

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

Community Partner



Program Guidebook

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps on occasion you have said or thought...

- “Our chapter could be more effective if we had more money.”
- “Local people are not interested in AFA.”
- “We can not seem to attract new, young leaders.”
- “Our influence would be stronger if we had a broader cross-section of community involvement.”

Sound familiar?

That’s why the Community Partner Program (CP) was established in 1975. This program offers chapters a method of stimulating community participation with their chapter while at the same time generating large amounts of income for chapter sponsored events and activities. When a chapter develops an outstanding CP program the chapters potential expands dramatically.

THE COMMUNITY PARTNER PROGRAM

The Community Partner Program publicly identifies a business as a supporter of the Air Force Association with the Air Force. When the business becomes a partner, they may sponsor one or two individuals within their organization as members of AFA. The designated individual(s) receives all benefits of AFA membership. The business may choose to join one of two categories.

➤ **Category One (Cat I)** – \$90.00 annually

The business designates one person in their organization to become a member of AFA; who becomes eligible to receive all benefits of a personal membership.

➤ **Category Two (Cat II)** – \$180.00 annually

The business designates two people in their organization to become members of AFA; who and are eligible to receive all benefits of personal membership.

A LOCAL CHAPTER INITIATIVE

The Community Partner Program is strictly a local chapter initiative. The chapter identifies prospective businesses, markets the program, and maintains contact, and renewal process with each business.

A chapter is entitled to retain \$45.00 of the annual affiliation fee for Cat I membership and \$90.00 for Cat II members. When a membership is sold, the chapter deposits the company's check into its own account and then forwards a check for \$45.00 or \$90.00 to AFA Headquarters with the completed application or renewal form.

Within 30 days, the Membership Department will send the chapter a new Community Partner kit which includes:

- Wooden plaque
- Date medallion
- 8 x 5 "Our Business Supports Our Troops" window decal

All mailings for this program are sent directly to the Chapter Vice President for Community Partners. If a chapter has not designated a Community Partner Vice President the mailing will go to the Chapter President.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM

Community Partners also offer chapter's important points of contact within the community, impacting every aspect of the chapters operations from membership recruitment, programming and to legislative influences.

I. Benefits to the Chapter

- Adds revenue to your chapter's treasury.
- Generates twice the revenue of a regular membership the first year.
- For renewal year, your chapter gets \$45.00 (or \$90.00 for a Cat Two), as opposed to the support payment for an individual membership.
- Can finance programs and/or fellowships, scholarship.
- Gives your chapter access to the commercial "network" in your local community.
- Community Partners average more than 80% participation in chapters vs. 20% participation of regular members.
- Members sponsored by a Community Partner count toward the chapter's annual membership goal.

II. Benefits to your Community Partner

Articulating the following benefits will determine the success of retaining your Community Partner.

A Community Partner joining has the ability to ...

...**help support a Strong National Defense**

...**have Community-Wide Recognition**

Along with their Community Partner membership they also become a full member of the association receiving the following benefits:

- ***Subscription to the AIR FORCE Magazine***
- ***Email Subscription to the Daily Report***
- **Automatic member of the Air Force Association Veterans Benefit Association (AFAVBA)**

The individual member(s) are eligible for programs and services provided by the AFAVBA; visit www.afavba.org to see current benefits.

- **Flexibility of Involvement with AFA**

Give the opportunity to become involved in a chapter at all levels.

- **Community Partner Plaque/decals**

Additional Benefits (Optional for Chapters)

- **Letterhead Recognition**

- **Newsletter Recognition**

- **Meeting Recognition**

First recognition should be made at the presentation of the plaque. At every meeting thereafter, the Community Partner should be recognized whenever its representative(s) attends.

- **Priority Sponsorship**

At chapter hosted functions allow Community Partners participation or sponsorship, ranging from VIP tours of an Air Force facility to golf tournaments and major dinners.

- **Double Program Impact**

Chapters who dedicate their Community Partner revenues to educational support projects such as scholarships show the CP how their membership simultaneously supports two worthwhile causes.

- **Chapter Business**

Chapter should deal with its Community Partners for goods and services.

- **Guaranteed Involvement**

Invite interested representatives to serve on appropriate committees, subcommittees, or the executive council. The decision to become involved rests entirely with the Community Partner.

