



**AARP BLACKSBURG**

## Standing Rules<sup>1</sup>

### *Chapter Operations and Committee Responsibilities*

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<sup>1</sup> Standing rules are supplemental regulations established by the chapter to define procedures for operations not specified by chapter by-laws. They may be changed at any time by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

## **Name and Address**

The name of this chapter is AARP Blacksburg Chapter 2613.

The official address of this chapter is that of the current President or the Post Office Box 10082, Blacksburg VA 24062.

## **Members and Dues**

The maximum number of members, including associate members, is unlimited.

Annual dues are \$15 for a single or for a couple in the same household. Dues are free for members 90 years or older. Dues are free for members who purchased a Lifetime membership. Associate members' dues are \$15.

Persons joining the chapter in the last half of a calendar year also are members in good standing through the following year.

Members of other AARP chapters may also join AARP Blacksburg.

## **Meetings**

Chapter member meetings are held in-person on the third Tuesday of each month at 11:30am except in July and August or when otherwise communicated with members for special occasions. June normally designated as a social event such as a picnic and December normally is designated a celebratory month such as a holiday luncheon. All regular meetings are held at the Blacksburg Community Center, 725 Patrick Henry Drive, Blacksburg, VA and are open to the public.

Chapter meetings may be held virtually if needed and announced to the membership.

The official annual meeting as required by the chapter designation as a 501©4 organization is held in the month of November.

The chapter Board of Directors are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00am at the Blacksburg Community Center, 725 Patrick Henry Drive, Blacksburg, VA and are open to all members.

The chapter is in recess during the months of July and August.

Cancellation of in-person member meetings due to inclement weather or other emergency events will follow the Montgomery County School System's closing schedule. Cancellation of Board of Director's meeting will be determined by the discretion of the current President.

## **Officers**

This chapter may elect additional officers as needed and approved by the Board of Directors. Such additional officers shall serve on the Board of Directors.

## **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors consists of the elected officers and the committee chairs and members. Officers are elected to serve one-year terms. Board members are elected to serve three-year terms. Terms of service may be extended at the discretion of the current Board of Directors.

## **Nominating Committee**

The Leadership Development committee serves as the Nominating Committee for this chapter.

## **Checks and Money**

Checks of AARP Blacksburg may be signed by the Treasurer and the President.

An annual budget shall be prepared by the Financial Review Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.

Unbudgeted expenses shall be approved by the President.

Reimbursement of travel expenses for members representing the chapter may be allowed if approved by the President.

## **Liaisons and Partners**

The chapter maintains regular liaison with AARP Virginia, the Town of Blacksburg Community Center, the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech, and the Virginia Tech Retires Association.

Partnership with other organizations are formed regularly when needed to accomplish mutually held goals. In recent years, the following partnerships have been formed: Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech, NRV Timebank, the Center for Gerontology at Virginia Tech, the Community Foundation of the NRV, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine, Warm Hearth Village Retirement Center, Virginia Tech Retirees Association, the YMCA at Virginia Tech, AARP Virginia, the New River Valley Agency on Aging, Blacksburg Community Center, Town of Blacksburg, AARP National, Virginia Tech Continuing and Professional Education, Christiansburg Recreation Center, Micah's Soup for Seniors, Retired Senior Volunteers Program, Montgomery County Christmas Store, Southwest Veterans Cemetery, Veterans Administration (Salem, VA), and the Veterans Administration (Beckley, WV)

## Committees

The standing committees and liaisons and their responsibilities include the following: (Note: The stated duties of committees were prepared by a former committee chair; however, they are flexible depending on needs as determined by current chairs.)

### Awards

The Chapter Awards Committee is responsible for seeking nominations for all awards, internal and external to the Chapter, and then selecting recipients for these awards. Two internal Chapter awards are given each year—the *Chapter Service Award*, and the *Community Spirit Award*.

The chapter also nominates persons for the *New River Valley Leading Lights Award*, various awards from AARP Virginia, and awards from AARP national.

**Primary Role:** Oversight for seeking nominations and selection process for annual recipients for Chapter Service Award and Community Spirit Award. (Generally, one recipient per award). Additionally, the committee in some years may choose to nominate persons from the Blacksburg Chapter for state awards given by AARP Virginia.

