



# FREA Handbook and Information Guide

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# FREA Vision and Mission Statements

## FREA Vision

The Florida Retired Educators Association (FREA) is a caring, active, and knowledgeable community of retired educators, school personnel, and other supporters who give their talents and time to support retired and active school employees; and the communities in which they live.

## FREA Mission

To safeguard the strength of the Florida Retirement System

To support public education in Florida

To provide fellowship opportunities

To encourage community involvement

To be a source of information and materials

## Suggested Strategies

### To Safeguard the Strength of the Florida Retirement System:

- Strongly support action plan of legislative committee
- Contact legislators with regular emails, letters, phone calls, and visits
- Share legislative agenda with community
- Invite legislators to meetings

### To Support Public Education in Florida:

- Attend school board meetings
- Serve on school committees
- Adopt a classroom
- Volunteer in schools
- Invite school board members to attend meetings; make them honorary members

### To Encourage Community Involvement:

- Support the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay Contest
- Network with other organizations
- Donate magazines to hospitals and libraries
- Promote scholarships both local and FREF
- Promote the Margaret Poppell Literacy Project

### To Be a Source of Information and Materials:

- Refer to website, Facebook and FREA Bulletin
- Give informative programs
- Make posters for libraries, post office and other public spaces

### To Provide Fellowship Opportunities:

- Be welcoming
- Provide nametags
- Have icebreakers
- Have interest groups
- Above all have FUN!

## What is FREA?

FREA is a not-for-profit 501(c)(4) organization. FREA was organized in 1954 and is the only organization where the Florida public education retiree is the # 1 priority! FREA is independent, nonpartisan, and does not endorse candidates.

FREA is the statewide organization that is the umbrella over 48 Local Units throughout Florida. We provide assistance to FREA Units in many ways, and we will tell you all about the resources available to you later in the handbook.

### HISTORY OF FLORIDA RETIRED EDUCATORS

#### 1954-Today

A brief historical background of FREA

1954: The Retired Educators of Florida were organized on April 9, 1954, as a section of the Florida Education Association (FEA) with Paul D. Phillips serving as President.

The three purposes for organizing were:

1. to promote the economic, social, and professional status of retired Educators, and the exchange of information of value to them
2. to safeguard and improve retirement benefits by promoting passage of legislation
3. to promote the involvement of retired educators in promoting Literacy through volunteer services

1971: The Florida Retired Educators section was reorganized in the fall of 1971, as the Florida Retired Teachers Association (FRTA), an affiliate of The Florida Educators Association (FEA).

1974: In September of 1974, a committee was appointed to study the future of the organization.

1975: A recommendation of the committee was accepted to discontinue affiliation with FEA and establish an independent organization with a separate office.

1975: FRTA affiliated with NRTA and was provided space in the NRTA/AARP District office in St. Petersburg.

1982: In July the NRTA officially merged with and became a division of AARP.

1982: Fall - FRTA changed its name to Florida Retired Educators Association (FREA), so benefits could be extended to faculties of higher education and certificated employees of county school boards who were primarily employed as supervisors and administrators.

1984: February - The Florida Retired Educators Foundation established as an adjunct to the FREA for the purpose of providing scholarships for future Educators, assisting retired educators in crisis, and publication of valuable educational material.

1988: The FREA office was housed in the St. Petersburg AARP State office.

1994: FREA moved down the hall to a separate four-room office, which was sub-leased from AARP.

1999: AARP located to a new building and FREA remained at current location.

2001: FREA moved office to larger quarters in downtown St. Petersburg at the Bay View Tower.

2005: FREA relocated the office to 10051 5<sup>th</sup> St. N Suite 108, St. Petersburg, due to demolition of previous building.

2015: FREA moved office to a different building at the request of landlord. Their current location is: 8950 9<sup>th</sup> St. N. Suite 105, St. Petersburg, FL 33702-3047

2018: With the higher level of available technology increasing efficiency, FREA downsized from three office personnel to two: An Executive Director and a Membership Accounting Specialist.



## FREA State Office

8950 9<sup>th</sup> St. N. Suite 105  
St. Petersburg, FL 33702-3047  
727-577-6400

[info@frea.org](mailto:info@frea.org) [www.frea.org](http://www.frea.org)



FREA is on Facebook.com



And Twitter: @FIRetiredEd

**Office hours** 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM Monday through Friday.

This office is here for you! We like to say that, while we may not have all the answers to your questions on everything from the FRS to dues, to benefits; we can certainly help you find out where to call and supply you with the necessary information.

So please feel free to call, or come by if you are in the neighborhood!

### FREA Office Personnel

FREA has two full-time employees providing a base of operations and continuity.



Anne M Fagan  
Executive Director  
[anne@frea.org](mailto:anne@frea.org)

Diane Lynch  
Membership Accounting  
Specialist  
[diane@frea.org](mailto:diane@frea.org)

### What is an Association?

An association is an organization of people with a common purpose.

