



# Chapter Organizing Manual



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# GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING A NOW CHAPTER

# STARTING A NEW CHAPTER

NOW was founded and built by women like you who have recognized the need for improvement in women's lives, and who have had the courage and persistence to organize. Transforming the ideals of an egalitarian society into the practical work of taking action to eliminate sexism from our lives is undeniably a challenge! Finding the women (and men) in your community who share these ideals isn't difficult. The Chapter Organizing Manual contains organizing and recruiting ideas; as well as sample officer duties, agendas, surveys, bylaws, and operating rules. The Membership and Finances section contains fundraising and financial guidelines and membership processing information.

## Why NOW?

1. NOW provides a national communications network for action-oriented feminists.
2. NOW provides chapter and state organizations with legislative updates and information for lobbying.
3. NOW provides experience and know-how from active feminists who are leaders in the women's movement.
4. NOW has instant name recognition with other local groups.
5. NOW is generally recognized in the national mass media as the leading feminist civil rights organization in this country.
6. NOW provides the power of numbers geographically spread throughout the nation. Your chapter will benefit from what NOW is doing in other parts of your state, as well as in other parts of the country.

At early meetings, your group can discuss and target local, state and national issues for chapter action. This list could range from discriminatory pricing at the local dry cleaners (men's shirts are generally cheaper than women's blouses), to state abortion rights campaigns, to the number of feminist legislators in your state capitol (no state has enough).

## Beginning to Meet

Even initial chapter meetings should be in public, accessible places that are well-lit and have adequate parking. Announcement of the formation of your chapter might appear in a letter to the editor of your newspaper, or on posters in women's bookstores, libraries, and even grocery stores or laundromats.

In addition, your chapter will want to invite any at-large members in the area to affiliate. (These are women and men in your state who are NOW members but do not belong to a chapter.) Your chapter can get a list of such members from your state coordinator/president. Chances are these at-large members will be delighted to know you are starting a chapter, and a few of them may actually come to meet you and offer to become involved. Most of them, however,

may not want to be any more involved than to join your chapter and renew their membership each year. You will have the most success with both kinds of members.

You may have more luck using a list of the local at-large members who have donated to the organization within a 6- or 12-month period. These individuals are more likely to be interested in becoming active. All recruitment of existing contributors and new prospects do best with written communication followed by a phone call.

Please see the Membership and Activist Recruitment section of this guide for suggestions to help you recruit new members who have not affiliated with NOW before.

### **From the Personal to the Political**

NOW feminist consciousness-raising (CR) can help in the evolution of your group from individuals, each with feminist concerns, to a group of women who see the universality or 'common denominator' of all women's experiences. CR is invaluable in helping women develop as feminists, and can strengthen chapter leadership and resolve. Introductory CR groups, using established procedures and ground rules, typically work through a prescribed series of topics, each with an 'action' ending. CR groups were very common in NOW 20 years ago, but for many reasons are not so prevalent today. Your state NOW organization may have a CR facilitator who would be happy to help you hold sessions.

If a trained CR facilitator is not available, we do not suggest that a group start having CR sessions without someone who has been specifically trained to facilitate CR groups. There is such a thing as bad CR and CR is not therapy. We do have copies of the 1982 CR manual and just reading the guidelines will give you ideas about structuring discussion groups so that feminists – both old and new – can talk honestly, and learn to be supportive of each other. The format for sessions, which end with discussion of action, as well as discussion rules, will be helpful whether you are able to start a formal group or not.

If it's not possible to do formal CR, try to provide time and space for new feminists to get together, ask questions, and learn about NOW.

### **Resources Available**

If you have questions or need information, contact the Chapter Development staff at the National NOW Action Center. The National NOW Action Center can provide you with free recruiting brochures on a variety of issue areas, as well as general recruiting materials, membership forms, issue and organizing kits, chapter development materials and much more.

Please check our website for more information. There is a special section of the site for chapter leaders only. If you are a chapter leader of NOW, please contact the Chapter Development staff for current log-in information.