**Responsibilities:** Chapter Awards: In advance of the May board meeting, the awards chair should determine criteria and deadlines for annual awards presented by AARP Virginia. Report this information to the board at the May meeting (or sooner) to determine if the chapter wishes to nominate an individual(s) or the chapter for one of the state awards (Andrus Award, etc.). The awards chair should communicate with the AARP Virginia office about criteria and deadlines, as well as monitor the AARP Virginia website for awards announcements. It is best to be proactive and contact AARP Virginia about deadlines before they are announced. (See printed email correspondence archive from prior years.)

Primary Local Awards- December Presentation: For the two primary local awards presented by the chapter each December, the selection process begins by late summer, according to the following timeline:

August board meeting: Awards chair reminds board that nominations will be solicited from Blacksburg Chapter members and the board during September, with a deadline around end of September.

Late August: Awards chair should communicate with the newsletter editor to ensure that an article appears in the September newsletter, inviting chapter members to nominate recipients for Chapter Service Award and Community Spirit Award. (As this is an annual process, the newsletter editor may choose to update a prior article with a current deadline, etc.)

Nominations should be submitted to the awards chair -- electronic method preferred.

September meetings: Awards chair should strongly promote at the board meeting that nominations are open, and due by a date in late September. Optionally, a brief reminder and

solicitation of nominations can be made to membership attending the general chapter meeting later in the month. At the board meeting, the awards chair asks for several board members to volunteer to serve on an awards committee during October to review nominations and select a finalist for each chapter award. Thereafter, the chair will send the nominations electronically to committee members to review and reach consensus about whom to recommend for the awards. (A Zoom session can be scheduled if needed if there are multiple nominees to be discussed.)

October board meeting (or sooner): The chair may wish to update the board that nominations are in hand and selection deliberation is underway, without yet revealing all nominees.

November board meeting: Awards committee presents to the board its recommendation for annual recipients of Chapter Service Award and Community Spirit Award, and requests motion confirming each. A summary of supporting comments from the nominator/others should be presented for each nominee to be approved by the board. The chair and/or committee members may wish to solicit additional background information to provide in support of a nominee.

The chair arranges for a plaque to be made for the December presentation to each recipient. Articles for the January newsletter should be coordinated with the editor. Deadline is usually late December. The editor may prefer for the committee/chair to prepare the article because of the chair's general knowledge of the selections.

December holiday luncheon: Awards and plaques are presented to recipients of the two awards as part of the luncheon program. Presentation is usually done by the awards chair – discuss with the chapter president how this should be handled and by whom.

The awards chair should maintain an ongoing file of correspondence, nominations and wording of awards statements and pass this informal archive to the successor chair.

(In some years, there may be interest in nominating for the annual slate of persons honored by New River Valley Leading Lights. Nomination deadline is typically announced in the fall in advance of a banquet to honor those selected from the nominees. Check with Leading Lights ((or Google it)) to monitor announcement of nomination date and criteria and take it to the AARP board as an information item. The chapter does not necessarily nominate but in the past board members have been motivated to make nominations on their own. The Leading Lights awards process/schedule was altered by Covid-19 in 2020 and 2021.)

### **Care**

The Care Committee provides comfort and cheer to members who are ill or otherwise in need. The committee chair will receive notifications of members who have lost a loved one and will offer condolences to that family on behalf of the Chapter. Cards appropriate to the situation are mailed to members who may be ill or in recovery. The same action is taken for extending condolences on the Chapter's behalf. Occasionally the committee chair will make phone calls, or notify members who may wish to make the phone calls due to personal associations.

**Primary Role:** The Care Committee facilitates Chapter responsiveness when Committee members or members of the Board recommend a need within the Chapter or larger community.

**Responsibilities:** The most important responsibility of the Care Committee is to respond to the needs of the Chapter membership and/or community as identified by the Committee itself, an Officer, or members of the Board. The Board may recommend specific and appropriate actions to be taken on behalf of the Board. Depending on the need, and especially in the case of an action that will require funding, the approval of the full Board will be necessary.

One ongoing responsibility of the Care Committee is to send Get Well and Sympathy cards to those Chapter members who experience an illness, accident, or death in the family.