SELLING THE COMMUNITY PARTNER MEMBERSHIP

A properly organized program can be an easy task. Below are some ideas that have been proven to work by numerous chapters.

Prospect List

Identify prospective businesses. Brainstorm a list of potential Community Partners during your executive monthly meetings. Remember any business is a potential Community Partner. Some will be obvious potential members...

- Examples of a few possible Community Partners
A Chapter's Bank, Printer, Trophy Shop, and Meeting Place,
- Businesses that have a connection with AFA or the Air Force.

Who Should Be Approached in the Business?

Once the potential businesses are identified, determining the proper contact is the next step. The members of your executive committee will know many of the organizational decision-makers.

If you can not identify a key person at the potential business identify a point of contact outside the organization. This will give you a starting point to market the program.

Who Should Approach the Organization?

You will have more success if you rely on personal contact.

- Once a contact has been identified, determine who in your executive or membership committee knows that individual; he or she should make the approach.

A potential CP will listen more readily to an acquaintance rather than a stranger.

- Ask an AFA member who has a similar business, hobby, or interest to accompany a member of the Community Partner committee on the call.
- Make the best match possible.

- Use your chapter members' talents. Find someone who enjoys selling.
- Review your list regularly.

Regular reviews will ensure that the Community Partner Program maintains its momentum throughout the year.

Now your Community Partner VP has a comprehensive list of businesses, points of contact, and chapter members who will make the visit.

Often, establishing teams and creating friendly competition at specific times throughout the year will create an enthusiasm that gets more chapter members involved. As time passes, you'll find that your chapter, as a whole, begins to "think Community Partners," when that happens, you will have achieved a valuable program capable of sustaining itself on the strength of the successes it enjoys.

Preparation

- Gather materials into an introduction folder for you to leave with the business contact.
 - Air Force Magazine (Chapter is allowed 10 free copies a month)
 - CP brochure
 - CP "What's In It For Me" brochure
 - List of past chapter activities and future plans
 - Sample plaque/ date medallion
 - Window decal
- Give yourself a good understanding of AFA on both the national and local level.
 - You will not convince a Community Partner to join based on your detailed knowledge of AFA, but rather by stressing the benefits of becoming a Community Partner.
- Develop a list of your members and what groups they represent.
- Use good judgment in tailoring your pitch to fit the circumstance.

Once you have decided what kind of handouts to prepare, the amount of work is inversely proportional to the number of people involved in the program. A well structured working group, augmented by members of the executive committee and other chapter members, as appropriate, can make a large number of calls without overburdening any single individual.

Selling the Membership

- The best approach is made in person.
 - Your objective is to get an audience with your point of contact at the business.
- If a phone call or letter is used to make first contact make sure to follow-up in person.

Sale

- Each presentation should aim to be around 15 to 20 minutes
- After the preliminary introduction, move right to the point, state that you are there to discuss the AFA Community Partner Program.
- Emphasize that their business was specifically identified as one your chapter wants to recruit as a Community Partner.
 - This could be because of business ties with the chapter or segments of the chapter membership, shared viewpoints, shared community involvement, etc.
 - Never use a “canned,” standard reason.
- Ask if they are familiar with AFA and the Community Partner Program.
 - Taking the answer into account, give a brief overview of AFA – keep to three to five minutes.
- Discuss the benefits. Make every effort to tailor the benefits to the business.
 - A retail business might benefit from being mentioned each month in your chapter newsletter.
 - Stress the value of the newsletter as a means of reaching your entire membership routinely throughout the year.
 - Show the importance of a local AFA program or project – which gives them recognition.
 - They will be supporting a strong national defense
- Giving the point of contact a folder with a lists benefits, a sample magazine, an application and any additional information unique to your chapter, can make a brief presentation highly effective.
- When you're finished, explain the difference between a Category I and Category II Community Partner membership. Then ask for the sale.

The Contract

If the individual decides to have the company join, have them fill out the application and provide payment.

Often he or she will want to look over the material you've prepared and think about the decision. In this case, leave the materials. But before you go, agree on a time when you can stop back to provide additional information and, hopefully, pick up the check.

But what if the company decides not to affiliate? This is where careful follow-up is necessary. Don't use pressure tactics. Instead, attempt to learn the reason for the decision. Often an objection will be cited that can easily be answered (see Objections section).