# CHARACTERISTICS OF A STRONG CHAPTER

## Definition

A strong chapter is one which, regardless of size, attracts people into a positive, action-oriented, and welcoming atmosphere. It encourages personal growth, carries out realistic organizational and action goals, is financially sound, and is an integral part of the larger organization, both at the state level and nationally.

This outline may stimulate discussion of ways to do outreach in your community, and ways to use internal education and programs or issue campaigns to build a strong chapter.

## Background

1. Chapters should represent a cross-section of the community, with care taken to include groups of women who have not "found" the chapter on their own; for example, be sure to reach out to women of color, lesbians, women with small children, and women in nontraditional careers.
2. A strong chapter can be any size and can have a variety of structures. Every chapter experiences a variety of challenges – some may be predictable, given the specific organizational stage of the chapter, and some may be related to particular personalities in the group.
3. Strong, healthy chapters tend to attract more goal-oriented members who want to be part of the action. People want to be associated with success and certainty, not confusion, inefficiency or conflict. Chapters with a strong, logical and consistent organizational structure give a positive impression to new members.

## Checklist for Organizational Strength

Your goal is to design a chapter structure that will be flexible enough to accommodate organizational growth as well as individual abilities and personalities. Strong chapters do not just happen, they are carefully built and nurtured over time.

In a strong chapter:

1. Chapter members and activists represent a variety of abilities, personalities and backgrounds, but they share a common interest in women's rights and feminist values.
2. There is a clear collective understanding of NOW's purpose and the purpose of the local chapter.
3. Chapter bylaws and operating rules are current, available to everyone, and in use.
4. There are close ties with the state organization, an understanding of the regional organization, and utilization of the National Action Center resources.
5. The chapter annually sets achievable goals and regularly checks progress toward those goals. It objectively assesses the community and its needs.

6. The chapter works to establish credibility in the community. This may be accomplished through networking and good public relations.
7. The chapter sets and follows an annual budget which can, of course, be revised if circumstances change. Fundraising is tied into every activity the chapter undertakes.
8. There is a detailed plan for:
  - a. Membership recruitment
  - b. Membership skill building
  - c. Activist development
  - d. Leadership training to "replenish" the supply
9. The responsibility for carrying out the chapter goals is shared by activists serving as task force chairs or officers. These leaders practice positive delegation.
10. An annual calendar of administrative, program, and task force meetings, as well as long term actions, is published and distributed to all members, and to the media when appropriate. The calendar is coordinated with significant community events and other organizational calendars.
11. Structures for internal communication exist. There is a website or page, a regular newsletter for members, and/or a telephone network for urgent action. Members understand and use effective person-to-person communication as well as a system for exchanging information with task force chairs, chapter leaders, and state/regional/national contacts.
12. Interested people are able to find the chapter. This means, if it's financially possible, a listing in the local telephone directory (a suggested listing would be NOW-followed by your chapter name). You should know all local referral resources, (e.g. City Hall Information Desk, City Library Reference Desk, etc.) and make sure they have current contact information about the chapter.
13. Leaders understand the value of developing and training their replacements, keeping accurate records, and passing those records on to new officers.
14. Leaders encourage a sense of unity and cooperation within the chapter.
15. There is a grievance procedure that everyone understands and is simple enough to resolve disputes without aggravating a conflict.

# MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVIST RECRUITMENT

There are many activists in our organization, and each has a different degree of available time, talent and money. Some members join NOW solely to support NOW's work financially, and while they understand and agree with our goals, they may not want to become actively involved. Other members want to devote their time, energy and talents to the organization in an "activist" way.

Each chapter should understand these differences in our membership and find a place for each prospective new member to fit in. We try to encourage members to become activists, but it isn't always possible. It is helpful to identify members who fall into different categories, using some version of a member survey (when the person joins) to learn everything we can about their interest, availability, and skills. Putting this information into a database system so that you can call on them to contribute in a way that fits their time and abilities is key to keeping people interested. Membership recruitment is an ongoing effort that involves every member!

## Recruiting Members

The first, and most important, rule in successfully recruiting new members is – ASK! Start by asking friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Then build your membership by contacting other like-minded people in your community. For example, watch your local newspaper for Letters to the Editor that are sympathetic to women's issues, and try to recruit the writer into the chapter – you can't have too many good letter-writers!

