

How to Prepare for the Leadership Transition

Change within a group is inevitable. Members will come and go, as will leaders. It is up to the group's current leaders to make the transition as smooth as possible, and to make sure the incoming leaders do not begin their terms in a vacuum.

- Set up a time for incoming leaders to meet with the outgoing officers. There should be time for pairs to meet as well as for the full leadership team to meet. Be sure to--
 - a) Review general duties and schedules, and identify key players both within the group and in the general community.
 - b) Review past and ongoing goals, projects, and activities, discussing both the successes and failures.
 - c) Go over financial procedures, a year-end fiscal summary, and a projection of future expenses and revenues.
 - d) Review roles and relationships among the leadership team and others outside the organization. Identify allies.

If some of the incoming and outgoing leaders cannot be at the meeting, make sure they set up a time to meet and transfer materials.

- Share files (computer and otherwise), phone/e-mail directories, forms, and any other helpful pieces of information that have been acquired along the way. Don't wait until the new leaders have already been on board for 6 months before passing these items along or requesting them.
- In any organization there are ongoing programs and commitments. Good leaders plan for the health of their organization beyond their terms of office.
- New leaders who believe they will "start from scratch" will cause the group to be frustrated and unproductive, and will make good relations among members difficult. No one has time to reinvent the wheel. Build on past successes.
- Are there other "movers and shakers" within the group who should be members of the leadership team? Getting them involved from the start will encourage a stronger buy-in, and will strengthen the team.

