Five Main Membership Focus Areas

Increase General Membership

- Encourage members to invite children to participate in lodge activities and to ask them to consider joining regular or junior membership
- Develop pamphlets/brochures with information about your lodge, and distribute them to churches, other organizations, chambers of commerce, Italian restaurants, etc.
- Contact Universities: Visit Italian Clubs, advertise in school papers, contact language instructors
- Contact Italian restaurants for key Italian-Americans in the neighborhood
- Communicate and cooperate with other Italian-American organizations such as Dante Alighieri Society, Columbian Lodges, and California's CIAO (Coalition of Italian American Organizations)
- Send out mailings to Italian-American groups and individuals with details representing lodges contributions to their community (scholarship awards, spaghetti dinners, wine tasting events, help with family record searches, etc.)
- Develop PowerPoint presentations tailored to new members for local lodge or state membership drives (or use one of the presentations provided by the MC and customize it for your state or lodge)
- Offer incentives for new members or for members who bring new members in: reduced dues for the first year, free tickets to the next two lodge events, etc.
- Encourage council members to be more visible in communities: radio morning talk shows and chamber of commerce "business after hours" types of events
- Encourage lodges to budget for advertising for new members by sending mailings or doing one of the above activities
- Conduct local fundraising events like picnics, spaghetti dinners, etc. and invite key Italian-American community leaders as guests
- Encourage grand and local lodges to share "what works" for their lodges (and provide that feedback to our membership commission)
- Pole existing members to get their input on how to increase membership in their lodge
- Contact past members, and share with them advancements and changes in the lodge since they left
- Host cultural events such as bocce and morra competitions or demonstrations, open them to the public, and have members invite a friend to participate
- Develop packets with brochures, schedules of events, mission statements, etc. to send to potential members
- Suggest to members that they give the gift of a membership for a friend or family member
- Develop recognition and appreciation programs and advertise them and invite locals to participate in them, such as veteran/military recognition and Columbus Day honorees
- Host membership drives at Italian Restaurants or at lodges with member-provided covered Italian dishes
- Give scholarship recipients membership free for one year and for the cost of per capita while they are in school

- Work with local businesses such as pizza restaurants who deliver to put OSDIA notices on pizza boxes for advertising. Show contact information and a brief summary of OSDIA lodges in that area

Start New Lodges

- Contact Universities: Visit Italian Clubs, advertise in school papers, contact language instructors
- Develop PowerPoint presentations with bullet items – Discuss details as you present it to perspective members (or use one provided by MC on osia.org)
- Offer incentives for new lodges such as Grand Lodge or National offering a $financial$ credit for new lodges to use on regalia, per capita, etc.
- Contact Italian restaurants for key Italian-Americans in the neighborhood
- Poll current members in the area to get the names of friends or relatives in the area you are trying to start a lodge
- Ask members if they would like to start a new lodge for any reason (driving distance to meetings, moving to another area, etc.)
- Contact other Italian-American organizations such as Dante Alighieri Society, Columbian Lodges, and California's CIAO (Coalition of Italian American Organizations) and offer to do presentations
- Send out mailings to Italian-American groups and individuals with details representing lodges contributions to their community (scholarship awards, spaghetti dinners, wine tasting events, help with family record searches, etc.)
- Share a list of benefits from OSIA/OSDIA web and from state and local lodge sources

Increase Member Retention

- Publish a newsletter with a calendar of events, and share newsletters from neighboring lodges and the grand lodge
- Have food at meetings
- Streamline general meetings to get to the "fun" stuff, such as tarantella lesson or a guest speaker
- Ask members to share at meetings what it means to them to have Italian roots
- Facilitate a formal or informal goalsetting session with as many members as possible to see what will keep them engaged
- Offer more "fun" events for members, and don't just expect them to work dinners, festivals, etc.
- Engage members as soon as possible by getting them on committees where their interests are: entertainment, culture, genealogy, etc.
- Ask members to share their family history and genealogy information – in smaller communities you find out a lot about family ties
- Periodically share a list of benefits from the national and other websites, and from state and local lodge sources
- Delegate duties beyond officers and committee chairs, e.g. giving the lead to members with particular interests, such as assigning someone to chair a major raffle (with the

appropriate licensee and certified individuals) for something they are interested in (e.g. guns, electronics, or travel raffles)
- Offer an "idea" box with prizes for selection and implementation of their suggestion: half off of annual dues, tickets to the next wine tasting, etc.
- Tailor a PowerPoint presentation to refresh members knowledge of OSIA
- Present periodic website demonstrations to members, showing them their benefits as a member, such as Office Depot/Office Max savings, savings on purchases such as posters, travel discounts, etc.
- Highlight one member or family periodically
- Ask state presidents to direct their deputies to be more engaged with the lodges by having them take information and questions and concerns back and forth
- Utilize State Deputies to share information from the State or National levels, or to respond to questions members may have about the Grand Lodge or the National Organization
- Invite guest speakers for Italian enrichment, such as Italian language students and professors, and Italian exchange students

Increase Younger Members

- Use pertinent tools from the rest of this document, but adapt tools to address younger folks: picnics with a softball game of young vs old, beer tasting with mostly IPA beers (trendy right now), etc.
- Share family genealogy information with younger members, including their own families to get that "I didn't know that!" response
- Offer to share the task of genealogy research with them as a member
- Develop a PowerPoint presentation specific to younger members, including offering them ways to help them start their own lodge
- Contact Universities: Italian Clubs, advertise in school papers, contact language instructors
- Poll young Italian-Americans to see what would bring them into the lodge or keep them
- Offer cooking lessons and wine appreciation sessions for younger members
- Discuss the values related to their heritage and culture passed on to young Italian-Americans by their families and friends
- Use incentives such as sharing Italian culture with and awarding scholarships to their children
- Engage scholarship recipients at all local, state and national levels to play a role in a local lodge
- Offer membership "deals" to scholarship recipients while in student status, such as half off of membership and special recognition at fundraising and other events

Start Junior / Youth Program

- Remind lodge presidents and membership committees that our bylaws provide for Junior Members (Article 19 of our General Laws)
- Encourage junior members to meet periodically outside of general meetings to discuss suggestions they may have for the lodge
- Provide cooking, genealogy, etc. workshops for youth and their parent/grandparent/sponsor
- Give youth members tasks to complete at fundraisers and community events (that are not adult only, like wine tasting), such as selling merchandise or candy bars, and conducting surveys with members and non-members
- Issue them a shirt and hat with a unique designation that identifies them as lodge members
- Give them an opportunity to "work off" their dues payment for the year by working events
- Respect and acknowledge their contributions