

## National NOW Chapters Report

To: NOW National Board

From: Supria Bhatia, Chapter Services Specialist

Date: July 18, 2019

Board Meeting: July 18, 2019

### **Supria Bhatia (For new board members, officers and staff)**

I began working for NOW on May 29, 2018. I grew up in Upper Marlboro, Maryland and received my Bachelor's degree in Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies from The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. Prior to NOW, I was the Refugee Health Coordinator, contracted by the Department of Family Jobs and Services, at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.

### **Chapter Services Staffing Changes**

**Joyce "Heejung" Lee** is NOW's Development and Operations Intern for the current semester. She attends Hamilton College located in Central New York. She is majoring in Political Science and minoring in Sociology. She splits her time between the chapters and members services departments. Joyce's focus with the Chapter's side has been to be the contact person for our current Campus Action Networks and mailing out round orders. Before the end of the Summer, she will be assisting with portal technical support for our NOW officers and processing 2018 annual reports.

### **New Online Chapter Portal**

Every chapter officer now has access to the online chapter portal. The chapter portal is an excellent resource for chapter leaders and it is important for them to gain access as soon as possible.

All state and local chapter officers are able to do the following through the online chapter portal:

- Update Chapter Information: Contact, Address, Phone Numbers, Leadership Changes
- Run Membership Lists: Active, Inactive, or Both
- Run Transaction Reports

If there is a chapter officer in your district who still does not have access to the portal, they must contact [chapters@now.org](mailto:chapters@now.org) so the Chapters Specialist or intern can reach out to assist them.

Local chapter officers must send a request to their state president to obtain at-large membership list for their area. In the event no state president is available, the Chapters Specialist will run the report for them.

### **Annual Reports**

Chapters submitted 109 annual reports for 2016, and 97 for 2017. The 2018 annual report was made available on the NOW Leaders section of the website on January 5, 2019. As of July 7, 2019, 69 annual reports have been submitted for 2018. For the remaining annual reports, I plan on reaching out to the Chapters to urge them to submit before the year ends. One of the requirements to remain eligible for rebate checks is to file an annual report and, for that reason, my goal is to reach out to the chapters who have not submitted a report to do so before the year ends.

***Annual reports are due December 31 of the following year. The most recent chapter annual report must be submitted in order to be eligible to obtain rebate checks.***

Some of the comments and suggestions chapters have for National NOW, based on 2017 annual report submissions, include:

- Supportive and positive communication between state and local chapters.
- Email addresses. When you collect memberships at the national site, we would really appreciate it if email addresses were a required field. Having no way to communicate with our members except via paper mail saddles us with additional expenses -- if we have to pay for printing and stamps, it's money we can't spend on activism, and for a growing chapter like ours, that becomes a question of sustainability.
- Provide NOW T-shirts and other merchandise that would be available for order. SWAG!!
- A medium where chapters can communicate with each other.
- Social Media Training

Some of the efforts and actions chapters completed in 2017, based on annual report submissions, include:

- Tabled at events
- Held press conferences
- Hosted film screenings
- Participated in marches
- Lobbied and met with elected officials
- Presented educational programs
- Partnered with other local organizations for fundraisers
- Registered voters

## **Active Chapters**

For purposes of this report, chapters are considered **active** if they have at least 2 chapter officers and a valid address on file with National. Chapters are considered **dormant** if they have fewer than 2 chapter officers and/or no valid address on file with National.

## **State Chapters**

There are 38 **active state chapters**: 210 Active Chapters nationwide.

- **Pacific:** Alaska, California, Oregon, Washington
- **Western:** Arizona, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Wyoming
- **Heartland:** Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, South Dakota, Wisconsin
- **Southern:** Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee
- **Eastern:** DC, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia
- **Northern:** Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Connecticut

**Dormant state chapters** in need of revival are:

- **Pacific:** Hawaii
- **Western:** Colorado, Idaho, Oklahoma, Utah
- **Heartland:** Nebraska, North Dakota, Kansas
- **Southern:** Alabama, South Carolina
- **Eastern:** Delaware
- **Northern:** Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire

National has prioritized reviving state chapters and have decided to pay the \$600 fee associated to the filing fee of IRS Form 1024 and 8718. District Board Members interested in helping to facilitate the revival of dormant state chapters can request a district grant. The request form is located on the Members Only Page.

## **New Chapter Interest Forms**

There has been a significant increase in New Chapter Interest Forms since 2015, most likely due to the current political climate.

- 2015: 32
- 2016: 64
- 2017: 111
- 2018: 51
- 2019: 22 (as of July 7, 2019)

## **Convening Chapters**

When a chapter becomes a Convening Chapter, it means 3 NOW members are listed on the Convenor Authorization Form, the form was signed by the convenor and state president (or relevant board member, if there is no state president), the form was submitted to National, and the chapter was created as a convening chapter in the database.

Chapters currently convening:

- Columbia NOW - South Carolina
- Cape Cod NOW - Massachusetts
- Oahu NOW - Hawaii
- Nassau NOW - New York
- Washington County NOW - Utah
- Black Hawk County NOW - Iowa
- Collier NOW - Florida
- Polk County NOW - Florida
- Orange County NOW - Florida

## **High School and College Campus Action Networks (CANs)**

National NOW is dedicated to motivate more youth to organize in their communities. We have personally reached out to current CANs and provided support. The new CANs resource guide is now complete and our intern, Joyce will be assisting the current Campus Action Networks in developing their groups. As Board members and activists, we urge you to visit the local high schools, community colleges, and universities to promote the core values of NOW and urge students to start a Campus Action Network in their school.

## **Rebate Eligibility**

To be eligible for rebates, chapters must have:

- At least 2 chapter officers with current memberships
- A valid address on file
- Submitted a current annual report (**currently the report for 2017 or 2018**)
- Cashed their last rebate check

**Increased IRS Fee**

Chapters that have lost tax-exempt status must apply to regain that status with the IRS. As of January 1, 2018, the IRS fee to do so has increased from \$400 to \$600. State and local chapter leaders should be diligent in filing their required 990-N e-Postcard or 990-EZ every year to ensure they do not lose tax-exempt status.

Again, National will now cover the IRS fee for members who are willing to revive dormant state chapters.

**Robo Calls:** National NOW can now facilitate robo calls to the members in your state! If your chapter is interested in placing robo calls for actions, please fill out the Robo call request form located on the Members Only Page. National requires a request at least 5 business before the call, a 60 second .mp3 file of your recording, the date the calls should be placed and a call back number. The person placing the call will need you to be available when the calls are scheduled. For any questions, please reach out to Supria for further clarification.

**ERA Grants:** Chapter Services has been overseeing and processing grant proposals that National has received. Since ERA is of the highest priority, National has provided three grants for the promotion of the ERA. The chapters that have been awarded the grants are Arizona NOW, North Carolina NOW and Virginia NOW.

For any chapters looking for financial aid for planned actions should feel free to submit a National Action Campaign Grant Request. The grant proposal will be processed by the Chapters Services Specialist, Supria, and she will be your contact person for any questions regarding your submission.

**District Grant Request** – District Board Members! If you are looking for additional funds for an action or state chapter revival, please submit a grant proposal and budget. The link can be found on the Members Only Page under Chapter Management. The grant proposal will be processed by the Chapters Services Specialist, Supria, and she will be your contact person for any questions regarding your submission.