existing and new membership, promoting a “membership development” culture that is demonstrated and sustained through all activities, e.g., Vincentian celebrations, home visits, educational opportunities, events, fundraisers, awareness raising, etc.

If a Conference is open to new members and its works are well known in the parish, new members will be attracted. Little active recruiting is required. But even such Conferences must periodically reach out so that the congregation knows that they are open to new members. They must also reach out to seek diversity within the Conference – men and women, young people, members of various ethnic groups in the parish.

## ARE YOU PREPARED TO WELCOME NEW MEMBERS?

Knowing how to attract new members is the easiest part of recruitment. Keeping them and helping them to become fully contributing long-term members is the more difficult and more important part. We strongly recommend that your Conference be confident that you are willing and able to handle the tough part of keeping members before embarking on the easier part of recruiting new ones. Bottom line: Make sure that your Conference is ready to do the work required to sustain recruitment.

### *IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU RECRUIT- Why do individuals become involved?*

There are countless answers to this question, but usually it will boil down to a few basic needs.

- ***What’s in it for me? People tend to join groups for both personal and professional reasons.***– With faith-based groups such as SVdP, people are responding, whether they are aware of it or not, to an urging by the Holy Spirit to serve the poor in the name of Christ. These potential members have received a call to serve.
- ***The desire to belong*** – Individuals want to feel a sense of belonging; it is natural for human beings to be drawn to social, religious, occupational, or other groups of people that share common characteristics or interests.
- ***The desire for recognition*** – Some people desire credibility and status. In the case of SVdP, an individual may be aware of the good work that flows from the Conferences and he or she may wish to be associated with SVdP as a result.

We, as Vincentians, are trusted to listen carefully and compassionately to the needs of potential members so that we can lead them, with grace, to the Society and into a Conference to grow in holiness, in friendship and in service with fellow Vincentians.

Take a moment to think about why you became involved and was it one of the reasons above or a reason all your own?

A Conference's Vincentian spirituality, friendliness and compassionate service to marginalized individuals should be valuable enough to encourage membership. When possible, use your own unique experiences to appeal to other individuals. Your personal testimony to the grace found in membership is a greater attraction to people than any printed brochure. It just might be the heaven-sent reason that someone makes the decision to join SVdP.

## GETTING STARTED

### STEPS TO HELP POSITION YOUR CONFERENCE FOR NEW MEMBERSHIP

Before the Membership Recruitment Program begins, there are a few exercises that should be undertaken to position each Conference for new membership. The 6 steps below will guide Conferences through a strategic thinking process that has been designed to sharpen the focus on current membership, Conference goals and objectives and intentional member recruitment.

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#### 1. FORM A RECRUITMENT TEAM

The ongoing responsibility of attracting new membership lies with every Conference member, especially the Conference President.

If forming a team, select a chairperson with a lot of energy. The team should include men and women, younger and older members, and representatives of the major ethnic groups in the parish/community. If the members do not hold any office in the Society, it is probably more an advantage than a disadvantage. Every member of the Recruitment Team should have a copy of this toolkit.

Recruitment Team members may serve in different capacities:

- meet with the Pastors
- recommend or implement recruitment/retention activities
- assist in the recruitment of new officers, if needed
- ensure that all new candidates receive the appropriate onboarding or introduction to a "new member coordinator"
- ensure all new candidates are informed of upcoming Formation & Training opportunities

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#### 2. CONSIDER YOUR MEMBERSHIP NEEDS

##### OBSERVE YOUR CONFERENCE

What is the current state of your Conference? Is its governance strong and sound? Could it be strengthened with the skills and competencies a new member could bring? What about the quality of its operations, services and special works? Are there needs in the community that could be addressed if your conference had a larger membership? Are you prepared to welcome other Vincentians into your Conference? Are your members feeling spiritually or emotionally fulfilled with the charitable works they are doing through the Conference? How do you know? Do you nurture the current members that you have? Are your meetings welcoming to new members?

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## DETERMINE YOUR CONFERENCE'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

After observing your conference, you will have a better idea of what your conference needs in terms of new membership and will be ready to set goals to increase its numbers and/or encourage membership development for new and existing membership.

Note: In addition to setting goals for the type of new membership needed and the number of new members desired, there are also goals and objectives relative to the "recruitment program" that you choose from this toolkit to implement. See the Invitation to Serve Information Packet for a sample *Invitation to Serve Program Goals and Objectives*.