**Deadlines:** Timelines/deadlines will be determined based on the need/action being addressed by the Care Committee.

When a large-scale need/action is determined and being addressed, the Care Committee will enlist the assistance of members of the Board. Meetings and discussions will be held accordingly.

Any mechanism (Email, Zoom, Phone, In-Person Meeting) determined to be appropriate will be utilized to get the work done.

**Organization and Operation:** The Care Committee is basically on-call to address needs and actions as they arise. In the case of large-scale efforts, for example, outreach to a special population, volunteers in the Chapter will be recruited to aid.

Progress reports on large-scale efforts will be reported to the Board during monthly Chapter meetings and to the Chapter membership in Chapter Newsletters.

## Chaplin

The Chaplain provides spiritual guidance for the chapter and delivers a short devotional message at each of the Chapter's monthly public meetings.

The Chaplain also prepares and delivers a short memorial presentation for members who have passed during a calendar year. This presentation takes place in January during the first public meeting of the year.

**Primary Role:** The chaplain provides spiritual guidance, representing multiple faiths and well as secular and/or humanist interests, and delivers a short inspirational message at each of the Chapter's monthly public meetings. The chaplain also prepares a brief remembrance service, generally in January, for those members who have died the previous year.

**Responsibilities:** Preparing inspirational messages for public meetings and a yearly remembrance service for deceased members.

**Deadlines:** Remembrance service is held at the January or (no later than) the February meeting.

**Organization and Operation:** For the remembrance service, I daily scan the obituaries in the Roanoke Times and on occasion receive input from chapter members. At the December board meeting, I request the members review the names of the deceased from that year to make sure I have not missed anyone who should be included. Inspirational messages are created from personal experience and a voluminous supply of information on the internet and in books and magazines.

### **Community Service**

The Community Service Committee facilitates the active engagement of the chapter in multiple activities to serve and benefit seniors and others. Some examples include the AARP Tax Aide program, AARP Driver Safety Courses, the National Day of Service, calls or visits to local retirement/care facilities, financial collection for various food pantries such as the Interfaith Food Pantry, MCEAP Food Bank, Vittles for Veterans, pet food and others. The committee also works to maintain active relationships with community organizations such as VCOM, Community Health Center of NRV, Montgomery County Christmas Store, Blacksburg Branch Library, Blacksburg Interfaith Council, Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program, Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Volunteers, Montgomery County Public Schools, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Virginia Tech YMCA, Virginia Tech Engage, AmeriCorps, and organizations that support Veterans age 50+ in our community.

**Primary Role:** The community service committee's primary goal is to seek out and coordinate board approved community service projects that reflect the organization's goals to support the local community, especially the senior community.

**Responsibilities:** Money collections for food pantries are held at monthly meetings or periodically during the year. The Community Service Committee will meet annually prior to the December meeting to determine which charities and non-profit organizations will be recommended to the board of directors for contributions.

Other community service projects are conducted periodically and may include drive-by parades at local retirement/care facilities, letter writing, sending cards, visits with members, and the like. All Community Service projects are advertised through the newsletter, RSVP regular communications, and occasional fliers in local stores.

**Deadlines:** The committee will make charitable contributions recommendations to the Board of Directors annually prior to the December meeting. Deadlines for other community service projects will be set as needed.

**Organization and Operation:** The Community Service Committee operates with a designated committee chair and committee members chosen from among the general membership. Projects are conducted in accordance with Board of Directors approval.

## Financial Review

This committee establishes financial procedures and planning for the chapter. It reviews the Treasurer's records and reports results at the February Board Meeting. It also prepares an annual budget for the Chapter, in collaboration with the treasurer, that is presented for approval at the February board meeting.

**Primary Role:** The Committee reviews the treasurer's financial records for the previous fiscal year and in collaboration with the treasurer, prepares a budget for the current fiscal year for Board approval.

**Responsibilities:** To review all the fiscal records maintained by the treasurer of the Chapter from the previous year.

To present a memo summarizing the annual fiscal review of all Chapter financial records for the previous fiscal year to the Board.

To make financial recommendations to the Board that support good fiscal practices and priorities.

**Deadlines:** The committee conducts its financial review during the month of January and presents the budget at the February Board meeting.