D. The Follow-Up

After the business decides to become a Community Partner, be sure to send a thank you letter. This letter should inform the Community Partner of what to expect over the next month or so as the application is processed and explain when and where the chapter will present the Community Partner plaque.

Do not give up! Ask if you can call back in a few months (especially effective if the company's cash flow is tight). Tell the contact that you would like to invite him or her to the next few chapter activities for a firsthand look at what AFA is all about. Over the next few months, drop off an occasional copy of *AIR FORCE* Magazine.

In short, unless the company is absolutely not interested in becoming a Community Partner, try to develop a positive relationship. Then, perhaps six months later, ask again. You'll be surprised at how successful a careful follow-up effort can be.

RENEWING COMMUNITY PARTNERS

AFA headquarters sends the renewal invoices to the chapter approximately 90 days before the expiration date of the membership.

The renewal is a 8 ½ x 11 perforated form consisting of three copies of the Community Partner's renewal invoice.

- Leave one copy of the invoice with the Community Partner, as a receipt.
- Return one copy with the check to Headquarters.
- Retain one copy for the chapter records.

**We suggest you mark this copy "Paid" and note the date it was sent to Headquarters

It is up to the chapter to contact the Community Partner for the renewal and to forward half of the payment to AFA headquarters.

As with the initial effort, Community Partner renewals should be handled in person. If possible, the same individual who originally solicited the membership should make the renewal call. Whoever makes the call should assess in advance the extent to which the Community Partner involved itself with the chapter over the year.

If the Community Partner was not active, plan to give an overview of the year's activities, stressing the advantages other Community Partners received from participating.

Indicate any changes of address or contact/member information directly on the invoice that is sent to Headquarters.

Begin this process as soon as the chapter receives the invoice.

Retaining a Community Partner

- Make sure that Community Partners know what's going on in the chapter. Some chapters prepare a brief quarterly letter or report for their Partners. If possible, show them the direct results of their investment in the chapter.
- Provide special invitations whenever similar invitations are mailed to community or military VIPs. This does not mean you invite them as guests of the chapter. You are simply showing their importance by giving them special invitations.
- Consider sponsoring a special activity for your Community Partners.

**For example a reception for Community Partners, community leaders, military leaders, and chapter officers.

HANDLING SALES OBJECTIONS

Just as in any sales, objections will arise. Accept that and be prepared to meet them.

This section identifies some of the common objections.

Objections should be viewed as an opportunity to clear up misconceptions or to present additional detail in support of the program's benefits. The objections addressed here are not all-inclusive. They will give you some ideas on how to develop your own defensive strategy.

Please be very careful in how you use these ideas. AFA is not in the business of pressuring anyone into joining.

"I can't afford to join."

Sometimes it is absolute fact, and a little observation of this business' working conditions will give you a feel for the gravity of the situation.

In most cases, this objection really means, "I can't afford to join everything I see." This is a much easier objection to answer. Stress why the Community Partner Program is beneficial. Through the exposure it provides to chapter members, the Air Force community, and other community and business leaders, the Community Partner Program can help the business interact more effectively with these groups. In addition, the publicity provided in the chapter newsletter, on the chapter letterhead, and during chapter functions can be very rewarding. Furthermore, the Community Partner member is offered many additional benefits through AFA.

"I have too much to do already without joining another organization."

Stress that an individual's involvement in chapter activities is strictly a personal decision. No pressure—not even any expectations—will come from the chapter.

"I don't believe in joining an organization when I don't have time to participate properly."

The chapter welcomes active participation, but it is not essential to either the chapter's or the Community Partner's interests or benefit. Finally, the Community Partner receives *AIR FORCE* Magazine, chapter newsletters, and other AFA communications. This can allow the Community Partner to indirectly participate and remain informed without active personal involvement.

“Why should I join as a Community Partner for \$90 when I can become a regular member for \$45?”

The benefits built into the Community Partner Program are designed specifically to promote businesses. Individual memberships do not offer the same advantages to a business. An individual membership does not provide plaques or displays in the reception area, no mention in the chapter newsletter, no listing on the chapter letterhead, and no formal recognition at chapter programs. A business person who joins AFA as an individual will not be on the same footing with business people who join as Community Partners.

*“My firm is already a Corporate Member of AFA.
Therefore, we don’t need to become a Community Partner.”*

The Corporate Member is an important and integral part of AFA and the company’s support is greatly appreciated. However, it must be recognized that the Corporate Membership program is a national program while the Community Partner Program is a local program.

