

## HOW TO START A YFL LOCAL CHAPTER

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NFFE-IAM members of all ages, at locals both large and small, have spent the last year working to fulfill our Union's commitment to recruit, engage, and empower a new generation of unionists. With your unwavering support, the Young Federal Leaders (YFL) initiative has been successful in creating a sound infrastructure and a myriad of tools to cultivate our Union's young worker community.

But the work of investing in our young members and preparing for our Union's future is far from done. The most important step in ensuring YFL makes good on its promise to provide education, mentorship, and leadership opportunities for our young members is to create a Local chapter.

Local chapters are the lifeblood of the Young Federal Leaders initiative. By starting one today, your local can translate the enthusiasm of its young workers into a powerful tool to strengthen our Union and ensure its success for future generations to come. The steps below will help get you started.

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1. **Be Creative** – The steps you'll find here are by no means exhaustive. Rather, we hope this document will provide a loose set of guidelines to establish your local's YFL chapter. No two chapters are alike – you have the freedom to develop unique ways of connecting with the young workers in your bargaining unit. Some chapters have incentivized participation by awarding one young member per month a certificate of achievement and a free lunch with the Union president. Others host monthly happy hour events for young members to get to know each other better and discuss issues happening at the agency. One chapter goes into high schools within the community and teaches students about Unions and why they are important to our country. The list could go on and on. Use some of these ideas to get started, but feel free to develop your own means of connecting with the young workers at your local.
2. **Get Started** – Starting a chapter is easy; young members who are interested in leading a YFL chapter should first approach their local leadership or bring up the idea at their next monthly Union meeting. For local leaders who would like to develop a YFL chapter, simply appoint an engaged young person within the Local to head up the effort. Once you've identified a young person to chair your Local's YFL chapter, let the national office know. We want to help our Locals get started, and we can't do it if we don't know they exist.
3. **Solicit Participants** – Send an email to your bargaining unit to let them know your Local is forming a YFL chapter. Let them know you're looking for young members who are interested in serving, and communicate that the chapter will provide social, educational, leadership, and mentorship opportunities for its participants.
4. **Communicate** – Create a contact list with all of the individuals who communicated initial interest. Send an email out to schedule your first YFL Local chapter meeting. Once you've established a reliable means of reaching out to the young workers at your Local, communicate regularly with your chapter about YFL social events, educational or mentorship opportunities, and any pertinent agency messages.
5. **Be Visible** – Request YFL flyers and signs from the National Office. All materials are free of charge to NFFE Locals. Young workers often feel they don't have a place or won't fit in at the Local. If they see other energized and enthusiastic young people and know there is a program that caters to their interests, they'll be more likely to get involved.

6. **Hold Meetings** – Schedule monthly meetings to develop your YFL chapter’s agenda. It’s often convenient to hold meetings either before or after your Local’s monthly Union meetings. The chair is responsible for hosting the meeting, conducting votes, and ensuring notes are kept to reflect current and future plans. Meetings don’t have to be held on site; your Local chapter meetings can take place anywhere, including restaurants, bars, or someone’s home – these gatherings should be social and fun!
7. **Have Fun!** – Young workers are serious about their careers but they’re also looking for opportunities to get to know their co-workers and have fun. Schedule social events outside of the workplace to build a strong bond and foster solidarity. Some YFL Local chapters have hosted happy hours, planned community service events, and joined intramural sports teams.
8. **Welcome New Employees** – Many young workers who are new to the agency don’t know what a Union is, how they operate, or why they are important. By meeting with these employees early, the Union has an opportunity to educate them about the importance of joining. Assign one young person from your Local chapter to attend all new employee orientations and talk about the opportunities for young people in the Union.
9. **Get Educated** – NFFE is extremely fortunate to utilize the IAM’s Winpisinger Education and Technology Center in Hollywood, MD. Young members can spend a week in the classroom with experienced professors learning how to become a better unionist, at no cost to them. YFL Local chapters should ensure all participants are kept up to date on the class schedule and have opportunities to attend classes regularly. The Federal Basic class, as well as Leadership I are great introductory courses for young members. Consider sending a young member to class with a more experienced unionist and encourage them to work together when they get home to implement what they’ve learned.
10. **Learn from a Mentor** – NFFE has some of the most dedicated and experienced representatives in the labor movement today. However, as the workforce ages and a new generation of leaders takes the reins, we risk losing the decades of institutional knowledge that have helped make our Union great. YFL Local chapters can play a key role in ensuring young members have opportunities to learn from experienced unionists within the Local. Work with your Local’s leadership to identify members who are interested in serving as mentors. Mentorship relationships don’t have to be formal, the idea is to pass on Union knowledge and provide learning opportunities for young members.