There are lots of other free and low-cost ways to advertise:

1. ACTIONS! Free media exposure is a positive result of well-planned and publicized actions.
2. Information booths (malls, county fairs, etc.)
3. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on radio or TV
4. Appearances by chapter/state/national leaders in the media
5. Chapter posters with information about upcoming meetings
6. Printed materials (brochures or flyers) in targeted areas (libraries, YWCAs, bookstores, women's centers). Consider placing a chapter brochure in feminist books in your library where interested readers are likely to see them.
7. Membership advertisements in local newspapers and newsletters of other organizations as well as your chapter newsletter
8. Email lists or a chapter web site, or blog or social networking page, and a chapter phone listing in the area directory if possible
9. Public speaking engagements and presentations to other organizations about NOW and our goals

Another important component of membership recruitment is having inclusive meetings. Almost anyone who feels positive about the group and its progress will come back. Suggestions for successful participation include:

1. Meet in a public, central location, with plenty of parking and security lighting.
2. Develop and use new member packets (these can include chapter, state and/or national newsletters, information about NOW and issue brochures or fact sheets, as well as any specific chapter information you have, such as regular meeting information and chapter contacts).
3. Assign one or more chapter members to greet new people at each meeting.
4. Avoid the use of acronyms like VAWA, HB158, or NNT without explaining them to all present.
5. Provide new member briefings or orientations.
6. Ask new members to *do something*, even if it is a small task, before the next meeting – make them feel involved!
7. Follow up with a phone call or email to each new member or potential member shortly after their first meeting. Invite them to come back!
8. Other helpful hints:
  - a. Put your chapter number on every membership form.
  - b. Carry membership applications everywhere you go.
  - c. Include the chapter contact and phone number or e-mail/web address on all printed materials.

### **Developing Activists**

Here are some ideas for getting new NOW members involved:

1. Prepare a list of skills or abilities needed by the chapter, and publish it in your chapter newsletter or website. Job descriptions for officers and task force chairs can also be circulated in this way. Members are more likely to get involved if they know exactly what they are being asked to do.
2. Delegate some relevant responsibility to new members but don't make them feel burdened. In addition to ending *each* meeting with an action idea, it is also helpful to make sure new people are offered the opportunity to participate in some way before the next meeting, such as going with other members to visit an elected official, or working on some research for a new chapter fact sheet.
3. Organize chapter retreats (you could call them "advances") or weekend meetings designed to bring members closer together, get to know each other and have fun in an informal setting. This builds a sense of camaraderie and teamwork among your core activists and encourages other to be a part of that core.
4. Have chapter goal setting that allows everyone a voice and makes everyone feel invested in the chapter's events.

5. Develop a database or spreadsheet with a record for every member. This should include each member's skills, experience, what they like to do, projects/tasks they've successfully completed, and personal limits (what they'd prefer not to do).

### **The At-Large Membership Lists**

Many women and men join NOW as at-large members, often as a result of direct mail or advertising from National NOW. While it's advisable to let the at-large members in your chapter's area know that your chapter is organizing (or reorganizing), it's also important not to focus on this list of names for any substantial part of your membership recruitment. Most of these individuals prefer to remain as basic contributors to the women's movement, and as a new chapter you need the energy that people who actively seek you out will bring to your activist core. Contact your state coordinator or state chapter to request at-large names and send them a letter – perhaps including your chapter newsletter – and invite them to affiliate with the chapter. (Please note that you will need signatures for each membership transfer if the number of total transfers exceeds 15; we recommend sending pre-stamped postcards to your at-large list to make this as easy as possible for you.) Then focus on your community for NEW members to NOW!

## Sample NOW Chapter Member Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

1. When and why did you join NOW?

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2. Do you attend chapter meetings or activities regularly? If no, please list some of the reasons why (e.g., schedule conflicts, need child care, transportation problems).

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3. What feminist issues are most important to you (e.g., reproductive rights, lesbian rights, domestic violence, ERA, sexual harassment)?

