

Tennessee Division Sons of Confederate Veterans



Retention & Recruitment Guide

April 2025

PREFACE

The Tennessee Division SCV Recruitment and Retention guide is dedicated to our confederate ancestors and to every compatriot from all walks of life, who devoted their hard work to ensure that the Sons of Confederate Veterans Tennessee Division is successful and recognized as the most prolific confederate heritage organization in Tennessee.

The Tennessee Division Membership Committee undertook a project to develop a guide to address retention and recruitment. This guide provides a wealth of information to assist the camps in their membership growth and membership retention by keeping current members active and involved.

The Division must continue to be steadfast. We must be truly committed to our Confederate Ancestors and to our SCV Charge; be valiant in our vision; be assertive and not retreat from the challengers; be visible and not conceal ourselves from the community; and be proud and not hide our Confederate symbols and imagery in darkness.

To the committee members, I want to express my gratitude for your tireless efforts, insightful contributions, and unwavering commitment. Your expertise, thoughtful discussions, and collaborative spirit were instrumental in achieving the success we see today. Thank you for your invaluable time and dedication, as this project would not have been possible without each and every one of you.

“Nothing fills me with deeper sadness than to see a Southern man apologizing for the defense we made of our inheritance. Our cause was so just, so sacred, that had I known all that has come to pass, had I known what was to be inflicted upon me, all that my country was to suffer, all that our posterity was to endure, I would do it all over again.”
Confederate States of America President Jefferson Davis

Richard L. Garcia
Membership Committee Chairman
TN Division 1st Lt. Commander

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Historical

The SCV is the direct heir of the United Confederate Veterans, and the oldest hereditary organization for male descendants of Confederate soldiers. Organized at Richmond, Virginia in 1896, the SCV continues to serve as a historical, patriotic, and non-political organization dedicated to ensuring that a true history of the 1861-1865 period is preserved.

Sons of Confederate Veterans Tennessee Division Creed

“We, the Sons of Confederate Veterans, carry the honor and legacy of our Confederate ancestors as a faithful reminder of the struggles and sacrifices they bore. We honor their courage, their conviction, and their dedication to their land and principles, all while seeking to inform future generations of the true history of the War for Southern Independence. We pledge to preserve the memory of those who served, not for our sake, but for the sake of the truth so that history may be understood in full, so that our posterity may know their sacrifice, and that the lessons from it may guide us toward a better future. With reverence, we hold fast that every struggle and sacrifice made by our Confederate ancestors carries within it the seeds of truth, and we aim to cultivate that truth with respect, honor, and dedication to the principles which they loved and that made them glorious.”

What is the SCV?

The citizen-soldiers who fought for the Confederacy personified the best qualities of America. The preservation of liberty and freedom was the motivating factor in the South's decision to fight the Second American Revolution. The tenacity with which Confederate soldiers fought underscored their belief in the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. These attributes are the underpinning of our democratic society and represent the foundation on which this nation was built.

Today, the Sons of Confederate Veterans is preserving the history and legacy of these heroes so that future generations can understand the motives that animated the Southern Cause.

Eligibility and Genealogy Services

Membership in the Sons of Confederate Veterans is open to all male descendants of any veteran who served honorably in the Confederate armed forces.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans established a staff of highly trained and qualified volunteers primarily to assist men wanting to join the SCV. This is a free service but limited and is not intended to take the place of people doing their own research. It is intended as assistance to help potential members verify the honorable service of their ancestor and verify their genealogical connection to the qualifying confederate veteran.

If you already know the name of your confederate veteran ancestor, his approximate age, and where he was from, we will search for a record of service and ensure his service was considered to be honorable. For example, did he desert, or did he take the Oath of Allegiance to the U. S. before the end of the war? It is important that you are able to prove your genealogical connection to him.

Charge to the Sons of Confederate Veterans

“To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will commit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier’s good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles which he loved and which you love also, and those ideals which made him glorious and which you also cherish.”

*Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee, Commander General,
United Confederate Veterans,
New Orleans, Louisiana, April 25, 1906*

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, in furtherance of the Charge of Lieutenant General Stephen D. Lee, shall be strictly patriotic, historical, educational, fraternal, benevolent, non-political, non-racial and non-sectarian. The Sons of Confederate Veterans neither embraces, nor espouses acts or ideologies of racial and religious bigotry, and further, condemns the misuse of its sacred symbols and flags in the conduct of same. Each member is expected to perform his full duty as a citizen according to his own conscience and understanding.

RETENTION

The retention of membership is essential in the sustainability of each camp in the Tennessee Division Sons of Confederate Veterans. It's important to look at how many camp members are leaving the SCV each year and address it. We must keep current members involved with an emphasis on creating camaraderie, loyalty, and commitment through various activities and events to guarantee continuous membership in the SCV. This is considered very important for maintaining the SCV's visibility, strength, and ability to forward the SCV Charge, and its mission to preserve the history and legacy of the Confederate soldier, so future generations can understand the motives that animated the Southern Cause.

Key Strategies for Member Retention in a Camp:

Active Leadership

- Prevent and eliminate "in-fighting" from dominating the energy and productivity of the camp. If personal attacks or disrespectful behavior arise, address it immediately.
- Elect and develop a strong leadership team that is dedicated to member engagement and communication that fosters a positive brotherhood atmosphere in the camp.
- Compatriots should always be welcomed by leadership.
- Camps should organize a camp membership committee to discuss membership issues and action plans.
- Member involvement should be encouraged and harvested to create an environment suitable for all members, who come from all walks of life to thrive in the SCV.

Camp Meetings

- Create a good orderly camp. Suggested guidance material to consider is "Roberts Rule of Order" and the SCV Camp Procedural Manual.
- Camps should designate a camp host to introduce visitors to camp members.
- Camp name tags (pin on or magnetic) could be created for camp members and visitors so everyone knows each other's name.
- The tags could be color coded to designate visitors from camp members.
- Have a sign-in sheet for camp members and visitors. Follow up with visitors and members who are consistently not in attendance.
- A convenient meeting date, location and meeting time should be considered for maximum attendance. Start and End time should be consistent. Arrange seating for comfortability, visibility and productivity.

- The camp needs to entertain feedback from camp members and act on it. Showing members that they are an important asset to the camp and that their concerns are valued.
- Camp leadership should take seriously members' ideas, input and appreciate what they bring to the camp.
- The restroom facilities should be tidy and appropriately stocked.
- Make periodic changes in your camp meeting style, do not let the attitude "if it is not broken, why fix it" dominate the atmosphere in the camp.

Some examples to keep members inspired and promote regular attendance are:

- Have an organized meeting and agenda.
- Read and approve the minutes from the last meeting.
- Provide a historical speaker or program that energizes and educates the members.
- Organize structured activity committees.
- Plan camp projects, activities, events.
- Serve coffee, light snacks, or provide other incentives (i.e., giveaways/prizes).
- Have a good meeting location and meeting facilities. The meeting room should reflect your confederate pride. The rooms should have confederate flags, confederate imagery and should be speaker/program friendly.
- Open the meeting room early, to enable men to enjoy confederate banter and connect with each other before the meeting starts.

Member Involvement:

A key reason people are drawn to membership in the SCV is the promise of working to honor confederate soldiers, confederate history, and legacy. Camps with multiple projects can offer more opportunities for involvement at all levels, making members feel they are contributing to an important effort and happy with their decision to join SCV.

- Giving new members an active role in your camp makes them realize an immediate connection.
- Identify the new members' interests and immediately involve them in camp projects.
- Talk to camp members about the potential for future camp leadership positions.
- Offer opportunities for involvement at all levels, making members feel they are contributing to an important effort and happy with their decision to join SCV.
- Make sure each camp member is offered the opportunity to be involved in camp activities, TN Division Grave Guardian program, C.E.R.T., heritage causes, and TN Division and National SCV events.
- All members and guests should walk into a camp meeting where they are welcomed and feel included.

- Camp members should be informed and have the opportunity to support TN Division facilities: Sam Davis Home, Nathan Bedford Forrest Boyhood Home, Bleak House, and Longstreet Museum.

