



4-H Youth Development Volunteer Training

Module 1: Communication

So You're a Club Committee Member

Effective committee work is an important 4-H club function. Through effective committee work, club business meetings can be more efficient and allow more time to meet the educational, recreational, and social needs of members.

A committee is a team with a common goal. The chairperson is the team captain and committee members are the players. The 4-H club leader is the coach who provides motivation and encouragement.

A committee is only as effective as its ability to get goals accomplished in a timely manner. Typical committee functions are to

- accomplish tasks
- gather information
- make decisions
- build relationships
- meet member needs

A committee chairperson may be vice president of the club (who oversees all committees), may be appointed by the president of the club, or may be a member who volunteers for the task. No matter who the chairperson is, there are responsibilities that must be fulfilled if the committee is to be successful.

Checklists for Committees

As a committee member, I will . . .

- ___ volunteer for only those committees for which I have time to fulfill the duties involved.
- ___ participate fully in the committee work.
- ___ check in regularly with the committee chairperson rather than wait to be contacted.
- ___ help to set timelines* for the committee.
- ___ follow through on all responsibilities that I accept while on the committee.
- ___ communicate with all committee members.

- ___ ask questions or seek more information to accomplish committee goals.
- ___ follow the guidelines for consensus decision-making and brainstorming.

As a committee chairperson, I will . . .

- ___ schedule necessary meetings to accomplish goals.
- ___ notify committee members of dates, times, and information needed for each meeting.
- ___ keep 4-H club leaders informed of meeting dates, times and progress toward goals.
- ___ invite a club leader or parent to attend meetings as an advisor.
- ___ lead committee meetings.**
- ___ request volunteers from the committee to fulfill committee responsibilities.
- ___ delegate responsibilities to committee members when volunteers don't step forward.***
- ___ accept responsibility for tasks to be completed.
- ___ keep a record of committee members and the tasks they are to complete.
- ___ lead the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating the committee's work.
- ___ report committee progress, decisions, and/or recommendations at 4-H Club meetings.
- ___ recruit other club members to assist at events planned by the committee.
- ___ treat committee members with respect.
- ___ work with the committee to develop a budget to accomplish goals.

*A timeline is most helpful in getting people to complete their duties in a timely manner.

**If you are unclear about your role, contact the club leader before the committee meeting so that you will be more prepared.

***Delegating refers to identifying someone on your committee who could fulfill the role and asking him or her during the committee meeting to take on the responsibility.

Steps for Consensus Decision Making in Committee Meetings

- 1. Definition**—Define or explain the subject that needs a decision.
- 2. Generate ideas**— Give everyone a chance to make suggestions. Encourage each member to voice his or her opinion. Ask for member ideas and comments. (See Guidelines for Brainstorming.)
- 3. Discussion**—Discuss the ideas that have been suggested. They can be changed or improved as they are discussed.
- 4. Selection**—Decide on the best idea to successfully meet the goal. Everyone may not agree that it is the best choice, but everyone should agree to accept the choice and help make it work.
- 5. Action Plan**—Put the decision into action. Decide who will do what, by when, and how. Usually may involve bringing a recommendation before the entire club.
- 6. Evaluation**—Evaluate the solution or event after trying it. Determine how well it worked, and make recommendations for change, if necessary.

Guidelines for Brainstorming

- Write down exactly what is said.
- As ideas are first presented, do not allow any discussion of the ideas. No remarks or gestures positive or negative should be allowed.
- Do not allow evaluation of the ideas until discussion.

Problems to Overcome in Consensus Decision Making

- Someone on the committee blocks the consensus process to promote his or her own ideas.
- The committee has members who always want their own way.
- The discussion does not stay on the topic.
- The committee has little time or patience.

. . . and justice for all

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