



Each year, from September 1st to October 31st, CPF launches its' **Annual Membership Drive**. As parents prepare for the new school year, what better time to put CPF on the radar! The membership drive helps chapters raise funds to host exciting French language social, cultural, and educational initiatives, as well as increasing contacts to pull on for volunteers and new board members too.

Why Run a Membership Drive?

Why? It's a great fundraiser!

Chapters receive 80% of the revenue from all new and renewing memberships normally, but during the drive this is adjusted to **90%**! So when there's a push to sign up members, the return really adds up...

For example, if your chapter signs up, or renews, 4 one-year individual members (\$25 each) during the Membership Drive, your chapter rebate is \$90 (90% of \$100) that goes right to your bank account. It's crucial to remind parents who are considering taking out a CPF membership, or renewing, that 90% of the membership fees are returned directly to supporting local FSL events and initiatives during the drive. The stronger your membership drive, the more local financial resources your chapter will have for the year.

Further, this year, the chapter with the most growth in membership throughout the drive will receive 100% of rebates back to their chapter!

Why? Volunteer Recruitment!

The membership drive can be used as an incredible tool in recruiting new parent volunteers to your chapter.

For instance, your chapter could offer subsidized – or even free – introductory memberships to parents new to French Immersion. The strategy is simple: offer a special "Welcome to CPF" membership to young parents with students in Kindergarten/Grade 1; add their names/email to your membership list; and encourage them to get involved with the local chapter's community-building efforts. Parents new to French immersion are often keen, and willing to get involved in organizing events that support their child's educational experiences. We need to engage these new parents as soon as possible!

If your Chapter decides to subsidize, it's important to let parents know that this is a special **one-time** introductory offer and that a one-year family membership normally costs \$25.00. Communicating this helps establish the true value of CPF membership, and underscores the integrity of CPF as an organization.

Your chapter may also wish to host a welcome event, or a members-only event. If parents can see the tangible outcomes and benefits of membership, or if it offers perks and access, they are more likely to renew.

Financially speaking, offering subsidies may be a cost to your chapter, depending on the rate you set. Here are a few different scenarios to consider:

Scenario 1—Free Memberships Offered

If you offer the membership to new parents for free, each one-year application will ultimately cost your chapter \$2.50 (10% of \$25). If, for example, you sign up 20 new members, it breaks down like this:

1. Collect the 20 membership application forms
2. Write out a cheque to national for \$500 (20 x \$25)
 - a. *You would still need to send national the full fee (\$25) along with the appropriate application form, but you are guaranteed to be reimbursed the 90%, which equates to net cost of \$22.50 per membership*
3. Send off the entire package to national
4. Once the memberships are processed in the national office, the branch will deposit the money directly into your chapter's bank account – which, in this case, would work out to be \$450 (90% of \$500)

At the end of the day, the chapter would have invested \$50 to sign up 20 new members.

Scenario 2—\$2.50 Memberships Offered

If you offer the membership to new parents at a one-time welcome rate of \$5, each one-year application will ultimately cost your chapter \$0. If, for example, you sign up 20 new members, it breaks down like this:

1. Collect the 20 membership application forms, and the 20 x \$2.50 reduced rate (total \$50)
2. Write out a cheque to national for the balance of the memberships owed: \$400
3. Send off the entire package
4. Once the memberships are processed in the national office, the branch will deposit the money directly into your chapter's bank account – which in this case would work out to be \$400 (90% of \$500)

At the end of the day, the chapter would have invested \$0 to sign up 20 new FI parents, and the parents would have a strongly reduced rate. It is a win-win membership drive strategy!

This special discounted membership drive campaign could also help your chapter in the long-run.

Once you have successfully engaged a group of Kindergarten/Grade 1 families to join CPF “out of the gate,” and you are successful in communicating the benefits of membership throughout the year, a significant percentage of these families will renew their membership – at the full \$25 rate. This means that the following year, with the 80 or 90% membership rebate returning to your chapter, you should see a significant boost in revenue to your chapter coffers.

How to Run a Strong Membership Drive?

Getting new members doesn't have to be painful!

Here are some recruitment strategies that are tried and true...

1. **Know the Benefits of Membership!** Why did you join Canadian Parents for French? What events does your chapter organize to help support French language programming in your community? We recommend you make your “sales pitch” personal, and chapter-specific. Speaking from the heart is always the truest and most convincing, so share with others what hooked you. By anchoring your stories at the chapter level, others will get a strong sense of the local flair and importance of your CPF Chapter. Don't forget to mention that 90% of their membership fee is redirected into your local chapter.
2. **Talk to Parents Face to Face.** Approach French Immersion parents as they wait to pick-up or drop-off their kids. This requires a certain level of coordination by the chapter. Who will reach out to which classes? If your chapter has designated school representatives, you can coordinate the effort with them. Introducing yourself to new parents is an excellent way to spread the word about CPF, sign up new members, and meet other local parents.
3. **Stuff the backpacks!** September brings with it a whole new group of parents. They are dying for information on how to help their child in French. Before every other group in your school recruits these parents, drop a Parent Welcome Package into every child's backpack (with a Parent Welcome Letter; a Benefits of CPF page; and a CPF membership pamphlet). Have a class representative collect the filled out membership forms after a week.
4. **Organize a Welcome / Information Event.** Organize a *Help! I Don't Speak French!* night, and invite some local experts to talk about resources available to parents. Promote CPF and Membership at the event.
5. **Woo them with prizes!** Local prizes can increase the appeal of the membership drive in your community; and it's a great way to get out and promote CPF! Approach local businesses to donate prizes you can use in draws for new / renewing members. Promote these prizes to potential new members. Once you have their attention, you can demonstrate the long-term benefits of a membership in CPF! And who knows – the local business you approach might want to become Associate Member Organizations (AMO)!
6. **Set up a table.** Is there a school event at the beginning of the year where you could set up a CPF table? Online you will find great information sheets for members that you can display on your table. This includes documents on how to help your child with French homework, great resources no child should be without. Make sure you have plenty of copies to hand out at events. That, along with a volunteer sign-up sheet and someone on hand to talk about benefits and collect membership forms on the spot, will help raise our profile and gain you some active volunteers.
7. **Go after the stray sheep!** At this time, every chapter gets an up-to-date membership list that contains current and lapsed members since that chapter was formed. Most members have email, and you will have quick access to your members. Don't be shy! Phone or email your members to welcome them, nurture them, and remind them to renew, or entice them to come back. Make them feel needed by offering them a job. Research shows that most people don't volunteer because they have never been asked! So engage them!