

## **Motion to Accept General Guidance for Committee Chairs**

Resolved: The board accepts the following document for distribution to new committee chairs whenever one is appointed:

**“General Guidance for Committee Chairs”** dated \_\_\_\_\_. The document is attached.

### **Discussion**

Committee chairs often appoint members without thinking about what skill sets are needed to address the committee’s goals and objectives. In fact, new committee chairs don’t always put to paper their goals and objectives before appointing members. The purpose of the guidance document is to help new committee chairs get started properly.

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## **General Guidance for Committee Chairs – (Except NEC)**

### Introduction and Purpose

Congratulations on accepting the appointment as a committee chair. Your services are greatly appreciated. The purpose of this document is to help guide you through both initial and ongoing phases of chairing a committee. The board of directors' goal, as yours, is to be as productive as possible.

### Steps for Forming Your Committee

Usually the first step that a new committee chair takes is to populate his or her committee with members. Unfortunately, that is not a good first step. There are several steps that you should take before appointing committee members. Also, just as your appointment ends when the current term of the board ends, so do your committee members' appointments. Do not feel that you must reappoint those committee members that served during the previous term if you feel that others would be more suitable and productive.

Step 1: Formulate what you want your committee to accomplish. What is your mission? What are your goals? Objectives? Get these ideas on paper, even if only in bullet point form. Share these with the board chair and/or the executive director. You may want or need input from them. (In some cases, the board has written specific guidance for some committees.)

Step 2: Determine what specific skills your committee will need to be successful. Will there be a lot of number crunching that will require a person with technical or accounting skills? Will you need a negotiator? Will you need someone with great interpersonal or organizational skills? List the skill sets you think you will need on the same paper that you started in Step 1.

Step 3: Now is the time to identify people in the Association with the skills you desire. You may be able to get help identifying those from the board or perhaps from chapter presidents.

Step 4: Contact those individuals that you believe have the skills you are looking for, and share what you wish to accomplish (Step 1 material). Inquire if they have an interest in serving. Give them time to think about it and telephone you if interested. Make it clear that you would expect their active participation and a willingness to accept assignments.

Step 5: The potential committee members should take some time to think about whether they believe, from their standpoint, they have the desired skills, time, and the enthusiasm to help the committee succeed; i.e., if they are a good fit. If so, each should telephone you (let them take the step) and the candidate and you should talk. If it is a productive conversation and you both agree that there is a good fit, you should appoint him or her. If the conversation shows that a good fit is not there, thank them for their interest and move on.

Step 6: Have Columbia create for you an email distribution list so that both you and committee members can contact your committee easily. Include in that email distribution list the board chair, the executive director, and any other committee chairs that you feel would benefit from your discussions.

There is nothing formal required in making an appointment. Just be sure to let the board chair and the executive director know who you have appointed. In addition, if you think that at some point you need one-time assistance on an initiative or project, don't feel that you have to put that skill set on the committee. Just seek out someone with the right skills and ask for their one-time help. It's analogous to needing help to fix a clock that you haven't encountered before. Just ask for that one-time help.

### Ongoing Recommendations

1. Most committees contain three to 10 members, depending upon what you want to do, how many different skills are needed, and how much effort is required. As you expand or shrink your committee's workload, feel free to expand or shrink your committee.

2. Regular contact and full participation by the entire committee is the key to success. Committee members serve at the pleasure of the committee chair. If you find that a committee member is not participating, not accepting assignments, or is doing poorly, feel free to terminate his appointment and replace him with someone more suitable.

Don't try to be a one-person committee and do everything yourself. Divvy up the workload among your members.

3. Ensure that you involve the participation of the committee when fleshing out the details of your committee's goals, objectives, and strategies. Ensure consensus by the entire committee.

4. Be sure to have an ongoing rapport with the board chair and/or executive director to ensure that they know how your work is progressing.

5. You are required to prepare an annual report each May for the board to review. It is desirable to write the report with an executive summary up-front that highlights what you have accomplished. Then in the discussion section that follows you can provide details on how you accomplished what you listed in the summary.

6. Feel free to keep other committee chairs informed of your progress on issues that may affect their committees or that might add to an overall positive, synergistic effect.

7. You are responsible for the decisions of your committee, as the board appointed you, not your committee members. Committee members may like to vote on potential decisions, but majority doesn't necessarily rule. You are the ultimate decision maker.

Good luck!

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Date accepted: