

## Understanding Membership Challenges in New Jersey Eastern Star

Let's dig deep into this nonprofit's membership challenge and let us know if your group has similar issues. I'll bet it does.

The New Jersey Eastern Star, a vital part of the Masonic family, has faced significant challenges in attracting new members in recent years. With current members expressing various concerns, it's crucial to delve into these issues and suggest actionable solutions to foster growth and engagement within the organization. Many members will state that people are not joining, when really the members are not bringing people in. People are not going to join because it's there. So that begs us to wonder, if the number one purpose of an Eastern Star Chapter, is to make more Eastern Star members, why aren't the members bringing in new ones?

### Current Member Concerns

#### 1. Misconception About Freemasons

- Statement: "The Freemasons have to bring their wives to join."

- Explanation: Many members both current and potential mistakenly believe that joining Eastern Star is strictly tied to being a wife of a Freemason, discouraging those who don't fit this description.

- Many members believe it is the Freemason's responsibility to populate the membership of NJ Eastern Star (Nobody bothered to inform Freemasons of this)

- Solution: Clear communication is essential. Host informational sessions that outline membership eligibility and emphasize that women can join independently. Highlight stories of women who have joined without ties to Freemasonry. Highlight the confusion of

Freemasonry in NJ. At a high point of 97,000 masons in 1969, they as of 2025 have 14,500 members. Also their active member lines are way different, composed of only 50% male female married couples the rest being composed of gay, unmarried, and divorced members.

## 2. Fear of Involving Friends

- Statement: "I don't want to bring my friends into this mess."

- Explanation: Some members may perceive Eastern Star negatively, fearing that their friends might have a poor experience or that the organization is riddled with controversy, from toxic individuals, and broken promises.

- Solution: Open dialogues about the positive experiences within the organization can help shift this narrative. Sharing testimonials and success stories from current members can illustrate the benefits of membership and dispel fears. Review the obligations and go deep into the meaning of each passage.

## 3. Dislike of Sales

- Statement: "I hate sales."

- Explanation: Potential members may be deterred by the assumption that joining involves sales pressure or recruitment quotas.

- Solution: Emphasize that membership is about community and service, not sales. Create a culture focused on fellowship and altruism rather than recruitment, making it clear that the goal is to build relationships, not to sell.

#### 4. Limited Eligible Women

- Statement: "There are no eligible women around."

- Explanation: on the face of this statement this just is not true. Demographic information is easy to obtain and house thousands of eligible women within 20 miles of every chapter in NJ. So perhaps this is really saying that some members may feel that their social circles lack potential new members.

- Solution: Expand outreach efforts beyond current social networks. Engage in community events, partner with local organizations, and use social media to connect with women who may be interested in joining. Check local demographics to be sure the statement is not actually correct.

#### 5. Narrow Social Circles

- Statement: "I don't know anyone outside of Eastern Star."

- Explanation: Existing members, especially older ones, may have limited connections outside the organization, hindering recruitment efforts.

- Solution: Encourage members to participate in local community events or volunteer opportunities where they can meet new people. Organizing social events that invite friends and family can help broaden networks.

#### 6. Age and Socialization Barriers

- Statement: "At my age, I don't know or socialize with anyone eligible."

- Explanation: Older members may feel disconnected from younger generations, making recruitment challenging.

- Solution: Foster intergenerational connections by hosting events that appeal to various age groups. Establish mentorship programs that encourage older members to engage with younger women, promoting a sense of community.

### Additional Considerations

- Promoting Inclusivity: Highlighting diversity and inclusivity within Eastern Star can attract a broader range of members. Create programs that celebrate different backgrounds and experiences to make the organization more appealing.

- Utilizing Digital Platforms: Leverage social media to connect with potential members. Share engaging content that showcases events, member testimonials, and the mission of Eastern Star to attract interest.

- Community Involvement: Actively participate in local community events to raise awareness about Eastern Star. Engaging in service projects can also help demonstrate the organization's commitment to making a positive impact.

### Conclusion

The challenges facing New Jersey Eastern Star in attracting new members stem from a variety of misconceptions and social barriers. By addressing these concerns with clear communication, fostering community engagement, and promoting inclusivity, the organization can revitalize its membership and ensure a vibrant future. Encouraging current members to actively participate in outreach efforts will be crucial in overcoming these obstacles and welcoming new members into the Eastern Star family.