These are important steps in keeping members interested in the SCV. Productive content members help the SCV achieve its goals and keeps membership growing.

Genealogy Assistance

- Provide robust genealogical research support to help camp members continue to trace their Confederate ancestry, making membership more meaningful and personal.

Community Engagement

- Keep members active in the community. Without an opportunity to stay active, camp members will quickly lose interest in the camp and stop coming to camp meetings.
- Organize local events and activities that connect members with their communities, such as historical preservation projects, educational talks, recruitment activities, cemetery headstone clean ups, community service projects and fundraising.

Family Participation

- Encourage family involvement by encouraging spouses, children and all family members to attend. This creates a multi-generational sense of camaraderie and belonging to a camp.
- If applicable, organize a women's auxiliary group for the spouses, cadet program for boys, camp picnics, camp Christmas party, potluck dinners, historical programs for children etc.

Educational Outreach

Member education is a primary means of retaining camp members. Education helps increase a camp's overall retention rate. The more members know about SCV and southern history, the more likely they are to become active members.

Some suggestions:

- In camp meetings, if you don't have a speaker, ask your members to tell their stories about their confederate ancestors.
- Have a confederate accurate video downloaded to serve as a backup program.
- Discuss your community and county's confederate history.
- Offer study programs, and roundtable discussions related to Confederate history that provide accurate information and addresses misconceptions about the true history of the south.

Diverse Activities

- Keep members tuned in.
- Develop a variety of activities and committees that cater to different interests, for example: social media, historical reenactments, newsletters, relic show and tell, C.E.R.T. projects, festivals/parades, fundraising, museum and battlefield tours, social gatherings, volunteer opportunities at SCV facilities and field trips to Elm Springs.

Digital Communication

- Create a camp website, newsletter, and e-mail to regularly inform new, current, and prospective members of what is happening in your camp.
- Maintain a contact list of phone numbers and e-mail addresses for all camp members. Be creative and resourceful when it comes to zoom meetings, social media, and electronic communication.
- A camp website or Facebook group page can serve a variety of communication purposes. If no one in your camp is familiar with how to use new technology and media, consult with the division.

Member Assistance

New members must be well informed about SCV and what's going on with your camp. Make sure you educate new members about the responsibilities of membership.

- Develop an orientation or mentoring program to ensure that new members are not lost due to lack of knowledge.
- Offer assistance to help new members learn camp structure by providing the history of the camp and bio of the camp namesake.
- Provide a "New Compatriot" kit that contains information related to the TN Division/National Constitution, Division and National leadership structure, SCV Camp procedural Manual and list of important Confederate dates.
- Help new members navigate through the TN Division website and through the National SCV website. Help the New SCV member activate their membership in the National SCV website.

Respectful Dialogue

- Respect each camp member's input, it's ok to agree to disagree.
- Be respectful to the speaker.
- Address the sensitive nature of Confederate history openly and responsibly, promoting respectful discussions within the organization.

Important considerations

- Always identify and address reasons why members may not renew their memberships. Never let members feel disconnected from the camp and SCV.
- Conduct exit interview with a member to determine why he decided not to rejoin the SCV.

Awards

Acknowledge hard working members in the camp meeting and submit award nominations to TN Division Award committee.

Collection of dues

- Retention success is based on a timely manner to collect dues. Camp Adjutant should be resilient in this process. They should have good organization, administrative and communication skills. They must have a positive outlook and keep an updated roster with current contact information on each camp member.

Historical Accuracy

- In camp meetings ensure all educational programs and initiatives present a balanced and accurate view of all Confederate history.
- Be mindful and respectful to speakers.

Community Perception

Encourage camp members to be mindful of the public perception of the SCV and actively work to dispel negative stereotypes.

In conclusion, membership retention is an ongoing process that requires constant attention, action, and commitment.

Retaining good camp members is critical to long-term growth and success. Turnover in existing camps is one of the most serious membership issues that the SCV faces.

