

How to participate in National Truth in Recruiting Day

Any of the “ACTIVITIES” listed here are great ways to participate in IVAW’s Truth in Recruiting campaign, but on September 17, we’re asking you make your presence known where the military is present in your community: at the recruiter’s offices. We’re not asking much. All you have to do is print out a few copies of our official flier, stand in front of the recruiter’s offices and give them to anyone who looks like a potential recruit. The goal is to initiate conversation, engage them about what is on the flier, and make them think about why they are considering joining. You can also print out one of the “IVAW WARNING” signs to make your point more clear.

When you start talking to a potential recruit, the most important thing is to ask the right questions and listen to what their issues are and what is motivating them to join the military. Marine Corps recruiters employ a similar strategy with what they call “benefit tags.” The tags are eleven plastic cards with eleven different reasons for joining engraved on them. The six “intangible” benefit tags are 1: Pride of Belonging, 2: Self-Reliance, Self-Direction and Self-Discipline, 3: Professional Development and Opportunities, 4: Leadership and Management Skills, 5: Challenge, and 6: Courage, Poise and Self-Confidence. The five “tangible” benefit tags are: 1: Technical Skills, 2: Physical Fitness, 3: Educational Opportunities, 4: Financial Security, Advancement and Benefits, and 5: Travel and Adventure.

The potential recruit is asked to pick their three most important benefits and then the recruiter can give them a targeted sales pitch. We can use the same technique in Truth in Recruiting. The easy part is pointing out the weaknesses in the military’s ability to provide those benefits. The hard part is coming up with options. Some counter-recruiting organizations focus on this, but the amount of information can be overwhelming, both to the person trying to convey it all and the potential recruit. For more information about this higher level of Truth in Recruiting, check out some of the links at the bottom of the page for Non-Military Options for Youth and American Friends Service Committee.

Some recruiter’s offices are in malls and certain areas where the area out front may be private property. If you are asked to leave, you may be risking arrest if you stay there. If it is public property, police may harass you on the grounds that you are, “obstructing the sidewalk.” It is happening to protestors these days with an annoying frequency. You are welcome to resist to whatever degree you think is appropriate, but do not forget that the point of National Truth in Recruiting Day is not to get arrested or make a scene, but to inform. We will cut through the lies of this administration with those whom they affect the most.