Many companies that are Corporate Members choose to participate actively with chapters on the local level because they achieve important local recognition.

Many more objections can and will arise. As they occur, write them down and think the answers through. If similar objections should occur with any frequency, we invite you to forward them to the Director of Membership along with your recommended answers, so we can share them with everyone.

SOME PROVEN IDEAS TO OBTAIN COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Organize a one-day, all-day “Blitz.” Using prepared prospect lists, two person chapter volunteer teams spend a day making calls on area businesses. Kick it off with coffee and doughnuts for all the teams and wrap it up with a pizza party. Have a little friendly competition. One chapter sold 100 Community Partner memberships this way!
- Put on a large dinner function with a speaker. Sell tables of 8 or 10 to local businesses. Then feature each business with table signs and including them in the printed program and the M.C.’s script. Price the table so all costs are covered plus the amount required for a Community Partner membership (\$45.00 or \$90.00) – then announce that each purchasing business has now been made a Community Partner! Present plaques, decals, etc. Make them feel good! Follow through by sending completed applications and payments to National.
- If near a base, organize a base tour for Community Partner prospects. Then make the sale while interest is high.
- Request a supply of Community Partner plaques from Headquarters in advance. Use one as an incentive in recruiting a new Community Partner and present the plaque on the spot. When the application comes to National, a new plaque will be sent to you so you will have a revolving inventory of plaques to be used for future recruiting efforts.
- Select a chapter program and recruit Community Partners specifically to support that program. This is especially effective if the chapter program directly addresses an important part of the community’s concerns such as education. The “Visions” program is ideal for this purpose.
- Make a Community Partner member your Vice President for Community Partners. This will give you an “insider’s” perspective for recruiting and retaining the chapter’s Community Partners.

CHAPTER AWARDS

The Community Partner Awards Program is designed to recognize those chapters who have developed a professional and dynamic local outreach into the community. Awards are based in part on a minimum percentage of the membership total for the chapter at the beginning of the membership year. That makes it easy for each chapter to set a goal for the year. There are three categories of awards:

Community Partner Achievement Award

Given to those chapters whose Community Partner total is 3% of the overall chapter membership with a minimum number of Community Partner members by chapter size. Chapters in the small to extra large categories (20-999 members) require a minimum of 5 Community Partners for eligibility. Chapters over 1,000 require a flat 30 Community Partners and chapters over 3,000 require a flat 45 Community Partners.

Community Partner Gold Award

Given to those chapters whose Community Partner total is 6% of overall chapter membership with a minimum number of Community Partners are awarded the Community Partner Gold Award. Chapters in the small to extra large categories (20-999 members) require a minimum of 10 Community Partners for eligibility. Chapters over 1,000 require a flat 60 Community Partners and chapters over 3,000 require a flat 90 Community Partners.

This award is in the form of a patch with a date rocker to display on the chapter's award banner. If this is the first award a chapter has received, they will also be presented with their award banner.

Community Partner Exceptional Service Award

The Community Partner Exceptional Service Award is presented during the National Convention to the chapter with the most outstanding Community Partner Program in the judgment of the National Awards Committee. Eligible chapters will be those who have qualified for the Gold Award and who have the greatest percentage of Community Partners (with respect to the chapter's own membership) for their size category.



An Independent Nonprofit Aerospace Organization

Community Partner Dues C323381 Expire 09/2010 90.00
2010-2011

Category I MEMBER
Mary Helen Jackson

Mary Helen's Southern & Creole
Cuisine
87 Lincoln St
Hampton, VA 23669

Remit To:
VA Langley Chapter #323
100 North Street
Yorktown, VA 23693



An Independent Nonprofit Aerospace Organization

Community Partner Dues C323381 Expire 09/2010 90.00
2010-2011

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An Independent Nonprofit Aerospace Organization

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Air Force Association
1501 Lee Highway
Arlington, Virginia 22209

COMMUNITY PARTNER APPLICATION

(PLEASE REMIT TO YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER)

Name of Company/Professional Office _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Signature and Title _____

Sponsoring Chapter _____ Chapter Number _____

Category I Community Partner - \$90 (one member)

Category II Community Partner - \$180 (two members)

Check Enclosed

Credit Card Visa MasterCard American Express

Credit Card Number _____ Exp Date _____

Signature _____

The following person(s) are designated as members of the Air Force Association. The monthly copy of AIR FORCE Magazine will be sent to the address(es) listed below.