**Organization and Operation:** The Committee meets in person in January for the review. The treasurer is always present to respond to any questions or clarifications that need to be answered. The chair of the committee coordinates the meeting and provides the fiscal review memo to the President that includes a summary of the review and any recommendations relevant to the financial status of the organization.

**Additional Information:** It is important to note that the committee's annual **review** of the financial matters of the organization is not a formal audit which would need to be provided by a professional auditor at a cost to the organization. It is also important to note that there is an annual, financial report that is submitted by the treasurer to AARP National that summarizes the financial transactions and status of the Chapter for the previous year. The format is provided by AARP National.

## Health and Wellness

The Planning Committee plans for and conducts a biennial Health and Wellness Fair in partnership with the Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM), the Christiansburg Recreation Center, and sponsors/exhibitors, including local healthcare providers, recreation centers, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and other organizations.

**Primary Role:** The Committee plans and executes an approximate 4-hour event held biennially in mid-September. Sponsors and exhibitors represent a wide range of health and wellness services across all areas of wellness: physical, social, emotional, mental/intellectual, financial, spiritual, occupational, financial, and environmental.



**Responsibilities:** The event involves four primary processes: (1) recruiting sponsors/ exhibitors; (2) registering sponsors and exhibitors online and through the mail; (3) marketing and media activities directed at both sponsor/exhibitors and visitors; and (4) completing all logistical activities. Ideally, two members of the Planning Committee are assigned responsibility for each process. The committee chair oversees all processes.

**Deadlines:** The Health and Wellness Fair Planning Committee should be formed, and a chair appointed by the Board by the end of the calendar year prior to the event held in the next calendar year, for example, November/December 2023 for an event to be held in September 2024.

Recruitment of sponsors/exhibitors occurs in several stages (February-March, April-May, and June-July). Sponsors/exhibitors are registered on a rolling basis until all spaces are filled, but not later than the end of August before the event. All processes occur on an ongoing basis until the day of the event.

**Organization and Operation:** The Planning Committee meets on an ongoing basis from January through September prior to the event. In the winter months (January-March), the committee meets once per month. In the spring months (April-June), the committee typically meets every two weeks. In the summer months (July-September), the committee typically meets every week.

All methods of communication are used as deemed appropriate. For purposes of email communication, a Gmail account ([arphealthfair.nrv.va@gmail.com](mailto:arphealthfair.nrv.va@gmail.com)) is utilized. All documents associated with previous health fairs are uploaded into Google Drive and organized in folders by year of the event.

Ideally meetings of the Planning Committee are in-person meetings but can be held via Zoom. Members of the recruiting, registration, marketing/media, and logistics sub-committees determine their own meeting schedules and methods of communication.

Effective planning and execution require the full participation and commitment of all volunteers: Planning Committee, AARP Blacksburg Board, VCOM and Christiansburg Recreation Center partners, and other volunteers, including Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) volunteers.

In each successive biennial planning period for purposes of continuity, it is extremely helpful to have volunteers who served on the previous Health and Wellness Fair Planning Committee.

## Hospitality

This committee conducts activities to welcome members and guests at chapter events, and provide light refreshments. The committee also plans the annual chapter holiday luncheon and the annual picnic.

**Primary Role:** The Hospitality Committee exists to provide a welcoming environment for monthly chapter meetings. Additionally, this committee plans and facilitates the annual June picnic, and the December holiday luncheon.

### Responsibilities:

- For each chapter meeting the committee provides coffee, hot tea, water, and doughnuts. Supplies are kept on site and are replenished as needed.
- Arrangements are made to collect any donations that members may provide to defray costs of refreshments.
- Name badges are kept for each member, prepared for guests, and handed out by a Chapter Greeter at each meeting. This activity is usually managed by a member of the membership committee.
- For the annual June picnic, the committee proposes the date, location, arrangements for food (e.g., potluck and/or catering), and any other pertinent details. The committee discusses all arrangements with the Board well in advance so that the details can be approved and made available to the general membership.
- For the annual December holiday luncheon, the committee works in advance with the Board to approve a desired location and general per member cost. Because the holiday luncheon is more complex than regular monthly meetings, it is typical for others beyond the committee to be involved in the planning and implementation of the event, as follows:
  - The Chapter President basically runs the event and, in that regard, becomes involved in all aspects of planning and implementation.
  - The Board approves significant details such as costs, speakers, annual donations given to local charities at the event, and any other details that require consent from the Board. These decisions are discussed and made at least a month in advance of the event.
  - The Committee Chair, Chapter President and other Board members meet well in advance of the event with the WHV Catering Manager, currently Lynn Epperly, to discuss the menu, technology needs, and other arrangements concerning the event. *Note: the AARP holiday luncheon has for several years scheduled the event at Warm Hearth Village, and this arrangement is likely to continue.*
  - The Chapter President will arrange for the speaker and/or work with a Board member who will take the lead on this task.
  - The Newsletter Editor ensures that notices of the holiday luncheon appear in one or more newsletters well in advance of the luncheon. The editor also prepares the program for the event and has it printed.

