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The National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest professional employee organization, is committed to advancing the cause of public education. NEA's nearly three million members work at every level of education—from pre-school to university graduate programs. NEA has affiliate organizations in every state and in more than 14,000 communities across the United States.

Who to Contact:

Year-Round Organizing: YRO@nea.org

Data and Analytics: datahelp@nea.org

Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy:
collectivebargaining@nea.org

Why Attend a Career Fair?



Build Relationships:

Connect future educators with union communities and resources before their very first day on the job.



Gather Data:

Collect personal contact information from future hires for later engagement.



Define Our Union:

Show future educators that our union is there for them—we are where they find support and a voice in the workplace.



Build Capacity:

Engage Early Career Educators, Aspiring Educators, Member Organizers, and member leaders in an organizing project.

By consistently showing up for potential members, even before their first day on the job, we show that our union offers more than protection in the workplace. We are a strong, aspirational community of educators, working toward a bold vision for public education that lifts up every single student.

Preparing for the Career Fair

Finding a Career Fair

Identify the top credential-producing institutions in your state. Locate their career services office online for event schedules, registration information, and contacts. It can help to choose schools with strong Aspiring Educator chapters. Student leadership can help you navigate the school bureaucracy and work the table!

Registering for a Career Fair

Find the university's career office online to get a schedule, contact person, and registration link.

Explain who you are—these offices mainly interact with employers like school districts and charter school operators, so tell them about our values and our mission.

Identify Your Team

The best organizers of future first-year educators are new educators. If your state has a formal Early Career Educator group, reach out to their leadership and ask for volunteers. Build a team that will reflect the diverse community of future educators you will meet! If possible, also recruit alumni from the college or university hosting the career fair who are current union members.

This is a great opportunity for your Member Organizers. And don't forget to connect with the Aspiring Educator or Higher Education chapter on campus to inform them of your participation and ask for volunteers!

Publicize!

- Let your members and the community know you'll be there and offer opportunities to volunteer.
- If there is an Aspiring Educator chapter on campus, ask them to promote the event on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat.

Gather Your Materials

- Bring along any helpful resources or flyers that may be relevant to future educators, including student debt information and professional development for state licensing tutoring.
- [NEA's Interview Tips for Prospective Teachers](#)
- Consider bringing branded union materials for folks you meet at your table!
- Prepare a QR code for your state's Year-Round Organizing Data Card.

Train your Tablers

Use the sample script on the next page to help your tablers prepare for the career fair.

Plan Future Engagement

How will you engage these future educators as they move through their career? Take a look at the timeline on page 7 for more ideas. Could events or programs your state and local already does be modified to accommodate future educators? How could the data gathered through the Year-Round Organizing Card support this work?

Career Fair Conversations

A Transformational Approach

When talking to future educators, don't forget to say **HELLO!**

H Hey There!

Get their attention with a simple greeting or question.

E Engage.

Go deeper: "What are you most excited about for your first year of teaching?" or "What made you decide to become a teacher?"

L Listen.

Ask open-ended questions. For example, "What are you most anxious about for your first day? Where do you see yourself in 5 years?"

L Link.

Connect their priorities to the work of NEA and your state and local. "I'm so glad to hear that you're excited to serve our students. At NEA, we offer training and professional development to help us be the incredible teachers our students deserve."

O Organize!

Encourage them to fill out the Year-Round Organizing Card.

"We're here to stand with you for your whole career. Would you take a moment to fill out this card? We'll keep in touch with helpful resources* for future educators."

**What other opportunities do you have to engage this person? Is there a panel discussion on campus that they could come to? Is there a training they could attend? Consider planning an event virtually or in-person to promote at the career fair and hand out invitations to those who complete a YRO card.*

Tips for Tabling

1. Engage with a smile, wave, ask questions designed to get a conversation going.
2. Focus on those who are interested! If people are interested, engage them: figure out how our union can support them where they are.
3. Present a good image: keep it positive and look happy! Never table alone, and decorate the table in a way that shows who we are.
4. Don't be afraid to move—if people aren't coming to you, go to them! Bring flyers or cards to pass out.
5. Direct people to the YRO Card. Gathering contact information will allow us to reach out later!

Career Fair Conversations

Research-Informed Engagement

Tailor your messaging to future educators with data from the 2022 NEA Aspiring Educators Bi-Annual Survey. Keep in mind that depending on the strength of the school's Aspiring Educator (AE) chapter, there may be a large proportion of students who are not AEs.

Center student-focused advocacy—84% of AEs are likely to take on an activist role for their students, compared to 77% on education issues, and 70% on racial/social justice issues.

Engage on Student Debt

62% of Aspiring Educators have taken out student loans, but 43% are unfamiliar with Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF). Consider highlighting NEA's advocacy efforts on PSLF to appeal to this group by sharing one of the many NEA resources on student debt relief for members.



Of the 25% of Aspiring Educators who are not likely to join a union such as NEA...