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### 3. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO ACHIEVE THIS?

This Toolkit provides two ideas for recruitment programs, including detailed instructions to carry out the SVdP "Invitation to Serve" Program and the "Each One Reach One" Program for use by your Conference.

Please review each of the recruitment programs that accompany this Toolkit and consider which type of program would most benefit your Conference and the surrounding community at this point in time. If your Conference needs to increase membership in every category, would it make sense to plan an "Invitation to Serve" as the primary source of recruitment during your membership drive? Or, if your Conference has a growing membership and sound operations, would it make sense to plan the "Each One Reach One" method of recruitment during the drive? Talk to the Pastor about which type of recruitment effort he would like to support.

Your Conference may choose to utilize these approaches or choose an alternative method. Once your Conference selects the program that best fits the parish, community and Conference, develop a timeline and outline what you will need to do to reach the program goals.

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### 4. DETERMINE BUDGET AND MATERIALS NEEDED

The best plan and the best intentions will go nowhere without adequate funds. When planning for recruitment efforts now and in the future, determine the costs for fundraisers, workshops, mailings, phone calls, etc. and keep in mind that some resources may be covered by the Conference Support Center, such as brochures, posters and help with presentations. See Support & Resources Section for examples of marketing materials.

When setting your budget and deciding on the type of Recruitment Program to select for your Conference, you might want to consider making the first meeting and meal complimentary. If you can afford to do this, it is a nice touch, and might bring in more attendees. Just be sure it is included in your final budget for the Campaign.

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### 5. COMMIT TO THE MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT PROGRAM AND DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN

Soliciting buy-in and commitment is crucial to the success of any membership campaign, because it is you and your members who will be the most effective recruiters. Everyone should take ownership in supporting the campaign since promoting, encouraging and retaining SVdP membership is the responsibility of all Vincentians.

Once the existing Conference members agree, if the Conference is located within a parish, the general recruitment idea should then be introduced to the Pastor for his support and, if any, his recommendations. In the Invitation to Serve Program, you will find helpful information on interacting with a Pastor in this regard. Please read through the section first and apply accordingly.

Often overlooked when assessing your Conference is whether your Conference can support new members at this time. If yours is an existing Conference, are the programs strong? Is the morale of the group high? Is your meeting

attendance acceptable? If the Conference is failing in at least one of these areas, no one will want to join. New members should not be expected to come in and solve problems that the Conference might be facing.

While it is obvious that you are trying to attract as many new members as possible to the Conference and SVdP, the long-term plan must be addressed as well. Your goal is to gain members who will become active participants, serve as primary caseworkers or other key roles, and eventually become Conference and District leaders. New members bring with them new ideas, vitality, and succession. They will give your Conference Leadership Board the opportunity to begin priming others for Board positions when they become available.

New member's enthusiasm for the Conference will carry over to other members and begin to break through the lax behavior or burnout that sometimes begins to take over when serving people such as the poor and marginalized. An active Conference with enthusiastic members is one that people want to belong to and dedicate their time to. If you don't believe that it is worthwhile, neither will anyone else. Now that you know what the benefits are to increasing your Conference's membership, what can you do to determine the overall perception of your Conference? What are the outside factors that influence the success of your Conference?

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## 6. IDENTIFY WHICH TYPE OF RECRUITMENT PLAN YOU WILL USE

Once your Conference stands united in promoting a "membership development" culture, you will need to select which type of "Recruitment Program," will be carried out during the campaign. The Recruitment Program is the actual tool that will be used to attract members of the parish to join the Society.

Basically, there are two approaches to recruiting new membership. A public appeal would be used to reach a large audience in search of anyone who might be interested in learning more about the Society. Public appeals may be made through pulpit announcements, parish bulletin announcements, talks to parish, school or community groups, open houses, or brochures in a rack. The Invitation to Serve program is a proven tool for public appeals. A personal appeal is an individual invitation to encourage someone to join the Society who has either expressed an interest or been identified as a potential Vincentian by the Pastor, another Vincentian, or anyone else. The Each One Reach One program is an excellent example of the personal appeal, as it involves a person-to-person discussion, perhaps in the prospect's home or in a prearranged appointment.

A personal appeal is usually more effective, but it requires more effort and is limited in scope. Relying solely on personal appeals may be the approach that will work best in your situation but be mindful of the risk that it could create the impression of a closed rather than an open Society. Best results are usually obtained by a combination of both public and personal appeals. The public appeal is used to identify those who are interested. These people are then approached on a personal basis in an effort to invite them to join.

Whether you choose to recruit new membership through a public appeal or a personal appeal, you are now ready to select a Program that best fits your situation:

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### INVITATION TO SERVE PROGRAM

See "Invitation to Serve Information Program Packet" on Membership Recruitment website-  
[www.svdpgorgia.org/recruit](http://www.svdpgorgia.org/recruit)

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### EACH ONE REACH ONE PROGRAM

See "Each One Reach One Program Packet" on Membership Recruitment website-  
[www.svdpgorgia.org/recruit](http://www.svdpgorgia.org/recruit)

## RETENTION

Though it is very common to talk about "recruiting and retaining" members, retention is an awkward category that does not stand alone. Unlike recruitment, retention is an outcome, not a task. In other words, you can set aside a certain timeframe to tackle a recruitment drive, but you cannot do that with retention. Retention is the result of accumulated actions necessary to support a solid membership development culture that will essentially sustain its members. However, Vincentian recruitment and retention both rely on the grace of God.

When members are recruited in good conscience, have meaningful work to do, receive valuable training, get supervisory input and feel recognized...they'll be satisfied enough to want to remain engaged. For this reason, SVdP provides many opportunities for its members to assimilate into Vincentian life and feel at home in the Society.

## PROCEDURES FOR ADMITTING NEW MEMBERS

Steps to take with prospective members:

1. Add prospective member to Conference mailing list for announcements, meeting dates, etc.
2. Introduce prospective member at Conference meeting
3. Have prospective member fill out New Member Application Form for President/New Member Coordinator to review (if applicable)- Found on Member Recruitment webpage at [www.svdpgorgia.org/recruit](http://www.svdpgorgia.org/recruit)
4. Once application is received, send/share New Member Welcome Packet with member. Packet can be found on the Member Recruitment webpage at [www.svdpgorgia.org/recruit](http://www.svdpgorgia.org/recruit).
5. Add new member to CMS with 'Conference Member' role
6. Sign New Member up for Newsletters (This task can be done by Secretary, or each new member themselves).
  - a. SIGN UP FOR THE SOCIETY PAGE- A MONTHLY PUBLICATION  
<https://bit.ly/3z0n3iA>
  - b. SIGN UP FOR THE E-GAZETTE- A WEEKLY PUBLICATION  
<http://bit.ly/1GKXYJ6>

## UTILIZE MEETINGS AND FORMATION FOR ENGAGEMENT

A Vincentian membership involves lifelong growth in many areas. Initial training for new members is provided informally by the local Conference. Ozanam Orientation, Spiritual Retreats, Home Visit Workshops, President Workshops, etc. are offered on a regular basis through the Local District and Diocesan Councils to provide new and veteran members the opportunities to understand the nature and purpose of the Society, its vision and potentialities, local, state, and federal resources in their area, and finally, to learn the proper attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed in effectively serving and empowering those in need as exemplified in Jesus' Gospel message of love.

All members are encouraged to understand the importance of attending and participating effectively in SVdP meetings as well as formation and training sessions at the local, diocesan, regional, and national levels. This helps continue the spirit of friendship that Frédéric Ozanam saw as one of the primary goals of the Society. Attending SVdP meetings is part of the basic Vincentian commitment that ensures the growth of Vincentian Spirituality. In this way, members can be seen as the true successor to Frédéric Ozanam. If members do not attend meetings, they risk not growing spiritually and forgetting what the Vincentian Charism is about and who they are called to be.

In addition to the formation and continuing educational workshops offered through the Society, membership is also encouraged to pursue supplementary training and awareness building - sharing new knowledge, best practices and lessons learned with the Vincentian community for the betterment of the Society and those we serve.

#### ENSURE THAT THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE NEW MEMBER MESH WITH THE WORK THEY ARE TO PERFORM

During the recruitment phase, ask prospective members what they expect to gain from their work with the Society and what type of work they would like to do. Make sure that the work to be done and the degree of involvement offered by the organization is in line with those expectations. A member that expects to lead a fundraising event will not be happy doing clerical work in support of that event. It may not be possible to accommodate every expectation and in those cases that needs to be communicated diplomatically to the prospective member.