- The Web Admin posts an announcement as well as reminders about the event via Mailchimp.
- When and if live music is available for the event, the President or designated Board member will make the arrangements.
- The Chair of the Awards Committee is responsible for overseeing the selection of Chapter Service and Chapter Spirit award recipients, and for making the award presentations at the luncheon.
- The Chair of the Community Service and Charitable Giving Committee is responsible for establishing a committee to select non-profit organizations/partners, including an annual donation to a food bank for humans and/or pets, for end-of-year donations. Those organizations receiving donations at the Annual Holiday Luncheon are invited to send a representative. Prior to the annual luncheon, the Board will vote on covering meal costs for special guests receiving donations. All organizations receiving donations are recognized at the event.
- The installation of Officers and new Board members for the upcoming year is performed by the AARP Virginia Liaison or an AARP national or state official if attending.
- Payments for the luncheon are made in advance through the online payment system or by mail. The Chapter treasurer collects the invoice for the event and makes timely payment.

**Deadlines:** Deadlines are set by the nature of the services provided as noted above. In other words, the main functions of the Hospitality Committee occur during set meetings and events and must be planned in accordance with predetermined schedules.

**Organization and Operation:** The Hospitality committee functions usually can be handled by one- or two-Chapter members and thus does not have a formal organization. Note, as shown above, that the holiday luncheon is an operation that involves the entire Board, Chapter Officers, and other Committee Chairs.

### **Leadership Development**

The committee works very closely with the Chapter leadership to identify, recruit and orient chapter members who are willing and able to assume new leadership roles and responsibilities.

**Primary Role:** To present a slate of future officers and Board members to the Board and to assist the President in recruiting chairs and members for key committees.

**Responsibilities:**

To recruit Board officers and Board members as a continuous activity.

To initiate new Board members and officers.

To recruit and promote involvement of chapter members in major chapter activities and key committees.

To periodically involve the entire Board in the discussion of future leadership candidates as part of Board meeting agendas.

**Deadlines:** A slate of officers and new Board members should be presented at the October Board meeting to be voted on at the November Chapter meeting by the membership and installed at the December Chapter meeting.

**Organization and Operation:** The important aspect of this committee is that its functioning is continuous throughout the year. The committee members carry on continuous conversations about members, prospective, new and continuing who have leadership potential for the Chapter. The President and Vice president are continually consulted. The committee holds at least two or more formal meetings in May and September to review potential candidates. These meetings may be either in person or virtual. The committee ensures that leaders that are nominated for the slate presented in October are involved in relevant role-related activities prior to their assuming the roles.

The premise guiding this committee is that leadership development is the responsibility of the entire Chapter leadership. Thus, it is important for this committee to create opportunities for the current leadership to identify and support potential leaders.

### **Legislative**

This committee provides information and recommendations to the Board and Chapter Members about legislative proposals, decisions, and issues at the local, county, state, and federal levels that may affect the lives of older persons in any significant way. The committee communicates Federal and State AARP legislative objectives and discusses with all interested parties with emphasis on governmental officers, elected officials, and their staff in order to gain their support through the legislative and policy processes and recommends tactics and strategies to accomplish such objectives.

**Primary Role:** To follow and maintain currency with issues of interest to and affecting local AARP constituency with focus on state and national AARP agenda items.

**Responsibilities:** Apprise the board of any current legislative concerns related to senior wellbeing and to initiate discussions at Board meetings as necessary.