In addition, experienced and active compatriots play a crucial role in recruiting and retaining new members. The SCV's camps can't prevent natural attrition, but they can minimize its causes and effects by working toward a structured and well-balanced camp membership.

This is not an all-inclusive list. Be sure to update any events or activities relevant to your camp members and their continued involvement in your camp.

“Our ancestors were brave men and women who were not afraid or ashamed to fight for their proclaimed independence. We have no reason to let them look down from Heaven and be ashamed of us for not preserving their memories, history, and Confederate symbols. These symbols must be kept clean from those who in their absolute ignorance, racism, and segregationist hatred deem to use them to divide America and for other nefarious purposes and deeds.

Their spirits linger here in every valley and in every glen, on every hill and on every mountaintop, in every swamp and in every forest. They linger in places like Gettysburg and in fields known but to them and God. Thus let the Battle Flags fly! Let them once again catch the wind! It is the least we can do for our valiant dead. Deo Vindice.”

author John O'Donnell Rosales

RECRUITMENT

Recruiting new members is the lifeblood for the growth of the Tennessee Division Sons of Confederate Veterans. If each camp member were to recruit just one new individual a year, our TN Division membership would double in size every year. A well-structured membership recruitment plan can help attract individuals who align with our Charge and Mission. New members revitalize Division camps by offering new energy and new ideas and thus provide a much greater impact. New member recruitment may seem like a difficult challenge, but it doesn't have to be. There are many things Tennessee members can do in order to attract new compatriots.

This is not an inclusive list as there are many ways to approach recruitment. Here are some viable ideas and approaches from the Membership Committee that can be used to recruit more members. They are grouped into categories. Having camp members involved with recruitment simultaneously helps with member retention. An interested, involved member helping recruit new members is far more likely to continue his current SCV membership.

Recruitment for camps

- Encourage members to bring someone eligible for SCV membership to camp meetings. This should be a re-occurring task so that camp members are continually bringing potential members.
- Network with friends and family to determine who might be eligible for membership. Invite families and friends to camp events.
- Create a camp recruitment packet for guests and prospects.
- Develop a camp recruitment team and a strategic plan for recruitment that works well for your local community. The recruitment team should have a few minutes at every meeting to discuss recruitment activities. Also, thank your camp recruiters regularly.
- Send an email or postcard, or make a phone call thanking guests for attending, and ask them if they're considering membership.
- Reach out to former camp members. Some people might be ready to come back after a break from camp membership.
- If your camp has a newsletter, encourage members to share the newsletter with family and friends.

- Ask camp members for recruitment ideas. They may have an idea you haven't thought of before or know about recruitment opportunities within their own social networks.
- Build a camp website and/or Facebook page to promote your camp.
- Ask for recruitment help and guidance from other camps and from the Division.
- Create and offer camp business cards to your camp members. The cards should contain contact information, meeting times, and meeting dates.
- Offer a different meeting time to attract people with different schedules. Is your meeting time leaving out a whole group of people? Consider switching up your meeting day and time.
- Remind current members to greet and engage with visitors. Make prospective members feel important.
- Conduct exit interviews with departing members. When you know why people are leaving, you can start figuring out ways to keep them in your camp.
- Work with community's churches to clean their cemeteries and this might open the door to potential members.
- Show potential members a scrapbook of your camp's achievements and accomplishments.

Interact With Your Community

- Advertise camp events and meetings in local newspapers & social media. Some examples: Facebook, YouTube, and other social media sites.
- Invite community leaders to camp meetings and events.
- As a nonprofit, establish community service events where students can acquire community service hours, often needed for their college application packets. Examples (acquire parental permission first): the Bleak House, Longstreet Museum, Nathan Bedford Forrest Boyhood home, Sam Davis Home, Elm Springs, and other SCV locations.
- Volunteer the camp to participate in a community event and community service projects that serve a need in the community.
- Customize SCV recruitment material with your camp's name.
- Work with the Boy Scouts and sponsor an Eagle Scout project. Then attach a SCV Camp award to the project.
- Place SCV pamphlets and Confederate Veteran magazines in your community.
- Publicize and invite the public to your camp meetings. Advertise your speaker if he or she agrees.

