



Steps to recruit and retain women officials

Recruiting and retaining women sport officials requires a strategic approach that focuses on outreach, support and development. Here are detailed steps to achieve this

Recruit

1. Targeted outreach

Have clear, targeted and transparent recruitment and selection processes for women wanting to officiate.



Examples: Reach out to women in sports programs, volunteer roles and related fields. Partner with schools and universities to introduce officiating as a part-time job option during sports education classes. Engage with local community groups and sports clubs to identify and encourage women interested in officiating.

2. Awareness campaigns

Create specific marketing and communications materials to highlight the benefits of becoming an official.



Examples: Develop brochures, flyers and social media content highlighting the opportunities and benefits. Share stories of successful women officials to inspire potential recruits.

5. Support

Develop mentoring and support opportunities for women officials specifically.



Examples: Pair new recruits with experienced women officials who can provide guidance and support. Establish support groups or networks for women officials to share experiences and resources.

4. Training and certification

Provide a variety of training opportunities including women only options.



Examples: Offer entry-level training and certification programs specifically designed for women. Provide scholarships or financial assistance for women to attend these programs.

3. Information sessions

Create opportunities to learn more about officiating.



Examples: Organise open houses and information sessions where interested women can learn about officiating roles and ask questions. Invite experienced women officials to speak about their experiences and rewards of the role.

Retain

1. Continuous development



Develop mentoring and support opportunities for women officials specifically.

Examples: Offer ongoing training opportunities to help women officials advance their skills and careers, such as workshops and seminars on topics like leadership, conflict resolution and career advancement.

2. Flexible scheduling



Provide flexible scheduling options to help women balance officiating with other commitments, such as family or other jobs.

Examples: Use scheduling tools to allow officials to easily advise of their availability. Offer part-time roles to accommodate different availability levels.

3. Recognition and rewards



Recognise the contributions of women officials through targeted and ongoing campaigns.

Examples: Provide incentives such as bonuses or additional training opportunities, for outstanding performance. Establish awards to recognise and celebrate the achievements of women officials.

5. Career pathways



Develop clear career pathways for women officials.

Examples: Clearly outline the steps and opportunities for advancement for women. Encourage and support women to take on leadership roles within the officiating community.

4. Supportive environment



Ensure a safe and respectful working environment free from harassment and discrimination.

Examples: Offer access to support services, such as counselling and legal advice, for women facing challenges in their roles.

6. Regular feedback and evaluation



Implement regular feedback mechanisms to understand the needs and concerns of women officials.

Examples: Create opportunities for feedback such as surveys and one-on-one meetings. Conduct regular performance reviews to provide constructive feedback and identify areas for development.

7. Community and family engagement



Think holistically about officials' experiences within your community.

Examples: Implement family-friendly policies, such as providing childcare during training and events. Educate athletes, spectators and others about the roles, responsibilities, respect for and importance of women officials.

8. Inclusive policies



Ensure your club has endorsed gender equity policies in place.

Examples: Implement and publicise gender equity policies that promote inclusivity and support for women officials. Enforce strict policies against harassment and discrimination to ensure a safe environment for women officials.

This summary of steps is from research conducted by La Trobe University, *Enhancing Participation Pathways for Female Sport Officials* (Hoye, R, Kappelides, P, Baxter, H, Grant, M, 2024).

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