Fact sheets about your organization and public policy issues can be effective tools for your Retired Educators Association (REA) and aid in your strategic interactions with policy-makers, legislative staff, the news media, current and potential members and other stakeholders. A well-developed fact sheet will speak in your REA’s voice and summarize who you are, what you stand for, the value you bring to your members and the community at large, and/or your position on important policy matters. Fact sheets can be used in a variety of ways – as leave-behinds following legislative visits, educational materials for news reporters and a tool for new member or volunteer recruitment.

KEY FEATURES

✓ Given their multiple applications, DO have a specific purpose in mind when developing your fact sheet. Who is your audience? Are you attempting to provide a summary of your REA, to recruit new members, or to impact a policy debate?

✓ DO include your organization’s name, address, contact information, website and social media sites.

✓ DO include your REA’s mission statement that reflects who you are, what you do and why. For help in crafting your organization’s mission statement, please review the “Mission Statement” section in NRTA’s Image and Branding fact sheet.

✓ DO mention your power by highlighting how many members your REA has and/or how many teachers, both active and retired, live in your district/state. These numbers will serve to show your clout in the community and the votes you can bring to bear.

✓ DO highlight your REA’s community service and volunteerism. Your REA’s good works in the community are a selling point for both attracting new members and for influencing policy-makers. Consider highlighting specific community service projects, volunteer hours, etc.

✓ DO include additional information pertinent to your organization, like when your REA was founded, the number of local units, your nonpartisan, non-union status, etc.

✓ DO provide a specific point of contact or contacts for your REA. Consider listing the contact information for your leadership and/or legislative chairs, depending on the fact sheet’s purpose.
Tips for Developing Effective Fact Sheets

**LAYOUT & LOOK**

There are many potential layouts for an effective fact sheet and a simple Internet search on “fact sheet templates” will provide a host of ideas. There are, however, some common layout tips.

✔ DO try to keep your fact sheet to one page, with front and back printing if necessary. Try to limit any text-heavy areas of your fact sheet.

✔ DO highlight your top three to five message points from the body of the fact sheet. Bullet them at the top or along the side of your fact sheet. Pulling out your main points will allow readers to quickly access your most important messages and information.

✔ DO consider using photographs of teachers/members and color(s) to enhance the look of your fact sheet and to make them more appealing. Glossy printing, if economically feasible, should also be considered.

✔ DO include your organization’s logo.

**MESSAGING**

✔ DO determine and use your most powerful organizational and public policy messages in your fact sheet. For help determining your organization’s most powerful messages, please review the “Five Steps to Powerful Messages” section in NRTA’s *Image and Branding* fact sheet.

✔ For messaging on public pensions:

  ✔ DO focus on the earned nature of public pension benefits. Teachers have paid into the system on time and in full over their entire working careers and earned their financial security in retirement. Take every opportunity to remind legislators and the public of this fact.

  ✔ DO highlight the positive economic impact public pensions have on the state and local economies and taxpayers. The AARP/NRTA/NIRS State Facts sheets, as well as NIRS’ *Pensionomics 2014 report*, are wonderful resources that can help you show the positive impact that public pension benefits have on state and local economies, job creation, tax revenues, and in preventing costs associated with employee turnover.

✔ DO talk about the dedication of teachers who spent their whole careers serving others and their communities, often taking money out of their own pockets to help their students learn.

✔ DO talk about the fact that all hard-working Americans should have a secure retirement and that there is broad public support for the financial security afforded by pensions.

✔ DO avoid using partisan or political rhetoric that could undermine the impact of your fact sheet.

✔ DO cite and hyperlink to any credible research that supports your views.

✔ DO check your facts. Nothing can undermine your message and even your organization like an incorrect or overstated claim.

**WHERE TO FIND STATE-BASED INFORMATION**

✔ AARP/NRTA/NIRS state fact sheets. These fact sheets provide state-specific data on your public pension system(s) and the positive impact pension benefits have on the economy, job creation and tax revenue. Please contact NRTA staff if you haven’t received your state fact sheets.

✔ National Institute on Retirement Security’s (NIRS) *Pensionomics 2014 report*, which also looks at the economic impact of spent benefits from pensions and also has state-by-state data.

✔ NRTA Pension Education Toolkit – *State-by-State Facts and Figures*.

**ADDITIONAL HELP**

✔ DO reach out to us! NRTA is here to help and we’re happy to be a resource for you on all of your advocacy-related endeavors!