**Organization and Operation:** Maintain an awareness of current legislative discussions through TBD\* \_\_\_\_\_. Work with the Virginia AARP Associate State Director- Advocacy

**Deadlines:** Have reports ready for Chapter newsletters.

## Membership Committee

**Primary Role:** Maintain an accurate and current membership spreadsheet and, when requested, share a read-only version with chapter leaders for purposes of conducting chapter business. With other Board members, engage in special events, for example, health fairs and non-profit organization events, for the purpose of informing potential members about benefits of membership and chapter activities.

**Responsibilities:** Keeping membership data current, use spreadsheets to generate a PDF set of address labels for monthly newsletter mailings and, when requested, for other purposes, for example, name tags or special mailings. Supply information on new members to the President for the purpose of sending welcome letters.

**Deadlines:** Upon request, email a PDF file of address labels to the newsletter editor or a read-only spreadsheet to chapter leaders.

**Organization and Operation:** See above.

**Role Processes:** Knowledge of spreadsheets, filters, and Word mail merge are vital.

## Member Communication

This committee designs and maintains the Chapter website. The site is constructed to enable storage of all pertinent chapter documents such as minutes, newsletters, bylaws, manuals, photos, business forms, membership applications, and other relevant digital artifacts.

**Primary Role:** The AARP Blacksburg chapter website is intended as a comprehensive current and historical information repository about chapter activities and interests and provides a secure subdomain for a gateway to credit card processing and for communications to chapter members.

**Responsibilities:** Website maintenance occurs daily depending on content availability.

Mailchimp communications are sent occasionally when messages are relevant for member enlightenment.

This committee meets as needed to input information and/or to address technical issues using texts, email, Zoom, in-person meetings, and phone conversation.

**Deadlines:** The website content for officers and committee updates are updated in December of each year or prior to the January Board meeting. Newsletters are posted the first week of the month.

**Operations and Processes:** The website committee utilizes input from the board on any changes or additions to the website to include upcoming programs, newsletters, Board meeting minutes, and any other edits, revisions, or updates deemed necessary.

We must maintain PCI compliance for our secure subdomain that provides a gateway to credit card processing handled by Authorize.net. Our compliance requirement is monitored by Secure

Trust and requires an annual compliance questionnaire and monthly scans of the computer where the website is maintained.

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**Role Processes:** Knowledge of spreadsheets, filters, and Word mail merge are vital.

## Newsletter

This committee prepares and publishes at a minimum quarterly issues of the chapter newsletter and distributes each issue to active members and others as determined by the Board of Directors.

**Primary Role:** Produce chapter newsletters each year: January, April, August, November, more frequently if needed

- encourage attendance at monthly chapter meetings and other events with announcements of titles, speakers, and topic summaries
- encourage member participation in community activities by highlighting events of interest to seniors (LLI, arts, etc.)
- encourage giving to the community through food drives, book drives, etc.
- support members in personal growth and wellbeing with reflections on aging well
- provide information on legislation that affects seniors
- feature stories, as space is available, that provide “food for thought” and expansion of knowledge--studies, issues, historical events, best practices for seniors (recent examples: driving safety, green burial, women’s suffrage anniversary)
- develop group cohesion by profiling volunteers and other members
- assist with developing annual chapter highlights for the December holiday luncheon
- represent the Blacksburg chapter for statewide officers and other readers

## **Responsibilities:**

- ❑ Keep informed about chapter activities and initiatives by attending board meetings and chapter meetings
- ❑ Identify community events and opportunities of interest to seniors
- ❑ Identify topics of interest for “feature stories”; invite writers
- ❑ Remind contributors of deadlines (examples: program, president, legislative report)
- ❑ Coordinate with the president about content
- ❑ Lay out and edit the newsletter materials using appropriate software
- ❑ Coordinate with membership director (labels), printer, volunteers who prepare the newsletter for mailing, and the website manager

**Deadlines:** Contributions needed two weeks prior to the month of publication (or earlier); for example, a minimum of March 15th for April 1st publication.

## **Program**

This committee plans and executes programs for the public, member meetings of the chapter.

**Primary Role:** The Program Committee plans and executes programs for the public in person either or virtual meetings of the chapter. The programs may be of general interest or focused on current chapter initiatives.