#### COMMUNICATE THE EXPECTATIONS OF VINCENTIAN MEMBERSHIP TO NEW MEMBERS

While members are not paid for their work, the Conference is relying on them to perform certain duties. A job description is essential so that the member understands what is expected in terms of a time commitment and type of work to be done. This provides a good tool for comparing the member's expectations against the needs and requirements of the Conference. A clear understanding as to what is required by both parties helps keep members engaged.

#### RESPECT, RECOGNIZE AND REWARD MEMBERS

This is the most basic principle. Members may meet regularly or toil away on projects because they feel strongly about the mission and vision of the organization but make no mistake - everyone wants to be recognized for their efforts. Recognition can include:

- Public acknowledgement of their hours of service, years of involvement, financial contributions and/or successful completion of a project (e.g. chairing and organizing a fundraising event) in newsletters, publications, etc.
- In addition, private acknowledgement is very important. Handwritten thank you notes, telephone calls or invitations to lunch are important tools for recognizing the efforts of volunteers.
- Rewards for service can include certificates, pins or special jewelry that marks years of service. These rewards can be presented during an annual volunteer recognition event.

#### MEMBERSHIP RETENTION BEST PRACTICES

- Regularly Request feedback from members on how programs are meeting their training and development needs.
- Provide a means for members to talk about their concerns, complaints and suggestions. Always provide answers to their questions.
- Consider changing meeting times to permit members to attend during alternative times.
- Consider forming a carpool to meetings if many your members are located in the same area.
- Develop high-level Conference projects to interest senior members who have more experience.
- Conduct or host an orientation program for new members.
- Look for opportunities to report on the achievements of members.
- Encourage board members to get to know Conference members by circulating at meetings.
- Consider assigning a board member or "new member coordinator" to introduce new members and guests at the monthly meeting and guide them through the process until they begin to feel comfortable. Having

a "buddy" assigned to a new member helps to bring the new member into the group and encourages participation.

- Issue plaques, certificates, free seminars, etc. to reward member efforts.
- **Keep new members happy! Add them immediately to mailing lists. The new member should not have to call to find out when he or she will be contacted. You have only one chance to make a first impression. If your Conference takes the summer off, and a member joins during that time, it is still important to welcome them. The new member will not know that the Conference is on hiatus, all they will know is that no one contacted them.**
- Call to invite them to their first meeting. Welcome them warmly. Invite them to serve on a committee.
- You do not have to "sell" members on membership, but you should remind them of the value of their membership.
- Network!
- Lead by example

## FORMATION & TRAINING

Visit the Vincentian Event Calendar for all Formation & Training opportunities at [www.svdpgorgia.org/vincentian-calendar](http://www.svdpgorgia.org/vincentian-calendar).

## EVALUATING RESULTS

After the completion of the campaign's planning and active recruitment phases, you will need to take a close look at what you did and what the results were. This is just as important a part of the campaign as the actual plan.

Consider the following questions:

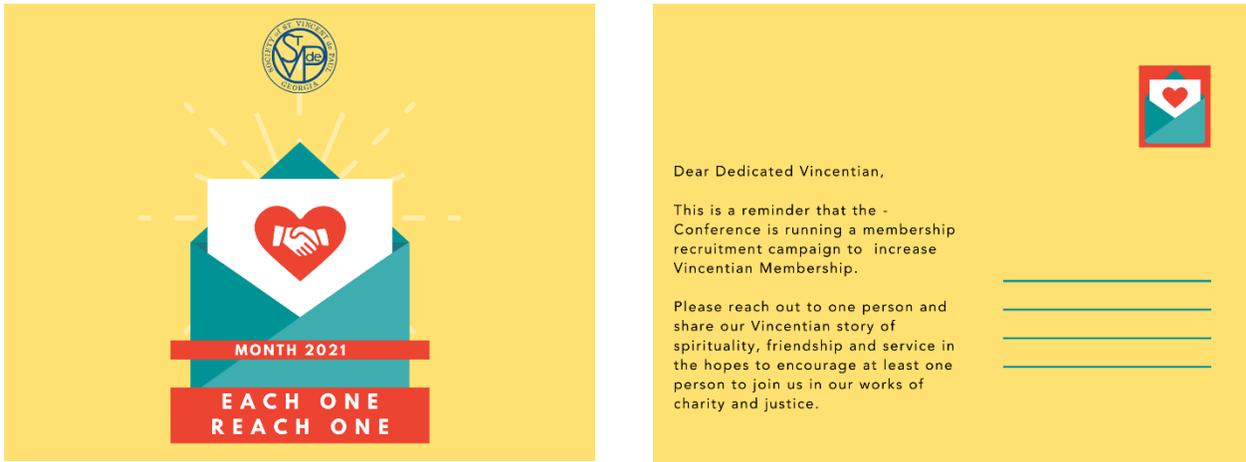
- What did you want to happen as a result of your membership drive?
- Did you reach your goals?
- How many new candidates did you gain?
- How many new candidates in each membership category?
- Will each new candidate become a new Vincentian at Ozanam Orientation?
- How many members did you have to start?
- Was the program worthwhile?
- How many "new" people know about SVdP and your Conference?