As you begin to get your Local chapter up and running let the National Office know about your successes. We want our membership to know about the fantastic work our young unionists are doing to make NFFE strong, and we plan to publicize your chapter’s accomplishments.

## **BEST PRACTICES**

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Looking for more ideas on ways to get started? Here are a few activities your YFL Local chapter can do to start recruiting, engaging, and empowering young workers at your local.

Activities typically fall into three broad categories – social, community service, or professional development. Commit to hosting three chapter events per year, and make an effort to offer activities

in each of these categories. By creating opportunities for learning, service, and fun, your Local's young worker community will strengthen your workplace and the community!

- Join a community sports league: Sign your YFL Local chapter up for a kickball, softball, or ultimate Frisbee team.
- Contact local schools and arrange opportunities for Union members to talk with students about the importance of union membership.
- Incentivize participation by honoring active young members with monthly certificates or raffle giveaways.
- Arrange lunch and learns with experienced union members and invite YFL Local chapter members to ask questions, discuss agency and Union issues, and swap ideas about how to strengthen the local.
- Cultivate mentorship relationships by allowing new young members to work with or shadow experienced members.
- Host a fundraiser for a community cause or get your YFL Local chapter together to perform service for those in need.

## UNION ROLES FOR YOUNG WORKERS

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Young union members have a lot to offer the labor movement and your Local in particular. They are adept at navigating current technologies, excel in communication endeavors, and offer a fresh perspective in matters relating to activism and advocacy. Regardless of age, engaging a union member means finding out what they're good at and helping them figure out how to apply their knowledge and skills within the Local. The roles below offer young members the opportunity to make a difference within their workplaces and communities, all while strengthening your Local's collective voice!

**Social Media Coordinator** – Facebook and Twitter have rapidly become a critical line of communication for more than a billion people around the globe. NFFE is encouraging all of its Locals to take advantage of this powerful, free tool to reach out to and engage current and future members. Recruit a young member to manage your Local's social media presence. [Learn how to start a Facebook page here.](#)

**National Office Liaison** – It's critical to establish a strong connection between your Local and the NFFE National Office. By opening the lines of communication, your Local is able to better take advantage of all of our Union's resources. Appoint a young member to stay in touch with the national office, request promotional materials, relay important messages, and inform the Local about new initiatives or opportunities.

**Newsletter Editor** – NFFE’s most successful Locals have one thing in common – they take a proactive approach when it comes to communicating with the bargaining unit. If your Local doesn’t already release its own monthly or quarterly newsletter, work with NFFE’s Communications Department to learn how. For those Locals that do, utilize a young member to draft articles, format the publication, or lead the effort altogether. [Access the Communicator’s Toolkit here for more information.](#)

**Education Outreach Coordinator** – Too many of our members don’t realize the tremendous educational opportunities that exist through the Winpisinger Center. Work with a young member to publicize course offerings, facilitate timely exchange of necessary application materials, and keep track of which courses members have taken and which ones they still need to attend.

**Website Coordinator** – Creating a NFFE microsite for your Local is an easy and effective way to communicate with your bargaining unit, attract new members, and broaden your Local’s visibility. Recruit a young member to update and maintain your microsite. [Access the Communicators’ Toolkit here for more information.](#)

**Community Outreach Liaison** – The labor movement has a long and proud tradition of community service. Well before we won a seat at the negotiating table, Unions made it a priority to care for their sick and wounded, provide for the families of injured workers, and establish vibrant communities. Each day unionists continue to express these sentiments of solidarity, not only in the workplace, but in their communities by donating their time and resources to strengthen their neighborhoods, cities, and states. Appoint a young person to coordinate your Local’s community service activities. [Access the Service Toolkit here for more information.](#)

**Local Lobbyist** – With legislation targeting federal employee pay, benefits, and job security gaining traction on Capitol Hill, it is more important than ever for our members to let their elected officials know why the work they do is important. Utilize a young person who is interested in the political process to coordinate your Local’s lobbying efforts and provide updates about pertinent legislative measures affecting federal employees. [Access the Legislative Action Center here for more information.](#)

**Recruiter** – The best person to convince a young person to join the Union is another young person. Young people have specific needs and face unique challenges within the workplace and at home. Utilize young members in your local’s recruitment efforts – they can provide firsthand testimony about why membership is important. [Access the Organizers’ Toolkit here for more information \(you’ll need your NFFE website user name and password\).](#)