**Responsibilities:** The committee meets in person or through email discussions to identify and recruit speakers. The chair informs and seeks input from the chapter president and other board members to create a list of topics and potential speakers.

The chair is responsible for ensuring that the room is reserved for each month and AV equipment is available. Typically, the meeting is in the community room. If a larger crowd is expected, then the Multipurpose room must be scheduled. The Rec Center must be contacted for availability of the room, and the change entered on their calendar.

**Deadlines:** The program committee must work closely with the President and others to ensure the program is announced well in advance of the program date. Ideally the schedule of speakers will be identified on a quarterly basis and announced as such on the website and in the newsletter. Currently newsletters are released quarterly with a date for information to the editor of March 12th for the second quarter. This may change as the newsletter team evolves and this document will be updated to reflect that information.

## **Operations and Process:**

Programs are typically planned for Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May- *“Sept every other year”*, Oct, and Nov. June is the scheduled picnic, and the September program will only be held every other year due to the scheduled healthier fair. Review all dates at the beginning of the year prior to planning with the board.

Once programs are planned, the chair provides a brief description of each program, along with the speaker's picture, title and contact information to the president, the newsletter editor for publication and the web administrator for posting on the chapter website. A member of the committee introduces the speakers at in person meetings, and following the meetings, corresponds with each speaker via email to show appreciation of their time for the chapter programs. The chair reports on planned programs at board meetings and solicits input on future programs.

Should the meeting be held virtually, the host or president introduces the speaker. The chair provides the host/President with contact information to set up a practice session to avoid any issues for the speaker at the members meeting. The chair informs the speaker that the host/president will be contacting them.

All information collected for each presentation is stored on the AARP Blacksburg Chapter Shared Drive > Committee>Programs>current year Speaker folder. The President, Newsletter and Website and Communications committee will gather text and photos from this drive/folder for their purposes.

Once a speaker has agreed to a topic and date the following information is requested and added to the programs shared folder for the month of the presentation:

- speaker name
- contact information
- title of presentation
- newsletter short for advertising the presentation
- short bio for introduction purposes
- photo
- ask if the speaker is available for in person and/or zoom presentations
- ask if recording the audio or video recording is acceptable to the speaker

Once the speaker's information regarding the presentation is on the website, send a link for the AARP Blacksburg programs website to the speaker.

The speaker is contacted at the beginning of the month they are to speak to confirm, provide directions, timeline etc.

### **Post Meeting:**

Send an email to thank the speaker for their time and efforts in presenting,

### **AARP Virginia Liaison**

The Blacksburg CHAPTER LIAISON positions for the Virginia Tech Retiree Association (VTRA), Town of Blacksburg (TOB), and VA AARP are all similar. In the case of VA AARP, the liaison keeps abreast of the annual state plan, staff responsibilities & changes, volunteer policies, new programs, and funding possibilities; and relates relevant information to the Blacksburg Chapter Officers, Board, or members. The liaison may also advocate for certain changes, programs, or funding to enhance and improve the chapter. Likewise, the liaison may report



chapter/member needs, ideas/suggestions, and requests to the state director or appropriate staff. This may include criticisms or complainants in both directions. To a very limited extent the chapter liaison does the same with national AARP for certain programs (temporary & permanent) that are not administered through the state office.

More succinctly, the VA AARP liaison goal is to provide information that will assist in strengthening and maintaining a positive, productive relationship between the chapter and AARP, resulting in better service to seniors and the communities in which they reside.

#### AARP Tax Aide Liaison

**Primary Role:** Promote AARP Tax-aid program

**Responsibilities:**

- Provide up-to-date information to board and members**
- Contribute articles about the program for newsletter**
- Make available AARP information at the tax-aid side**
- Recruit prospective volunteers**

**Deadlines:** Taxes are prepared Feb. 1 thru April 15.

#### Lifelong Learning Institute Liaison

This partnership is intended to work with the Program Committee of the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) at Virginia Tech to provide courses, lectures, and events to be conducted as a LivingWell@50+ event in each term.

**Primary Role:** To maintain on-going communication with LLI at VT including but not limited to describing activities in each organization and act as a catalyst for the generation of possible areas of collaboration in programming and social activities.

