

Branch Contacts, Branches Email List Liaisons, and Branch Leaders (2/22 revision)

There sometimes is some confusion about the difference between being branch leaders, the branch **contact** (who is listed on the branches page of the WILPF US website), and the branch **liaison** (who receives – is “on” – the branches email listserve).

Branch *leadership* works with the rest of branch members to identify who is able to serve in each of these roles: branch leaders, a branch contact, and a branch liaison. Preferably, such responsibilities change over time and are distributed among a diverse group of the branch members.

Both the liaisons and the contacts are part of the WILPF US communications structure, with the liaisons accessing the Branches Listserve and the contacts accessed by those referring to the WILPF US website Branches page.

WILPF US has a variety of communications tools, including email listserves (also called listservs), the website, the (electronic) newsletter, email alerts, the WILPF US pages on social media, paper mailings, and phone calls. **We urge all WILPF members to provide their email addresses to national WILPF** so that they can receive directly the electronic newsletter, email alerts.

For more information about WILPF US communications tools, contact the Secretary (secretary@wilpfus.org), the President (president@wilpfus.org), or another WILPF US Board member (listed on the website).

The Branches Listserve

The primary function of the Branches Listserve (or Branches List) is for national WILPF and branches to be able to relay WILPF news and information plus branch action items and announcements. Besides the branch **liaisons**, others on the Branches Listserve include representatives for the national issue committees, the national standing committees, and WILPF Board members.

It's important to realize that *only those “on” the branches listserve can post to it.*

In order to communicate with the *entire listserve*, address your email *specifically to the listserve address*: wilpf-branches@groups.electricembers.net.

Please note: The branches listserve is far from the *only* way branch members can get info about the One WILPF calls and other *national* WILPF activities.

We urge all WILPF members to provide their email addresses to national WILPF. (About 75% of WILPFers *do so*, and that's quite helpful.) In this way, members can will receive the WILPF US emails, including the valuable monthly electronic newsletter, plus the occasional alert emails about the One WILPF calls, WILPF action or information items on other national activities, and other time-sensitive information items.

Branch Liaisons

The branch liaison passes along to their interested branch members announcements distributed via the WILPF US branches email listserve. Because only a limited number of WILPF members receive the Branches Listserve, **branch liaisons**

are the key connection for the listserv information to reach the rest of their branch members.

The liaison should be someone who will **read the listserv emails regularly and can pass pertinent information along to the branch, including last minute announcements** (which, inconveniently, we do have!). So the liaison should understand what is likely to be valuable to the branch or to certain branch members. Forwarding of branches listserv emails is one way to communicate listserv information to branch members.

Receiving and relaying the info posted on the Branches list is important! Each branch should have *someone* – possibly two people – who serves as liaison, getting and reading the emails on the branches listserv.

Additionally, the liaison may “post” to the branches listserv by emailing to the list any branch announcements or other information of *broad WILPF* interest. Only listserv members can post to the listserv. **To post WILPF-specific broad branch/member interest items** to this listserv, liaisons, **send an email to wilpf-branches@groups.electricmembers.net**. (This address is also provided at the *very end* of each listserv post.)

Remember – every email sent to the branches listserv goes to the *entire listserv*. Also, **due to a recent 2021 change in the branches listserv**, the email address of the sender – *your email address* – will be visible to the entire list

The liaison can also respond to questions posted to the branches listserv. Due to the 2021 listserv change, anyone who seeks to reply to a listserv post will reply *only* to the person who made the post. (We ask you to avoid “reply to all” unless you are clarifying the announcement or otherwise adding information that is relevant to many of those on the listserv. A reply to all will go to the entire listserv – adding to the emails that liaisons should read.)

Also, if you make a listserv announcement *please indicate* the contact information (phone and/or email address) for the person with more information, so inquiries about that announcement can go to that person, if it’s not you. Again, because *only those on the branches listserv can post to it*, giving such contact info allows for wider communication, as needed.

As the person who passes along useful information from the listserv to the branch members, the liaison should have a sense of what is likely to be valuable information for the branch and that should be shared. The liaison might find it useful to simply forward some information-filled listserv emails to branch members.

Branch Contacts

A very different role is being a branch contact. The contact is the person others *first* reach out to in order to connect locally with WILPF, so it is important that the branch contact be welcoming and friendly – as well as responsive.

The branch contact is volunteering to occasionally receive emails and, preferably, also phone calls from individuals who want to communicate with the branch and/or attend a branch meeting. Those individuals could be WILPFers newly moving into town, other branches wanting to do a collaborative event, or someone at the national level with questions for or about the branch.

The branch name, email, and phone number (ideally) for the **contact** is listed in the Branch Directory and the map of branches on the WILPF US website “Branches” webpage. The Contact should respond quickly to any inquiries.

If the contact has a change in email address or phone number, the contact should be sure to notify the branch leadership *and* the WILPF office (info@WILPFUS.org) ASAP. (Another branch member should *please* notify the WILPF office if the contact cannot or does not quickly do so.)

Branch Leaders

The branch leaders are chosen by the branch members, through a democratic process. Every branch is required to have a treasurer. Some branches have one or more chairs, presidents, secretaries, etc. Other branches have a leadership team. The term of office for branch leaders is established by the branch, and it is important that such responsibilities change over time and are distributed among a diverse group of the branch members.

Conclusion and Summary of Branch Roles

One need not be (but *might* be) a branch **leader** in order to be a **contact** or a **liaison**. Also, one person might be both the contact and the liaison. However, whenever possible, it is far preferable to **distribute these various roles among different branch members**.

The Branch **Liaison** (for relaying information from and to the Branches Listserve)

1. **Receives and reads** all branches listserv emails.
2. **Relays listserv information to their branch**, based on their knowledge of branch interests.
3. **Posts to the listserv branch announcements** or other WILPF-specific information of broad branch/member interest.

Note: Liaisons are able to *post* to the Branches Listserv only because they are *on* that listserv. Anyone *not* on the Branches Listserv is not able to post to it.

The Branch Leaders

1. **Facilitate the functioning of the branch**, in accordance with WILPF US Principals and Policies and Bylaws. (Available on our webpage.)
2. **Respond to occasional inquiries and contacts from WILPF US** – with branch input.
3. **Make sure the branch notifies and/or contacts the national office to about changes** in branch positions and contact information: leaders, liaisons, contacts.
4. **May be listed on our website on the branches page, with their permission, if WILPF US opts to do so.**

The Branch Contact

1. **Is listed** on our website on the branches page.

2. **Promptly responds** to occasional contacts or simple inquiries about the branch.
3. **Directs inquiries** to the branch leadership if more information, action, or response is needed.
4. **Does not** get *routine* branch emails or announcements from WILPF US (but we *do* request that branch Contacts provide an email address in order *to receive* occasional national WILPF inquiries *for the branch*).

(Contacts – like all WILPF members, as part of their WILPF US membership information – are *also* encouraged to provide their email addresses, in order to receive the eNews and eAlerts.)

For more information about WILPF US operations, roles, structures, and communications tools, contact the Secretary (secretary@wilpfus.org), the President (president@wilpfus.org), or another WILPF US Board member (listed on the website).