**Effective organizations** are composed of interdependent and coordinated parts that have common goals. All of the parts must cooperate and function as a coordinated whole within the framework of approved programs that provide a healthy degree of uniformity. In an effort to provide a degree of uniformity and direction toward the association goals for all FREA units, the following framework is supported in the FREA Bylaws as follows:

**State Office** - The state office is the administrative headquarters of the association. It is staffed by an Executive Director and Membership Accounting Specialist. The state office is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the association, and the implementation of policies and programs as approved by the Executive Board of Directors.

**FREA Districts** - FREA is divided into 10 Districts determined geographically by counties. These geographic units take into consideration major metropolitan areas, urban areas and rural counties. Each District elects a District Director who is a voting member of the Board of Directors. Each District Director is the main point of contact between the state office and the local FREA units.

**Local Units** - The FREA recognizes 48 local units. They adhere to the requirements of the state Bylaws. Local unit members are made up of education and school personnel retirees. Our Units are very important to us, and the State Office strives to provide a strong support system for Units.

# FREA Awards

## Unit Awards

### Volunteer Services Participation

Presented by: State Volunteer Services Chair

A unit will receive an award if 10-40% (depending on unit size) or more, of its members report actual volunteer hours. The highest 6 units will receive an award.

### FREF Foundation – Certificate of Recognition

Presented By: State FREF Chair

A unit will be awarded a certificate if it meets the requirements on the “Certificate of Recognition Form”. If the unit does the before mentioned plus increases its donation to \$5.00 per member, it will receive an award.

### Membership Award

Presented By: State Membership Chair

A unit will receive an award if it increases its FREA membership. FREA Office verification is required.

### Annual New Member Contest

Presented By: State Membership Chair

Each local FREA unit will be awarded one (1) entry for each NEW FREA member added for the period of January 1— December 31. The entries will be placed in a drawing for \$100, held at the Annual FREA Convention. The award may be used by the unit as they so choose. FREA Office verification is required.

### Unit of Excellence Award (Suspended)

Presented By: President-Elect

This is a voluntary award. A Unit will receive this award if it completes the criteria contained in the rules. Some of the criteria are to be verified. Verified FREA membership Growth is mandatory.

