To: Officials Chapter Executive Boards

From: Mark Bitar, NJSIAA Officials Recruiting Coordinator

Date: August 1, 2022

RE: Cadet Courses

Great news to share! As you know, there is a severe shortage of officials in our state and in the country overall in virtually all sports. This past year, we piloted a new program for recruiting individual officials in football and the results were remarkable! Our first action was to gain alignment from all four of our NJFOA Chapters to work together to address this critical issue by taking the following steps:

* Developing a strong social media presence
* Updating/enhancing all Chapter websites to make them more useful and user-friendly
* Updating/streamlining the registration processes
* Developing new initiatives in the cadet classes

The good news is that by completing just a first-phase implementation of these few action items, we were able to increase our cadet registrations by 500% year-over-year for 2022! This was just the beginning; we can and will do more, but you can do the same in your sport!

To completely fulfill our new official recruitment objects, we need your assistance in following the steps outlined below:

1. **Cadet/New Official Course**
* If you offer the course once a year, please open the registration 11 months in advance. For example, if a course starts in March 2024, open the registration for that course in April 2023.
* Allow for the cadet course to be able to be livestreamed so cadets have the option of coming in person or online. This will allow for better attendance at the classes along with allowing flexibility for certain cadets especially those that are traveling from far distances. (Some offer a fully online course which is great too!)
* Promote this information on Social Media outlets, in particular Twitter and Instagram.
* Include the link to register a cadet in the social posts that are made. From there, ask your membership to “follow you” on these social platforms, along with coaches, teams and schools. This will enable you to get the word out regarding your course. Examples of this can be found on Instagram and Twitter by following these handles: @NJFOA\_North, @NJFOA\_Central, and @NJFOA\_South.

1. **Website**
* If your Chapter does not have a website, please start the process of creating one.
* Ensure you have a direct link on your official Chapter website to register for your cadet course.
* Provide the dates, location, and requirements for the course on the website.
* Allow for online registration directly on the website and, if possible, allow for online payments through a credit card.

To keep pace with the level of attrition, we need to continuously be exploring new and innovative ways to generate the interest of new and younger applicants. Our recent successes have shown that implementing these steps do just that.

To help us in the recruiting process, the NJSIAA is providing financial assistance in the form of a rebate of $300 to all new officials during the 2022-2023 school year once the following steps have been completed:

1. Pass their cadet course and final test
2. Register with the NJSIAA
3. Pass NJSIAA background check
4. Take Concussion Course
5. Pass NFHS test on Zebraweb with a score of 80% or higher
6. Is in good standing with the Sport Chapter

Once a cadet has accomplished the above six items, the local Chapter will send an email to Tony Maselli (tmaselli@njsiaa.org) listing the new officials who are ready to officiate in the 2022-2023 school year. The NJSIAA will then issue payment directly to the officials using ZebraPay.

To begin this process, please complete the form that appears from the link below regarding your cadet/new official training course and status. It is a quick and easy way to get started. <https://www.njsiaa.org/form/chapter-information>

If you have any questions and need assistance, feel free to email me at mark.bitar@gmail.com.

All the best,

Mark