After the campaign, fill out the Recruitment Results Report Form included with the recruitment program packet you use.

**SUPPORT AND RESOURCES**

**EACH ONE REACH ONE REMINDER CARD**

The reminder postcards can be ordered through the Vincentian Services department at the Conference Support Center. Please contact the Director of Vincentian Services to place an order.



**MARKETING MATERIALS**

Marketing materials can be ordered from the Conference Support Center Vincentian Services Department. Please contact the Director of Vincentian Services to customize your materials.

**CONFERENCE REPORT POSTER**

**YOUR SUPPORT COUNTS 128 FAMILIES HELPED (2021 FEBRUARY - AUGUST)**

**PARISHIONER CONTRIBUTIONS JANUARY - AUGUST 2018 \$53,030**

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| UTILITIES (GAS, WATER, ELECTRIC)         | \$7,817 [13%]  |
| HOUSING   RENT                           | \$46,463 [75%] |
| OTHER (PHYSICIANS, TRANSPORTATION, ETC.) | \$191 [1%]     |
| TEMPORARY HOUSING                        | \$7,172 [12%]  |

For more information, to make a donation, or to volunteer, please contact: [svdpholycross@gmail.com](mailto:svdpholycross@gmail.com) or the church office at 770-939-3501

**CONFERENCE RECRUITMENT POSTER**

**Live Your Faith**

Join the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at **CHRIST OUR HOPE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Vincentian volunteers deliver hope and help to families and individuals in need.

**WE PROVIDE:**  
 Poverty services including financial assistance and food information and referral services  
 Services for emergency and special needs  
 Services to the lonely and alienated  
 Services to children in need

Join the more than 3,000 volunteers who work tirelessly to be Hope in Action for the thousands of families and individuals struggling with poverty! This need is great for volunteers who desire to be the hands and feet of Jesus to people in need. We are seeking people who can give a compassionate, listening ear to people in need.

**Please join us at our monthly meeting in the Parish Hall Library at 4:00pm on the second Tuesday of every month.**

Respecting the dignity of each person, St. Vincent de Paul Georgia brings hope and help to those in need so they may find stability and move toward self-sufficiency.

**CONFERENCE BROCHURE**

**Our Mission**  
 Respecting the dignity of each person, St. Vincent de Paul Georgia brings hope and help to those in need so they may find stability and move toward self-sufficiency.

**We invite you to serve**  
 Please contact us to learn more about our mission. Thank you for your service to the community!  
**CONTACT:**  
 Joyce Cole, Sr. Director, 770-939-4338 or  
 Robert Wallace, Sr. Director, 770-939-4338

**Changing Lives**  
 "To serve the poor is to go to God."  
 St. Vincent de Paul

**HELP US TO DO MORE**  
 Volunteers just like you act as a personal support network of advisors to provide emergency financial assistance, food, clothing, medicine, career support, and life skills education. It's our big and small acts of service that make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable in our community.

**NEED HELP?**  
 Call us for more information: 770-939-3501

**Make a Difference and Live Your Faith!**

**GROW Spiritually**  
 • Attend our monthly meetings  
 • Participate in special events such as the Parish Mass and Living a Vincentian Adventure

**CREATE Friendships**  
 • Attend our monthly meetings and events  
 • Volunteer with Christ Our Hope food pantry or other Vincentian programs

**SERVE Others**  
 • Assist in our monthly meetings and events  
 • Volunteer with Christ Our Hope food pantry or other Vincentian programs

## SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Recruiting new members is relatively easy. attracting the right members and holding on to them is more challenging.
- Be prepared. Form a team and develop a plan
- With those interested: follow up, follow up, follow up
- Draw on available support and resources: Conference Support Center, District and neighboring conferences.
- Welcome, nourish, encourage, and mentor your new members. The first few months are critical.