## Individual Awards

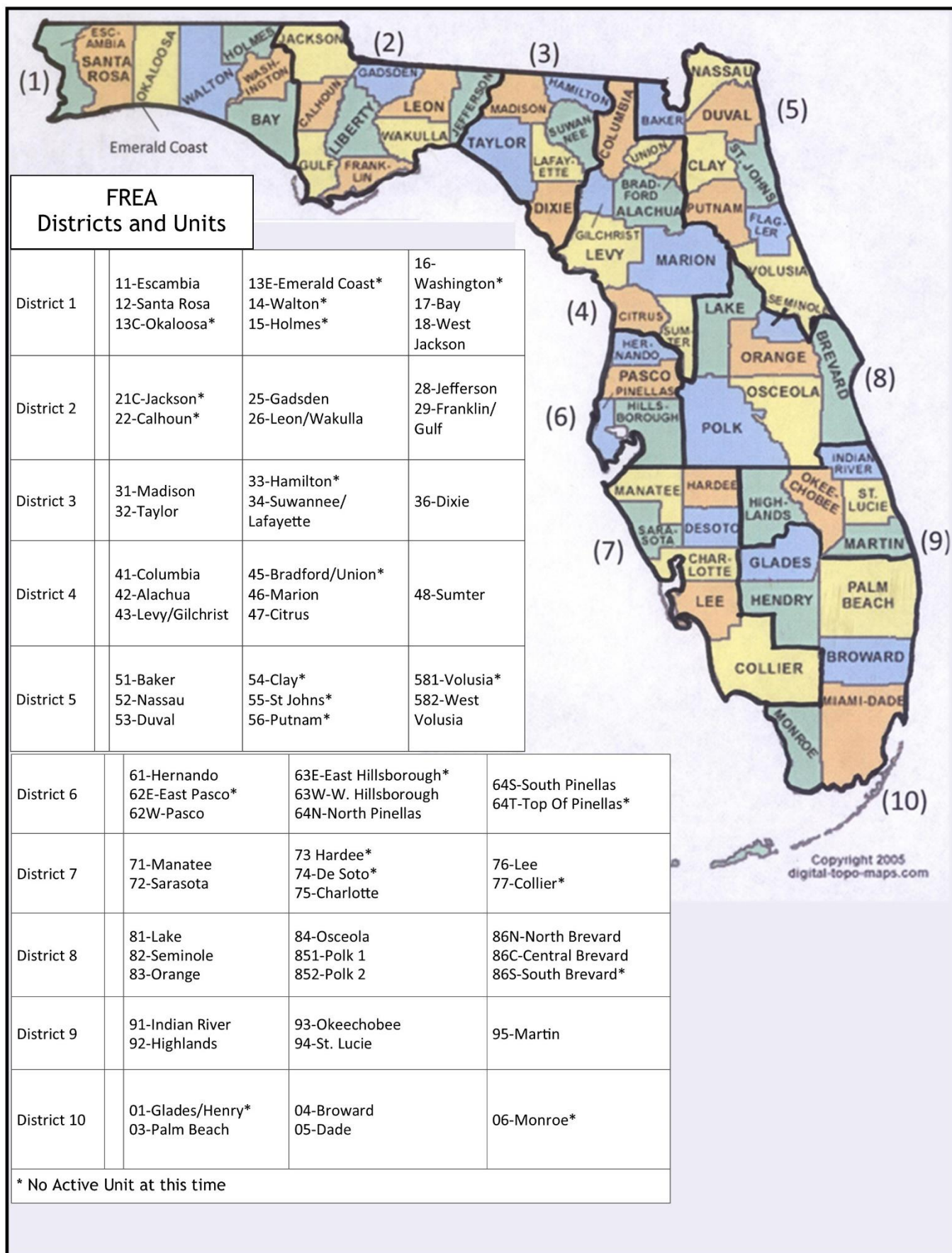
### Volunteer Services Award

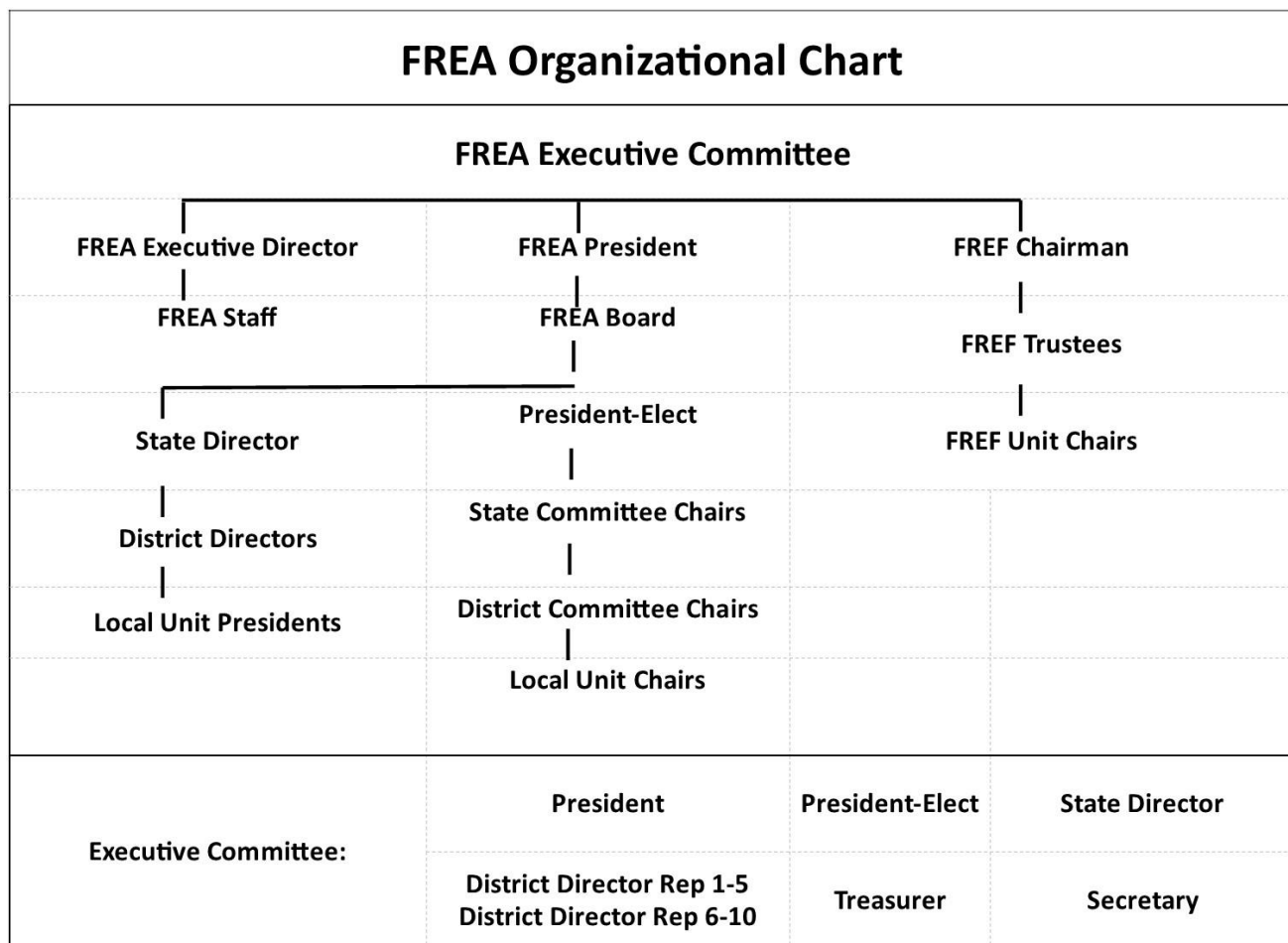
Presented by: State Volunteer Services Chair

Unit Volunteer of the Year: Each unit nominates a candidate. An award will be given for each unit nominee.