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4. Which local issues are of greatest concern to you?

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5. Members of NOW are encouraged to work on issues specific to their concerns. As a chapter we want to support as many feminist issues as possible. Please indicate interests you have in tasks that are necessary for working on the issue(s) you named above.

- Attending monthly meetings
- Planning activities
- Picketing/actions
- Fundraising
- Writing letters
- Newsletter, blogging or website maintenance
- Monitoring our legislature
- Becoming a board member/officer

6. What special skills do you have to contribute to the chapter? What connections/contacts do you have in the area (e.g., members of legislature, congress)? Are you involved in any coalitions that NOW should be a part of?

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7. How did you hear about NOW? How do you think we could make more women and men aware of NOW?

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8. How should we advertise/publicize our activities and actions in order to reach as many interested people as possible?

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9. What would you like to see happen in the chapter in the coming year?

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10. What are your ideal long-term goals for NOW?

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11. What do you see as the strengths of NOW?

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Weaknesses?

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12. Any additional comments/questions:

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## INTEREST FORM FOR CHAPTERS

*(Note: this is a good example of a form to use with a mailing you might send to new members in your area. Please note that it is important to ask them what they would like to do - not what they would like to see YOU do.)*

I am interested in becoming a part of the NOW chapter in \_\_\_\_\_ (city/area).  
Please contact me about a chapter in my area so I can get involved!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- Please give my name to the chapter nearest me and ask them to contact me right away.
- There's no chapter close by, but I'd like to help start one. Please call.
- I have friends who would be interested in getting involved, too
  - I'll get in touch with them and let them know about contact information for the chapter.
  - I've included their names and addresses (including phone and e-mail). Please add them to your lists and get in touch with them.
- Please add my e-mail address to any legislative or action/event alert lists the state or chapter develops.
- I can't get involved right now, but would like to contribute to your efforts with a contribution. Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_.

My concerns for women in \_\_\_\_\_ (city/area) that I'd like to see chapters work on are:

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I have the following skills I'd like to contribute to NOW's efforts:

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Please return this form to:

*Your information here.*

*Be sure to include both phone and e-mail.*



# RUNNING SMOOTHLY

# SUCCESSFUL CHAPTER MEETINGS

Chapter meetings give us an opportunity to plan, prioritize, socialize, and educate ourselves. Chapter meetings are critical to the growth and effectiveness of NOW and should be carefully structured and conducted to be productive. All of us have wasted time in unproductive meetings that may actually have caused us to have a negative response to the offending organization. Included here are some tips to help your chapter meetings run smoothly and be more productive.

## Why Have Membership Meetings?

1. Meetings should have a definite purpose. Do not meet just to meet. Give your members a reason to come.
2. Meetings can be used to set goals and to plan actions, and should be structured to educate the membership on our issues.
3. Effective meetings will help keep members active and attract potential members.
4. Meetings give members more opportunity to participate in decision-making and keep the leadership accountable to the members.

## Preparing for Successful Meetings

1. Hold your general meetings at regularly scheduled times and in public places.
2. Develop an agenda. Agendas keep everyone on track and can be written with time limits on discussion items. Copies should be available in advance to the officers and any board members, and at the time of the meeting to the general membership.
3. Officers, board members, task force chairs and committee chairs should be invited to suggest agenda items.
4. The board of officers should review the agenda in advance of the general meeting. These leaders can anticipate problems or questions.
5. Notice of meetings should be sent to every member, the chapter newsletter is a good way to give notice to current and potential members.
6. Anticipate the need for child care and make appropriate arrangements to offer it without charge (NOW policy).
7. Members should prepare for meetings, too. Knowing what is on the agenda helps others think if they have questions or suggestions.
8. Make sure members are aware of the chapter's agreed-upon process for decision-making, and how they can participate.
9. Minutes should be kept, and approved according to chapter policies.
10. For a long agenda, schedule breaks. If the meeting is regularly too long, you may decide that some items are more appropriate for a monthly board meeting or for a committee to tackle. Keep it moving!

