Tips for Leading an Effective Meeting

BEFORE the meeting...

Be Prepared
- Choose a meeting time and stick to it
- Communicate with members to ensure they know where and when the meeting is and what they should come prepared with/to discuss
- Know the purpose of the meeting (to inform, brainstorm, update, etc.)
- Create an agenda for the meeting
- Ask members if they have any agenda items so those can be included and discussed at the meeting
- Review the agenda with your co-chair/office board BEFORE the committee meeting so you are both on the same page

Create an Open Space/Environment
- Choose a location that is:
  - Easy to find
  - Appropriate for your group size
  - Accessible
  - Consistent from week to week
- Consider your meeting space/set up and ask "does this arrangement encourage participation?"

DURING the meeting...

Start on Time
- Greet people so they feel welcome
- Respect the members’ times by starting on time each week, regardless of how many members are in attendance

Invest in Relationships
- Allot time in your agenda for members to get to know each other

Keep the Meeting on Track — Follow the Agenda
- As the meeting facilitator, you are responsible for keeping the meeting moving and on track
  - Limit side conversations
  - Limit questions that do not affect/relate to the entire group
- Encourage discussion to get different ideas and viewpoints, but keep it moving toward a decision
- Keep meeting minutes for future reference and questions
- When possible, involve members in facilitating parts of the meeting (lead icebreakers, take minutes, etc.)
End with Action Items

- The facilitator, with member input, should assign action items for members to complete before the next meeting based on their interests and available time.

End on Time

- Respect members’ time by finishing each meeting on time.
- If you are finished early, let everyone leave early.
- If you are unable to finish in the allotted time, create an alternative plan for accomplishing the remaining tasks (move to next week, discuss via e-mail, call a special meeting, etc.)

AFTER the meeting...

Compile and Share Meeting Minutes and Action Items

- Within 1–2 days of the meeting, follow up with an e-mail that includes the meeting minutes/notes and reminders of action items/decisions from the meeting.
- In this e-mail, include a reminder about the time and location of the next meeting.
- Remember to thank the members for their contributions and commitment.
- Discuss any problems/concerns experienced in the meeting with your co-chair/officer board so improvements can be made.
- Follow up on delegated tasks and make sure members understand and carry out their responsibilities.
- Put unfinished business on the agenda for the next meeting.
- Give recognition and appreciation to members for excellent and timely progress.