District Volunteer of the year: Each will receive a certificate and an award.







<p align="center"><b>FREA Executive Committee</b> 7 members</p>		
President	President-Elect	
State Director	Secretary	
Treasurer	District Director Rep from 1-5	
District Director Rep from 6-10	Ex-Officio Member: FREA Executive Director	
<p align="center"><b>FREA Board of Directors</b> 15 Members</p>		
President	President-Elect	Secretary
Treasurer	State Director	District Directors 1 –10
<p align="center">Ex Officio: FREA Executive Director, FREF Chair</p>		



FREA/FREF Unit Reports-Actions Calendar			
Date	Report	Responsible	Destination
	<b>VIF—Very Important Form: Report of Contact Info for Unit Officers and Meetings</b> -Please send to Office after election of officers and when any changes of meeting times, locations, etc.	Unit President	FREA Office
January 1	<b>Deadline: Any Unit Dues increase</b> is due to the Office to be included in Member renewal invoice for upcoming year.	Unit President	FREA Office
February 15	Scholarship Submittal Deadline from Units	Unit FREF Chair	FREF District Trustee for District 1-5/6-10
February 15	Practicing Educator Grant	Practicing Educators	FREA Office
Jan/Feb FREA Board Meeting	Unit Contact Progress report	State Committee Chair	President-Elect
	Potential Leadership Candidates	District Directors Unit Presidents	Nominating Chair State Director
March 1	Membership Grant Proposals	Unit Membership Chair	FREA Office
	Return Convention Delegate Names to Office	Unit President	FREA Office
March 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unit volunteer services reports</li> <li>Volunteer of Year Nominee</li> <li>5<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay Deadline for units</li> </ul>	Unit VS Chair	District VS Chair
March 31	Certificate of Recognition Deadline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Per member contribution (\$2-3-4-5)</li> <li>Honorarium and Memorial donation</li> </ul>	Unit President	FREA Office
April 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copy of each units' volunteer report</li> <li>1 5th Grade Essay selection</li> <li>1 VOY selection</li> </ul>	District VS Chair	State VS Chair
	Liability Insurance Payment Due to FREA Office	Unit President/ Treasurer	FREA Office
May 1	Deceased names to FREA Office for Convention Memorial Program	Unit Officer responsible	FREA Office
August 31- Sept 30	Scholarship Information to High Schools	FREF Trustees Unit FREF Chairs	All High Schools in District
September - October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay Information to schools*</li> <li>Practicing Educator Grant info to schools*</li> </ul>	District/Unit Volunteer Services Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All grade schools possible</li> <li>All schools possible</li> </ul>
October 15	Notify FREA Office of person receiving Extravaganza tickets	FREF Chair	FREA Office
2nd week in November	Office mails Extravaganza Tickets	FREA Office	FREA Office
	VS = Volunteer Services		

## **District Directors**

The FREA organization provides a valuable resource for all local unit Presidents—District Directors. In each District throughout the state, convention delegates elect an individual from the District to represent them on the FREA Board of Directors. That individual's responsibility is to "serve as the chief liaison between the FREA Board of Directors and the local units". The opportunities provided to the individual as he/she serves as a District Director makes each a knowledgeable asset to local unit Presidents.

### **FREA District Director Goals and Duties**

1. To serve as a liaison between the FREA Board of Directors and the local units.
2. To provide information and assistance to Unit Presidents regarding the FREA operations and the role of local units within the organization.

### **How:**

- Contacting local unit Presidents within a District to offer assistance to assure the smooth operation of local units
- Serving as the principal source of help to the local Retired Educators Association units by providing information regarding memberships, programs and services/benefits from the Association
- Providing opportunities for leadership training activities through the Fall Leadership Workshop planned for each District
- Attending local unit meetings or unit board meetings
- Requesting a spot on the local unit meeting agenda to speak to the membership regarding Association business
- Encouraging local units to submit newsworthy articles to the FREA office for publication in the FREA Bulletin
- Distributing all relevant materials to Unit Presidents
- Assisting Unit Presidents in preparing and submitting all reports in a timely fashion; and
- Encouraging and assisting local units with membership recruitment and retention activities.

# FREA

## Standing Committees



### The 6 FREA Standing Committees include:

- Membership
- Volunteer Services
- Information Services
- Legislative
- Nominating
- Bylaws

Each of these committees has a State Chair that is appointed by the FREA President. The FREA President-Elect works with the State Committee Chairs.