**Responsibilities:** Make periodic reports to the Board of both organizations and provide relevant information for the Chapter Newsletter

**Deadlines:** Share programming information from LLI for each term in September and January in the Chapter Newsletter.

**Organization and Operation:** The Liaison should ideally be a member of the LLI Board or the administrative leadership team.

*Note: The following paper was prepared for discussion by the Virginia Chapter Advisory Committee, chaired by Joyce Williams, President, AARP Virginia. It is included in this document because it addresses aspirational goals for chapter success and was adopted by AARP Blacksburg to aid in chapter evaluation.*

## **AARP Chapters: Good for Seniors; Good for the Community**

Don Creamer

AARP chapters are organizations devoted to service to the community in which they reside. They are chartered by AARP and embraced by their respective state offices. They operate according to bylaws, some of which are prescribed by AARP. They are composed of seniors, citizens 50+ years of age, and adhere to the motto of the founder of AARP, Ethel Percy Andrus: "To serve, not to be served."

There are more than 800 AARP chapters chartered in the United States and Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands. Almost 40 of these exist in Virginia. They range in size from a very few to hundreds of members depending on their location and the culture of those communities.

Chapter viability depends on leadership of the organization and its compatibility with the prevailing cultures of the community. Inevitably, organizational health depends on its relationships with other entities in the community.

The principal goal of AARP chapters is enhancing the quality of life as we age. Successful aging, then, is the dominant operational guideline for local chapters. Whatever contributes to enjoyment, health, well-being, and enlightenment of members represents a viable activity for chapters.

### ***Essential Components of Successful AARP Chapters***

***Leadership is the key to successful chapters!*** Leaders make things happen and may override other key factors in organization success; however, successful chapters are likely to be characterized by certain commonalities:

- Significant relationships with other community organizations
- Renewing membership
- Responsive system of governance
- Regular, meaningful programs to enlighten members and spark interest
- Consequential projects and activities that allow member involvement and reward
- Frequent communication with members containing crucial information for successful aging

### *Significant relationships with other community organizations*

AARP chapters exist in a community composed of multiple entities ranging from governments, churches, families, non-profit organizations, civic organizations, and personal interest groups. Taken as a whole, enormous energy is expended through these groups that tends to attract persons of similar interests and who want to be a part of something vital to an expressive community. Successful AARP chapters must fit in the fabric of these cultures and must contribute substantive value that enriches the environments for all.

### *Responsive system of governance*

Governance is a system by which an organization operates. Essential elements of governance include a policy making body, often called a board of directors, officers authorized to carry out organization policies, and committees normally expected to conduct the business of the organization. Responsive governance is a system sensitive to its external and internal cultures and reacts to them positively in an ethical and legal manner.

### *Renewing membership*

Membership of an organization must be renewable to survive in the long term. New members not only bring diversity of ideas that invigorate current operations but provide sustainability of the chapter itself. Natural attrition of members must be countered with replacement.

### *Regular, meaningful programs to enlighten members and spark interest*

A principal obligation of an organization is to nurture its members by responding to their needs. One of the most pervasive needs of seniors is enlightenment; that is, constant learning about their environments and feeding their thirst for understanding their world. Organizations can and should provide ongoing educational opportunities open to all members that enriches lives through experience and knowledge.

### *Consequential projects and activities that allow member involvement and reward*

To feel connected to an organization; that is, to feel rewarded for being part of the group, members must experience its essence by physical, mental, and emotional involvement in communal activities. This involvement can be manifest by simple awareness through reading or talking with others on the one hand to leadership roles that shape the character of the organization on the other. Examples of meaningful involvement include reading newsletters, attending social events, participating in meetings, joining discussion groups, listening to speakers at program events, membership in the policy making groups, holding officer positions, and planning events are examples of meaningful involvement.

### *Frequent communication with members containing crucial information for successful aging*

Constituent meetings, newsletters, blogs, websites, and email messages are mechanisms available to all organizations to enable regular messaging to members. Employing each of these devices offers another meaningful form of involvement of members who must write or design these tools. To be effective, these messaging tools must be used reliably and frequently.

### **Summary**

AARP chapters composed of these essential elements can succeed in communities of energetic persons who want to be involved in something larger than themselves. Inquisitive minds invariably seek new understanding of the world in which they live. AARP chapters can play a vital role in this quest.