- Host a community Open House and program for the public regarding local confederate history and historic preservation to the community then weave SCV throughout the program.
- Donate Confederate Veteran Magazines to your local library.
- Honor First Responder's, Veterans, etc., with awards.
- Consider taking a pizza, donuts, etc., to your local law enforcement office.
- Honor an excelling FFA student in your local High School with The General William Hicks Agricultural Award. You can include local farmers, school agricultural teachers, and agricultural advisors.
- Volunteer to give a talk about confederate history about your camp at other like-minded organizations and share our SCV Charge, mission, and activities.
- Establish the SCV Guardian program and C.E.R.T. program in your camp. Then host a community event where you showcase these programs which demonstrate the SCV's commitment to preservation of our ancestors' headstones.
- Reach out to community service organizations, historical societies, civil war round tables, public schools, and home school networks to provide speakers and living historians.
- Walk in a parade or build a float for town parades. You'll put your camp in front of the whole town and look good doing it!
- Stand up a recruitment booth at your local community festivals.
- Have a meeting in a public location like a park or town square. This draws attention and is a low-commitment way for curious potential members to check you out.
- Host a charitable event like a toy drive. You'll raise money for a good cause and introduce your camp to the community.
- Host meet and greet activity at a local coffee shop or donut shop. Invite prospective members to come for coffee, to simply to learn about your camp and meet your members.
- Video member stories and testimonials. Publish them to your camp's social media website, so you can give prospective members a visual reminder of how engaged your current members are with our cause and the SCV Charge.

Marketing Your Camp

- Advertise the SCV National Academic Stand Watie Scholarship to local high schools.
- Post recruitment flyers around town in community bulletin boards and high traffic spots like grocery stores, coffee shops, gun shops, etc.
- Create informational booklets on how 1776 was similar to southern independence in 1861.

- Announce camp meetings in local newspapers, grocery store market flyers, and social media sites. Look for neighborhood and special interest newsletters, whether online or on paper and post your camp meetings.
- Put all Camp, Brigade and Division events and camp meetings on community calendars.
- Add recruitment information to the front page of camp websites and social media sites and attach QR Codes as part of your recruitment tool kit.
- Join the Chamber of Commerce to network with other groups and individuals. The Chamber of Commerce will publish a directory and will list your camp's name.
- Air a recruitment Public Service Ad on local radio station and let the community know about your camp and its events.
- Create an informational Camp brochure about your camp. Include the SCV mission, showcase camp activities, achievements as well as contact information.
- Send media releases to local news outlets when your camp completes a project, presents awards, etc.
- Invite local dignitaries, community officials, historical and genealogy groups to camp meetings and events.

Organizational Recruitment and Miscellaneous Ideas

- Put up a sign at your meeting place during your meeting. It's amazing how many people discover organizations by simply walking or driving past their sign.
- Establish open lines of communication with camp members, other camps, brigades and Division leadership.
- Conduct a camp meeting via Zoom.
- Remove obstacles and barriers to camp attendance. Think about what might stand in the way of someone joining and try to resolve those issues.
- Create a camp bumper sticker and put your camp's name out on the road!
- Create a camp T-shirt.
- Create a fundraiser for membership/recruitment budget. Promotional materials cost money.
- Designate a Membership chairperson in your camp to lead recruitment activities.
- Set a membership goal. A concrete goal encourages members to recruit new people and puts everyone on the same page.
- Talk to other similar organizations and other camps to see how their membership efforts are going, as well as to your own members.

- Coordinate and share costs with other camps to create a recruitment event in your brigade.
- Create a Podcast to inform, inspire, and engage audiences with SCV related material.

Tips for A Successful Recruitment Event

Logo Visibility: Participation with our logo enhances SCV visibility and it attracts people. It demonstrates that the SCV is comprised of good men committed to the SCV Charge and preservation of southern history. It also shows that we engage and invest in our communities. Individuals who have a positive experience at your SCV booth or event are more likely to view our heritage organization favorably and this creates better relations with the community down the road.