# FREA Standing and Special Committee Purposes

FREA has multiple committees that carry on the work of the Florida Retired Educators Association, and it is critical to FREA's mission that all committees work together. The standing committees are:

## **Membership**

This committee's purpose is growing FREA Membership. We invite all FRS school retirees to join our team of FREA members, who are bound together by the goals set forth in the FREA Mission Statement.

## **Volunteer Services**

This committee encourages volunteerism and the reporting of volunteer hours by all unit members. Any unpaid services to individuals, groups, or entire communities qualify for volunteer hours: tutoring, hospital service, personal help to the disabled, conservation, serving on civic committees and boards. As retired educators and school personnel, we encourage projects that place an emphasis on literacy.

## **Information Services**

This committee provides a comprehensive approach to living in retirement. Using programs, online, and print information, the committee works to enable members to live a healthy, safe, and fiscally sound retirement.

## **Legislative**

This committee seeks to promote state legislation to meet the needs of all Florida Retirement System retirees. This committee communicates with, and supports, the local unit legislative chairs with materials necessary to promote the current FREA Legislative Priorities.

## **Nominating**

This committee is charged with the task of finding qualified candidates to fulfill the positions of elected officers, in both FREA and FREF, in accordance with the FREA Bylaws procedure below:

### Section 9.01

A standing Nominating Committee composed of the immediate Past President, who will serve as Chair, the State Director, the two District Directors on the Executive Committee and one member at large appointed by the incoming President for a two-year term, coinciding with the President's term of office, shall work on a year-round basis to secure candidates to fill vacancies in elective offices. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees to be presented to the Convention. This slate shall be printed in the last issue of the FREA Bulletin published before the meeting of the Delegate Convention. Nominations may be made from the Convention floor provided prior consent of the nominees has been obtained. *(From Anne – I thought that this committee should be more formally outlined as it is so structurally defined.)*

## **By-Laws**

This committee is charged with the task of reviewing the By-Laws in accordance with the FREA Bylaws procedure below:

### Section 15.01 Proposals.

Any member, affiliated unit, or other committee or group of the Association, having any recommendation for changes in the Articles of Incorporation or in these Bylaws, may submit the recommendation for changes in writing to the President, with a copy to the Chair of the Bylaws Committee.

### Section 15.02 Review.

The Bylaws of the Florida Retired Educators Association shall be reviewed for change at least every two (2) years.

## **Special Committee: Benefits**

The FREA Benefits committee is a special committee and meets at the state level only when deemed necessary. This committee's purpose is to study, recommend, and monitor benefits to FREA members. The committee also acts as a liaison between the members and the companies. They ensure nothing goes to the State Insurance Department for consideration without the committee's approval.

## **FREA MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

The primary objective of this committee is to *Recruit/Retain/Reclaim* FREA members. FREA is a unified organization. All Unit members should also be State Members. FREA Benefits are only available to STATE Members. FREA supports unit efforts providing posters, unit specific informational packets, etc. upon request.

### **Responsibilities of STATE Membership Chair**

- Reports directly to President Elect.
- Select District Membership Committee Chairs (2-year term) and notify FREA by Aug 1<sup>st</sup>
- Maintain an accurate contact list of District Membership Committee Chairs.
- Contact District Membership Committee Chairs on a monthly basis. Provide support, guidance and information for them to share with their local units.
- Attend FREA Board of Directors meetings as scheduled.
- Complete reports for Aug & Jan Board of Directors Meetings as well as an Annual Report due April 15<sup>th</sup>
- Maintain active participation with local unit.
- Other duties as stated in FREA Standing Rules

### **Responsibilities of DISTRICT Membership Committee Chair**

- Maintain an accurate contact list of unit membership chairs
- Keep your local unit chairs up to date on your contact information pass any local information changes on to FREA in a timely manner.
- Share information you receive from STATE Membership Chair with your units as directed and in a timely manner.
- Turn in requested reports to the State Chair on time.
- Maintain active participation with local unit.

### **Responsibilities of UNIT Membership Chair**

- Contact newly retired educators in your school district explaining FREA's goals and purposes. A new list of retirees is available from FREA upon request in Dec and July.
- Work with Information Services Chair to convert local only members to unified membership
- Encourage State Only members, i.e., those recruited by AMBA or FRG to join local unit.
- Ensure New Member Registration forms and payment are sent in to FREA in a timely manner.
- Encourage members to support FREA and renew their annual membership early. FREA begins collecting state dues in March. Early renewal saves FREA time and money.
- Report any deceased members to FREA directly. [info@frea.org](mailto:info@frea.org)
- Request Current Member Name and Address labels from FREA Office for Membership Renewals
- Maintain up-to-date list of all Unit Members
- Attend meetings of your local unit and work with the unit president and executive committee to develop and support unit and state activities.
- Work with unit treasurer to ensure FREA has correct contact information for unit members. Members should review and update their contact information annually on the FREA website if possible.
- Complete requested reports and turn in to your District Chair on time.
- Maintain active participation with local unit.

