



Tips to Make Meetings More Welcoming

Prepare

- **Make meetings accessible to ALL Members:** *(funds may be available to support these efforts, talk to staff for more info)*
 - Near public transit
 - ADA accessible
 - Language translation and interpretation services if needed
 - Meetings should not be held in locations where any person attending would face discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, legal citizenship, national origin, income, or political affiliation.
 - Provide options for child care
- **Relocate Meetings:** Change your meeting location or time occasionally to reach new members. Have meetings in coffee shops, restaurants or neighborhood parks to change up the atmosphere and welcome new faces!
- **Do outreach before the meetings:** word of mouth is most effective!

Before

- **Have a greeter**
- **Provide refreshments**
- **Post signage** on the doors of your meeting space so the meeting can be easily found. Confusion makes participation more difficult.
- **Make welcome packets, neighborhood brochures or info sheets.** Include information on future meetings, board members, committees and upcoming events. The more they know, the more they can participate!

During

- **Be considerate of participants' time and opinions, begin and end on time.**
- **Don't assume that everyone in the room knows how the meeting will run**
 - Go over the agenda, explain any ground rules.
 - Do a round of introductions at the start of every meeting.
 - Ask for input from newcomers and be welcoming of new ideas.
 - Define acronyms and share appropriate background information.
 - Allow social time so neighbors can interact.
 - Allow time for questions.
- **Ask dominant voices to take a break** so that other people can participate.
- **Set an example from the start:** If you want energy and engagement from your group, you need to embody those qualities as soon as you walk through the door.
- **Make a connection with everyone in the room:** The point of meeting face-to-face is to, well, meet face-to-face. Make it a priority to build and maintain rapport so you can foster collaboration.
- **Remind everyone of your greater mission:** Don't get so focused on the minutia of a meeting that you forget to step back and see the big picture.
- **Acknowledge successes:** Recognition is important in building a positive culture.

After

- **Follow-up with new members:** Check in to see how their first meeting experience went, find out particular issues or interests of new members and potentially generate involvement.