40% believed that unions don't make a difference in working conditions or salary

33% said that unions don't offer enough training and professional development

Emphasize professional development opportunities and state and local wins to appeal to this group! Aspiring Educators, like their more experienced colleagues, need believe that their union will make a difference in their working conditions and support their professional growth. Be prepared to share examples of how it does.

What are AEs interested in?

62%

Training on trauma-informed practices

60%

Mentoring for new educators

59%

Help with job placement

59%

Help with online certifications

59%

Support for addressing social justice issues

What opportunities does your state or local offer to meet these needs?

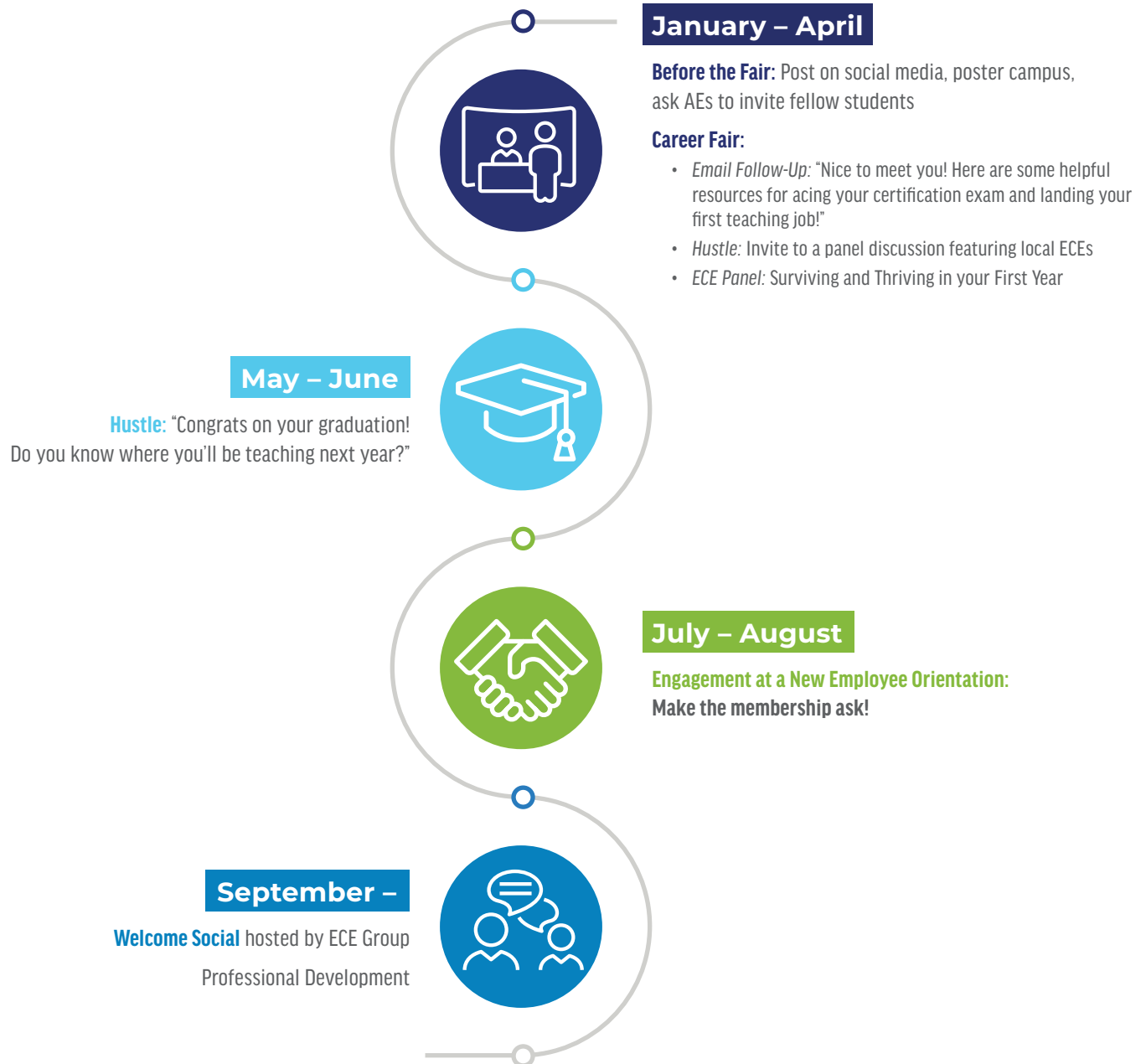
The Big Picture

Career Fairs in a Strategic Organizing Campaign

Career fairs are typically held in the winter, so they are the perfect opportunity to engage new leaders and activists identified during your fall Year-Round Organizing Campaign! Use the career fair to train new folks on Transformational Organizing Conversations in preparation for your spring Early Enrollment Campaign.

In order to maximize their likelihood of joining, be sure to stay in touch with the future educators from career fairs throughout the spring and summer, and blend engagement seamlessly into your Early Career Educator organizing efforts.

A Timeline of Engagement



*Don't have an Early Career Educator group? ECE groups grow union membership and build organizing capacity by training and empowering new educators. Check out [this helpful guide](#) on starting an ECE group for your affiliate!