### **FREA/FREF Awards and Opportunities with Membership Component**

- The number of STATE members in your unit as of January 31 of each year will be used to determine awards eligibility as well as the number of delegates for your unit.
- **NEW MEMBER CONTEST** (Jan-Dec)
- **MEMBERSHIP AWARD** – Must show increase in State Membership (Verified by FREA)
- **MEMBERSHIP GRANT PROPOSAL** Due to FREA March 1st

## **FREA VOLUNTEER SERVICES COMMITTEE**

The FREA Volunteer Services Committee encourages FREA members to continue their public service by providing and encouraging opportunities to serve their local communities as retired educators. Local Units are encouraged to participate in FREA statewide projects like The Margaret Poppell Project for Literacy, but Units are also encouraged to create your own service projects and to ask members to track volunteer hours they complete on an individual basis.

*Note: While FREA considers time spent caring for grandchildren, elderly parents, or other family members as very important, these activities are family obligations and would not qualify as volunteer hours.*

**By tracking volunteer hours, you ensure that volunteer programs help to achieve the objectives of FREA.**

### **Responsibilities of STATE Volunteer Services Chair**

- Select District Volunteer Services Chairs (2-year term) and notify FREA by Aug 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Maintain an accurate contact list of District Volunteer Services Chairs.
- Contact District Volunteer Services Chairs on a monthly basis. Provide support, guidance and information for them to share with their local units.
- Attend FREA Board of Directors meetings by invitation of FREA President. Present reports for Aug & Jan Board of Directors Meetings as well as an Annual Report due April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Report directly to President Elect.
- Participate as requested at FREA Convention.
- Maintain active participation with local unit.
- Perform other duties as stated in FREA Standing Rules.

### **Responsibilities of DISTRICT Volunteer Services Chair**

- Maintain an accurate contact list of unit Volunteer Services chairs.
- Keep your local unit chairs up to date on your contact information and pass any local information and/or contact changes on to FREA and the State Chair in a timely manner.
- Contact Unit Volunteer Services Chairs on a regular basis. Provide support, guidance and information for them to share with their members.
- Assist District Director as requested at the District Workshop.
- Review annual data reported to you by local units and send to state chair for compiling by April 1.
- Select one winner for Volunteer of the Year from local submissions. You may wish to do this by committee. Be sure to notify your District winner of his/her selection so that he/she may register for the Convention if not already done so. Report this to State Chair by April 1.
- If you have participating units, select one winner from entries submitted for the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay Contest and report to State Chair April 1<sup>st</sup>. Ensure that the winner's photo is attached.
- Turn in all completed Volunteer Services reports to the State Chair on time by April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Participate in a TBA conference call if arranged by the State Chair.
- Email your contact information to the State Chair by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Contact information should include: Name, Position, Local Unit, District, Address, City/State/Zip, Home Phone, Cell Phone, E-mail
- Maintain active participation with local unit.

### **Responsibilities of UNIT Volunteer Services Chair**

- Encourage members to become volunteers in their communities. Remember to emphasize opportunities that encourage literacy. Keep them informed of opportunities in your local area
- Ask members track their volunteer hours and submit them to you either monthly or annually by the end of February. With Our Youth hours can qualify for an award by AARP, please report them separately if possible.
- Attend all meetings of your local unit and work with the unit president and executive committee to develop and support local volunteer projects.
- Complete the Unit Volunteer Services Report and Unit Volunteer of the Year Nomination form and submit to your District Chair by March 15<sup>th</sup>.

- Encourage 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students, Teachers and Administrators to participate in the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay Contest.
- Complete the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay Contest Cover Page in its entirety with an attached student photo and updated home address.
- Participate in conference calls if arranged by the State Chair.
- Email your contact information to the State Chair by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Contact information should include: Name, Position, Local Unit, District, Address, City/State/Zip, Home Phone, Cell Phone, E-mail
- Maintain active participation with local unit.

### **FREA Information Services Committee**

The Information Services Committee works to increase FREA membership through communication, providing information important to FREA retirees that will improve their quality of life in retirement.

#### **Responsibilities of STATE Information Services Chair**

- Select District Information Services Chairs and notify FREA by August 1.
- Maintain an accurate contact list of District Information Services chairs.
- Contact District Information Services chairs on a regular basis. Provide support, guidance and information for them to share with their local units
- Pass FREA benefit information to District Information Services chairs.
- Cooperate with State Legislative Chair to update members on the Florida Retirement System
- Attend FREA Board of Directors meetings at invitation of the FREA President
- Participate as requested at FREA Convention
- Complete requested reports to President-Elect as requested.
- Maintain active participation with local unit.

