

Committee Chair Responsibilities

Basic Function

Consistent with the association's policy and strategic plan, the committee chair guides the committee in its work as outlined by the scope of work and charge from the chair of the Board of Directors.

Responsibilities

- With staff, develop a work plan that will allow the committee to effectively and efficiently discharge its responsibilities for the year. Take responsibility for staying informed.
- Committee chair does their assignments and does not pass everything off to the staff.
- With staff, develops agendas and conducts committee meetings and communicates effectively.
- Work with staff to ensure that the work of the committee is carried out between meetings. Be available if staff needs assistance.
- Approves reports on committee activities, including requests to the board of directors for action.
- Reports to the committee on decisions of the board of directors or executive committee that affects the committee's work or activities.
- Where appropriate, guides the committee in proposing products and services that further the goals and objectives of the association.
- Where appropriate, makes policy recommendations to the board of directors.

Presiding Over a Meeting

- Be prepared.
- Read and review agenda and all reports in advance. Do your homework.
- Don't be late. In fact, arrive early so the meeting can begin on time.
- Introduce new members or guests.
- Make everyone feel comfortable.
- Recognize members who are entitled to talk; discourage breaking in. As a committee member, remember to follow simple rules of etiquette.
- Explain and understand procedure – who can speak and who can vote.
- Restate the issue to be voted on before calling the vote, and explain the consequences of the vote.
- Put all issues to a fair vote. Don't make assumptions about how committee members feel.
- Announce the results of actions taken; explain the follow-through to be taken and by whom.
- Help expedite business. Don't let discussions drive or go on too long. Keep discussion "on topic." Speak to the topic; build on previous conversation.
- Stay with the agenda. Seek the full committee's agreement to change the agenda once it has been announced. Stay on topic.
- End the meeting on time. Seek the committee's agreement regarding extending the time if necessary.
- Remember to be brief but to the point. Stand up. Speak up. Sit up.
- Thank everyone for their participation.
- Be a facilitator of meetings. Don't "hold court." The committee belongs to the association, not the chair.
- Guide, mediate, probe, and stimulate discussions. Let others thrash out ideas. Committees are not formed to validate the thinking of the chair or staff.
- Encourage a clash of ideas, but not of personalities. Good decisions are made when committees examine all sides of the issue, but don't let members personalize the debate.
- Prevent one-sided discussions.
- Deal with dysfunctional behaviors. Don't let a person who is blocking constructive decision ruin the committee meeting for everyone else.
- Monitor participation. Control talkative members and draw out silent members.
- Use well-paced questions; seek points of information and clarification; and periodically summarize to keep the discussion focused.