

NPEA 2007 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:  
(OCTOBER 20, 2007 – OCTOBER 24, 2007)

**DEVELOPING MEMBER EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION**

Facilitator: Judy Price Guy, Retirement Systems of Alabama  
Co-Facilitator: Paula Brown, North Dakota Retirement & Investment Office

- 1) How does an organization strategize start up ideas?
  - Ask members what they want to learn about
    - group felt it should include health insurance, Social Security, system pension information, adjusting to retirement (felt this is a very important part that seems to be left out of pre-retirement planning seminars)
  - Members have the money part down - need the emotional and mental issues too
  - Let members attend seminars on work time - get paid to attend, no deduction for annual leave time
  - Suggestion - make attending a seminar mandatory and include it as a goal on performance appraisal
  - Make seminars mandatory - especially for DC plans
  - Hold seminars in the summer or on Saturdays
- 2) What type of research is used to identify educational need of membership?
  - Surveys to members, HR personal or business manager requests, phone calls from members, requests from employers, interest groups, mentoring programs in schools - do presentations during one of their meetings
- 3) How do you provide financial education – utilize financial planners or in-house?
  - Some systems have financial experts on staff
  - Most use financial experts from the community or ones that are involved with the school systems
  - One system includes a survey in their seminars - 25 questions about things you want to accomplish in your life before you retire because how do members know they are ready to retire?
  - Check with your legal staff to make sure it's O.K. to give out financial information during seminars as we are not financial planners - some systems do not include financial information in their seminars as their systems won't allow it - don't want to be giving out advise
- 4) What are some of the tools to most effectively reach members?

- Welcome letters sent to your new members including information about your seminars
  - Posters, e-mails, flyers to members, brochures
  - Outreach offices throughout the state
  - Field counseling
  - Annual statements - include seminar information
  - Member Handbook
  - Conduct agency seminars for all members or just HR personal - when members ask questions they are able to help them or give them retirement system's number to get correct information
- 5) How do you conduct retirement counseling?
- Walk-ins - in-house.
  - Out on the road doing "one on one" counseling sessions
  - After school programs for teachers
  - Vendor displays - at in-services, conferences and conventions
- 6) How do you market new programs?
- Newsletters
  - Websites - let members sign up for seminars on-line
  - Posters throughout employment sites

The following are additional comments made during the discussion. It was hard to take notes as everyone was jumping around when answering the questions.

- Some system's hold a "Pay Yourself First Seminar", "Retirement 101 Seminar"
- Some felt it was good to include Member estimates at seminars
- Do a "Fact Sheet" at seminars
- One system does a "Learning Management System" that walks the member through their program. This is mandatory for everyone going through the retirement process and the system tracks who has and who hasn't taken the course
- American Medical Association website is good source of information
- It was suggested to have seminars just for women or a segment just for women, as women live longer than men, they are less educated about retirement, and may feel more comfortable asking questions if just women were present