#### **Responsibilities of DISTRICT Information Services Chair**

- Maintain an accurate contact list of unit Information Services chairs.
- Keep your local unit chairs up to date on the contact information and pass any local contact changes to FREA in a timely manner.
- Share information you receive from STATE Information Services Chair with your units in a timely manner.
- Assist District Director as requested at the District Workshop
- Complete requested reports and turn in to State Chair as requested.
- Maintain active participation with local unit.

#### **Responsibilities of UNIT Information Services Chair**

- Arrange for Information Services programs and/or handouts at each unit meeting.
- Monitor the FREA website and other sources for new activities and reports that may be shared at unit meetings.
- Share information on FREA benefits and discounts with current and prospective members.
- Work with Membership Chair to convert local only members to unified membership.
- Invite representatives from various organizations specializing in information important to retirees. to present at unit meetings.
- Attend meetings of local unit and work with the unit president and executive committee to develop and support unit and state activities.
- Maintain communication with District Information Services Chair.
- Complete requested reports and turn in to District Chair as requested.
- Maintain active participation with local unit.



## **FREA Legislative Committee**

The Legislative Committee of Florida Retired Educators Association works diligently and cooperatively to inform lawmakers of the needs of its membership to live economically secure and healthy lives. They communicate in an ongoing manner with FREA members, keeping them informed on legislative issues that affect their daily lives.

### **Legislative Priorities:**

The Legislative Chairs will meet at least once a year to review the Legislative Priorities. This list of priorities will include, but not limited to, maintaining benefits for retired school employees: pensions, health insurance subsidy, Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) etc. The priorities will also include the safety of students and maintaining funding for public education.

### **Responsibilities of STATE Legislative Chair**

- Select District Legislative Chairs (2-year term) and notify FREA by Aug 1<sup>st</sup>
- Maintain an accurate contact list of District Legislative Chairs.
- Contact with District Legislative Chairs on a regular basis. Provide support, guidance and information for them to share with their local units.
- Attend FREA Board of Directors meetings by invitation of FREA President. Complete reports for Aug & Jan Board of Directors Meetings as well as an Annual Report due April 15th
- Report directly to President Elect
- Participate as requested at FREA Convention
- Maintain active participation with local unit.
- Perform other duties as stated in FREA Standing Rules

### **Responsibilities of DISTRICT Legislative Chairs:**

- Maintain continuous contact with their local senators and representatives. The goal is to be personally recognized by the elected official.
- Invite elected officials to meet with your district meetings
- Maintain an accurate list of Unit Legislative Chairs.
- Communicate FREA Legislative priorities to the membership through the Unit Chairs.
- Communicate legislative issues that will affect the members. Contact the Unit Chairs to help you.
- Develop questions for state and local legislators/candidates regarding their position on our priorities
- Share legislators/candidates answers to our questions with the membership through the unit chairs. If someone does not answer our questions, we state "they did not respond" to our questions.
- Develop partnership strategies with other organizations that have mutual legislative priorities.
- Encourage the membership to become active on issues pertaining to our priorities through person contact, emails, letters, phone calls etc.
- Assist District Director as requested at the District Workshop
- Participate in annual trip to Tallahassee
- Maintain active participation with local unit.

### **Roles of UNIT Legislative Chairs**

- Maintain continuous contact with their local senators and representatives. The goal is to be personally recognized by the elected official
- Invite elected officials to meet with your local unit meetings
- During election years, have local candidates speak with your membership
- Communicate legislative issues that will affect the members. You will receive notification of these issues.
- Encourage the membership to become active on issues pertaining to our priorities through personal contact, emails, letters, phone calls etc. Some groups have had "writing parties" at their unit meetings.
- Maintain active participation with local unit.

**Annual Trip to Tallahassee:** The Legislative Committee (State and District Chairs) will meet in Tallahassee during session to:

- Personally speak with every Senator (or their aide), concerning FREA's priorities.
- Personally speak with as many Representatives as possible.
- Communicate with other state groups housed in Tallahassee that have our same priority goals (Police, Firefighters, FEA, State Workers, Retired Administrators, lobbyists, AARP, etc.)
- Meet, if possible, with members of State Board of Administrators to hear about the health of our pension plan (FRS)

Since Senatorial Districts/Representative Districts do not match the FREA districts, some of our Legislative Chairs have one or two Senators to meet with. Other District Chairs have more than 12 Senators. If a District Chair has more than 5 Senators (plus Representatives) they need the assistance of one or more legislative people. The number of attendees to the State Legislative Meeting will be determined from year to year.



**Thank You for Being a  
Valuable Part of FREA!**



## **Florida Retired Educators Foundation, Inc. (FREF)**

### **What is FREF?**

The Florida Retired Educators Foundation (FREF) is an autonomous branch of FREA. It is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation chartered by the State of Florida in 1984.

### **FREF Mission Statement**

Awarding scholarships to students majoring in education, grants for current educators' classroom projects, and fiscal assistance to retired educators in crisis.

