

Tips For Conducting More Effective Staff Meetings

- 1) There should be a specific purpose and agenda for each staff meeting. (Research shows that about 1/3 of all meetings are a waste of time; make your's short, to the point, and meaningful).
- 2) Have agreed-upon rules for the meetings. Develop a format to follow; (i.e. a procedure for recognizing people who want to speak, a method for voting or reaching consensus.)
- 3) Decide who needs to attend the meeting, and inform them enough ahead so that they can all arrange to attend.
- 4) Prior to the meeting, provide an agenda for the schedule meeting and minutes for the previous meeting for staff members to review ahead of time.
- 5) Pick a convenient time for the meeting when interruptions are few and enthusiasm high.
- 6) Start the meeting on time! (Once the habit is established and adhered to, staff members will realize that they need to be punctual).
- 7) Use the minutes from the last meeting to refresh everyone's memories about past agenda items that still need to be addressed.
- 8) The meeting coordinator should explain each item on the agenda (one at a time) and why the item needs to be brought to the group. Items on the agenda should include general information, updates on projects, problems, and/or anything of major importance affecting the agency. Inform the group if any of the following is needed:
 - a) Decision deadline
 - b) Agreement that must be acted upon
 - c) Reinforcement of policy
 - d) Response to a complaint
 - e) Solution to a problem
- 9) As the meeting coordinator, your agenda items that were predetermined should be covered first. Encourage group feedback, including constructive criticism. Then the meeting should be opened up to the group for their concerns and ideas. (It is better to discuss problems in the open where everyone receives the same message).
- 10) Predetermine discussion limits when necessary to keep the meeting at a reasonable length of time; (the average time frame for an effective staff meeting is ½ to 1 hour).
- 11) Do not allow one person or group to dominate a discussion; (solicit responses from others).
- 12) Politely discourage side conversations during staff meeting; (these distractions indicate to the person who has the floor that what s/he is saying is insignificant).

Tips for Conducting More Effective Staff Meetings.... *continued*

- 13) Allow courteous disagreement; (they can produce well-rounded discussions and better decisions).
- 14) There should be a procedure for following up on action that needs to be taken as a result of discussions during the staff meeting. Develop a method for the staff to monitor their own decisions. Things get done through staff members. Involving them in the meeting and the monitoring of decisions will ensure their cooperation and support.
- 15) When possible, let decisions be made by the group or get group consensus. Be willing to modify your decisions based upon group discussion and consensus; (decisions that include staff input will be better accepted).
- 16) After the meeting, take some type of action, or offer a concrete response to everything that was brought up; (do not leave things unresolved).