Name _____

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

City _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

State _____ Zip _____

If Applying for a Category I affiliation, complete this section only.

Current Military Status

- Active Duty US Armed Forces
US National Guard
US Reserve
Retired US Armed Forces
Branch of Service _____

- Previous US Military Service
Spouse/Widow(er), Lineal Ancestor/Descendent of Veteran
Civilian (No Service with US Military)

Current Profession

- Aerospace Industry
US Government
Retired
Other

Current Job Function

- Management R and D
Engineering Retired
Procurement Other

Signature _____ Date _____

If applying for a Category II affiliation, complete this section for the second person.

Current Military Status

- Active Duty US Armed Forces
US National Guard
US Reserve
Retired US Armed Forces
Branch of Service _____

- Previous US Military Service
Spouse/Widow(er), Lineal Ancestor/Descendent of Veteran
Civilian (No Service with US Military)

Current Profession

- Aerospace Industry
US Government
Retired
Other

Current Job Function

- Management R and D
Engineering Retired
Procurement Other

Signature _____ Date _____

About AFA

AFA is the **professional association** of the Air Force Community. We are an independent, nonprofit, civilian education organization promoting public understanding of aerospace power and the pivotal role it plays in the security of the nation.

Mission

- **Educates** the public about the critical role of aerospace power in the defense of our nation
- **Advocates** aerospace power and a strong national defense
- **Supports** the United States Air Force Family and aerospace education.

Organization

Volunteer leaders at the national, state and local levels lead AFA. Our state organizations and more than 200 chapters hold elections and conduct programs to increase public understanding of key national security issues in their communities.

Air Force Association
1501 Lee Hwy
Arlington, VA 22209

www.afa.org

Events and Programs

Conferences, Symposiums

Expositions

- Air and Space Conference and Technology Expo
 - Washington D.C.
- Global Warfare Symposium
 - Los Angeles, California
- Air Warfare Symposium & Expo
 - Orlando, Florida



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Contact AFA

(800) 727-3337
Monday- Friday 8:30 am – 5:30pm
membership@afa.org



The Force Behind the Force

What's In It For Me?

*The
Community Partner*



Community Partners...

- Are civilians and private companies
- Hold chapter offices from the top down
- Work on committees
- Become apart of an Association that openly and strongly supports the United States Air Force

By Joining... you are expressing your own concern for a deterrent force sufficient to ensure this nation's peace and security.

Specialized Support & Recognition

You will be supporting an association that supports the United States Air Force its mission, and its personnel at all bases nationwide. By joining you will let people of the Air Force community know that you support them.

AFA chapters nationwide provide support and sponsor many local Air Force personnel recognition programs, conduct fundraisers and many other activities

As a local business...

- You will have access to hundreds of potential customers by being a Community Partner
- A chapter brings you special recognition by showcasing you in their newsletters, emails, publications and at chapter functions.
- You receive a plaque, year medallion and window decal identifying you as a Community Partner.

Benefits of Joining AFA

- **Subscription to the Air Force Magazine**
The defense communities trusted authority on top issues.
- **Almanac of the US Air Force Issue**
A Heavyweight compendium of facts and figures about the Air Force People, Equipment, budgets, base organizations, leaders, heroes and much more.
- **Daily updates from our ground breaking "Daily Report"**
Focuses on daily news about the Air Force, airpower and national defense.

Individual Benefits

- Develop leadership skills and confidence by serving in key positions within your local chapter.
- Help support adequate Air Power for National Defense
- Gain knowledge on issues affecting the Air Force and our nation's security

Membership Privileges

As a member of AFA you are automatically eligible for all of the Air Force Association Veteran Benefits Association programs.



- Bank checks
- Car & truck rental discounts
- Health service discounts
- High rates on savings
- Identity protection
- Low group insurance rates
- Platinum Mastercard
- Resume & job search assistance
- Shopping rebates & discounts
- Travel savings
- Tuition discounts

www.afavba.org
services@afavb

Please direct any questions, comments or requests to:

Bryan Larson

Manager, Membership Programs

1.800.727.3337 extension 4805

blarson@afa.org



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(703) 247-5800 • 1(800)727-3337