### **Purpose of FREF**

The purposes for which the Foundation is organized are: (1) to encourage, receive and administer contributions, gifts, bequests, and grants of funds and property for scientific, educational and charitable purposes, and (2) to disburse funds for the above stated purposes.

### **How is FREF Organized?**

The FREF Board of Trustees consists of 10 district representatives (Trustees), who are elected by their district for a three-year term. Each Trustee can serve a total of three terms. The Chair of the FREF Board of Trustees is an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors of FREA.

### **Where does the Foundation get its funds?**

- **Donations for a named scholarship**

Individuals or organizations may donate a minimum of \$10,000 to the Foundation in order to have a named/designated scholarship. The donor can specify how the scholarship can be awarded (i.e. must be awarded to a student from a specific Unit of FREA or a specific District). These donated funds will be invested and when the interest accrued is sufficient to fund a scholarship, one will be awarded. The student is selected in accordance to FREF selection evaluation procedures. Gifts to the Foundation are deductible as charitable contributions on Federal Income Tax returns.

- **Unit Contributions**

Units are required to donate at least \$2.00 per paid local unit member. In addition, units are asked to make annual gifts in memory or honor of individuals. Unit contributions to the Foundation are part of the criteria for earning an annual Certificate of Recognition.

- **Fundraising**

FREF Trustees and local Unit FREF chairs raise funds for the Foundation by selling Extravaganza tickets, fundraisers at the District meetings and activities at the annual FREA Convention (Dollars for Scholars, Country Store, etc.)

### **Responsibilities of the STATE FREF Chair**

- Preside over State FREF Board meetings.
- Attend State FREA Board meetings, as an ex-officio member.
- Provide orientation for new Trustees. **If a District Trustee has not been selected, ensure units are notified of pertinent information.**
- Establish committees and assign committee chairs.
- Stay in constant contact with the Trustees and State FREA Office.
- Maintain active participation with local unit.

### **Responsibilities of DISTRICT Trustee**

- Attend all required state meetings.
- Visit all local units included in the district.
- Share all pertinent information you receive from the FREF Board and FREA with local units—scholarships (process and deadlines), practicing educator grants, financial assistance for retirees in financial crisis, process for receiving a unit award, etc.
- Attend District meetings and deliver current FREF information to all members from the District.
- Complete requested reports and send to FREF Chair.
- Maintain active participation with local unit.

### **Responsibilities of UNIT Scholarship Chair**

- Stay in contact with the District Trustee.
- Keep local unit informed of the purpose of FREF.
- Create fundraising ideas to earn money for FREF, in addition to the sale of Extravaganza tickets.
- Communicate state scholarship information to local high school contacts.
- Form a committee to interview and select a nominee for the state scholarship program.
- Inform local unit about Practicing Educator Grants and assistance for retirees in financial crisis.
- Inform local unit of the criteria for receiving a Certificate of Recognition.
- Maintain active participation with local unit.

# **FREF Scholarships and Grants**

## **Benefitting Past, Present, and Future Educators**

### **FREF Scholarships - Future**

FREF awards scholarships to graduating high school seniors who wish to become teachers. Each FREA Unit may submit one scholarship applicant per year. A second application may be submitted if a Unit has a named scholarship and it is available for that year. Contact the FREA office to check on the scholarships availability.

FREF scholarships pay \$,4000.00, \$1,000 a year. Money is sent to the student not the institution. For each year recipients accept the scholarship, they are required to teach one year in the State of Florida or repay the money at 5% per annum.

Each Unit designates an FREF scholarship chair whose responsibilities include distributing the scholarship application to local high schools, reviewing applications, interviewing applicants, selecting the Unit applicant(s) and submitting the application(s) to FREF. Unit FREF chairs are urged to organize a scholarship committee for this process.

In March, the FREF Board of Trustees reviews and scores applications submitted from all Units in Florida. The number of scholarships awarded in any year is dependent on the amount of funds available in the FREF portfolio. Scholarship recipients receive their funds prior to the fall term of college.

### **Practicing Educator Grant - Present**

Each year FREA awards one or more \$1,000 grants to practicing educators who have a classroom project that needs funding. Applicants submit an application, essay, and letters of recommendation to be considered for the grant. The winners are chosen by the FREF Trustees at the March meeting.

### **Retired Educators in Financial Crisis - Past**

FREA members who are facing a financial crisis due to a catastrophic event may apply for emergency financial aid from FREF. The individual must be a member of FREA for at least five years to be eligible. An application for aid must be submitted to the President of the local unit who will assess the application. After review, the application is sent to the Chair of the FREF Board of Trustees and later to the FREF Board of Trustees to determine merit. If authorized by the FREF Board, a check will be sent directly to the individual. This financial aid is in the form of a gift. If the individual later becomes able and wants to repay the Foundation, a donation or bequest to the Foundation would be appreciated. The local Unit President will receive a confidential report on the outcome of the request. (See Appendix H for the application for Emergency Financial Aid)