Showcasing the SCV: Community activities provide a platform to showcase the SCV's mission. Create a stimulating booth or event that reflects our identity in a positive way. This helps recruits understand what it's like to be a SCV compatriot and whether it aligns with their aspirations and beliefs. This can lead to committed compatriots that are more engaged and active.

Discuss and highlight the following information from the SCV to perspective members:

- Joining the SCV can be a way to pay tribute to and commemorate the history, service and sacrifices of their Confederate ancestors who fought in the War between the States in 1861-1865 time period. This often involves hosting and participating in events like memorial services, reenactments, monument preservation, and understanding the motives of the Southern cause is important for future generations.
- Educational Outreach: Some SCV camps engage in educational efforts to teach the public about the War between the States, its causes, and its impact on American history. They may sponsor lectures, living history presentations, and other educational activities.
- Historical Research: SCV members often engage in historical research to better understand the lives and experiences of their Confederate ancestors. This research can lead to a deeper appreciation of history and heritage.
- Fellowship and Community: Joining an SCV camp can provide a sense of community and fellowship with like-minded individuals who share an interest in Confederate history. It offers opportunities for social interaction and camaraderie.
- Preservation of Monuments and Memorials: Some SCV camps are actively involved in the preservation and maintenance of Confederate monuments, cemeteries, and other historical sites.

- **Advocacy and Legal Support:** In some cases, the SCV has been involved in legal battles to protect Confederate heritage, such as the defense of Confederate symbols and monuments. Joining a camp may involve participating in such advocacy efforts.
- **Participation and Preparation is Key:** Plan and organize your recruitment booth setup, bring promotional materials, fundraising items, Confederate Veteran magazines, camp flag or camp banner, tabletop display board showing photos of your activities, and reference materials. Create QR codes and establish talking points to make the case about the SCV and its mission.
- **Engage Openly:** Interact with potential recruits, ask open-ended questions, ask if they have a Confederate ancestor, listen actively to their responses, talk about their confederate heritage and connect with them.
- **Collect contact information:** Have a system in place to collect and organize names, telephone numbers and email.
- **Provide Information:** Provide locations of the camps in Tennessee Division, provide TN Division, National and camp website addresses, and explain the application process. Very important! - inform them that the SCV will provide free genealogy services to find a confederate ancestor. If you have the availability of a Division, National, or camp genealogist, have him on site. You might also include a QR Code at your booth that directs them to the Tennessee Division website.
- **Be Approachable:** Maintain a friendly and approachable attitude to create a positive experience.
- **Follow Up:** This is important, after the event, be assertive and follow up with promising recruits within a couple of days to inform them about meeting time and meeting location.
- **Lastly - do not overlook the young men.** If a family stops by your booth, explain the Cadet program to the young recruit and his parents. With their permission, consider offering him a recruitment coin. These may be purchased in bulk from Headquarters at low cost. These young men will become the leaders of our organization tomorrow.

RECRUITMENT PACKET







WHAT IS A RECRUITMENT PACKET?

A Recruitment Information Packet is a compilation of all the information a potential new member needs to join the Sons of Confederate Veterans TN Division.

WHO GETS YOUR RECRUITMENT PACKET?

A recruitment packet should be given to interested individuals who want to join the Sons of Confederate Veterans as a member or join as “A Friend of SCV.”

RECRUITMENT PACKET ESSENTIALS:

-  Camp Business/Contact card/Camp Cover letter
-  “Discover Your Confederate Heritage” SCV application pamphlet
-  “An informative Guide to Confederate Heritage in the State of Tennessee” pamphlet
-  Elm Springs rack card
-  Confederate Veteran Magazine
-  SCV License Plate/TN Confederate Facts rack card.

In conclusion, we are all proud SCV members. The growth and the success of the Tennessee Division squarely lies on the shoulders of ALL compatriots. The state of Tennessee is full of promising candidates, and participating in recruitment efforts can generate a whole new pipeline of quality recruits for our division.

“Duty is ours; consequences are God's” - Stonewall Jackson

Tennessee Division Membership Committee

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Tennessee Division Sons of Confederate Veterans

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