## Characteristics of an Effective Chair

1. Helpful personal leadership skills:
  - a. Assertive without being domineering
  - b. Communicates in a positive way
  - c. Actively listens to everyone
  - d. Watches for non-verbal cues (arms crossed, facial expressions, non-participation)
2. Helpful chairing skills:
  - a. Makes or leads off introductions
  - b. Sticks to the agenda, follows time limits
  - c. Encourages discussion from everyone
  - d. Knows how to handle interruptions or breaks in the scheduled agenda
  - e. Maintains order
  - f. Encourages all points of view – asks another officer to chair if she or he wishes to engage in vigorous debate
  - g. Identifies when decisions have been made, and summarizes meetings at the end
  - h. Has a copy of Robert's Rules on hand
  - i. Solicits feedback on the meeting – what went well, what could be better

## Meeting Structure

Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised) is used by National NOW and is specified in model chapter bylaws. Most chapters do not adhere strictly to Robert's Rules except for formalities such as elections, but chapter leaders should know the basics to keep the meeting flowing smoothly. Cooperative decision-making may be substituted for traditional parliamentary procedure. It includes the use of consensus "voting" (reaching a mutual agreement) rather than majority rule. It takes longer, but some chapters feel it is more effective.

## Logistics

1. Have a sign-up sheet for attendance
2. Meet in a room that is large enough for the members to gather, but not so large that they feel lost.
3. Arrange the chairs to be the most effective for your goals and structure at this particular meeting. Placing the chairs in a circle will increase participation by everyone, while meeting in theater style will give the chair more control over the meeting if there is a need to move the meeting along quickly.
4. Have the room temperature slightly cool.
5. Eliminate possible distractions such as ringing phones and any hall traffic.
6. Meet in a public place that is accessible for differently-abled members and guests; particularly important are ramps and accessible restrooms.
7. It is NOW policy that there will be no smoking in meetings, but that adequate breaks must be scheduled. Plan ahead for appropriate breaks in the agenda.

## SAMPLE AGENDA FOR A FIRST MEETING

7:00 p.m. – 7:20 p.m.	Organizers arrive, arrange chairs, set up materials and refreshments
7:20 p.m. – 7:40 p.m.	People arrive, informal introductions, greet new members
7:30 p.m.	Meeting is scheduled to begin
7:40 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Program about NOW (Remarks by a state NOW officer or regional representative)
8:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Taking action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Deciding to become a NOW chapter</li><li>- Deciding on a chapter name</li><li>- Deciding on a date, time and place of next meeting</li><li>- If chair is not the convener, decide on a temporary chair for next meeting</li><li>- Deciding on acting treasurer</li><li>- Assigning responsibility for notifying others of next meeting – media contacts, writing or phoning individuals</li></ul>
8:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Formal adjournment, questions and informal discussion

Note: Meeting organizers may want to add a personal dimension to introductions by having each new member tell why they joined, welcoming them formally to the group or reading a communication from the state or national organization. Local history, presented by feminists in the area, is interesting to new members as well.

## SAMPLE AGENDA FOR A MONTHLY MEETING

7:00 p.m. – 7:20 p.m.	Organizers arrive, arrange chairs, set up materials* and refreshments if desired
7:20 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	People arrive, informal introductions, greet new members
7:30 p.m.	Meeting is scheduled to begin
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.	Call to order Introductions Adoption of the Agenda Approval of Minutes (from the last meeting) Treasurer's Report Other Officer's Reports Task Force and Committee Reports Old Business New Business Action** Announcements Adjournment

\* Issue and membership materials should be available at all meetings for new and prospective members

\*\* Try to schedule some kind of relevant action at the end of each meeting so members have an immediate sense of accomplishment, even if it's simply to write letters to members of Congress or compose letters to the editor of your local media.

Note: Task force or committee meetings can be more informal, depending on how task forces and committees are structured in your chapter. Emphasis at these meeting should be toward including everyone in discussion, especially welcoming new members' ideas. Since this is usually where the activity/action of the chapter is carried out, everyone should leave with an assignment.

Note: Chapters often decide to separate chapter business from the issue interests and task force work of the members. Individuals don't often judge the chapter for the sole purpose of becoming the chapter's treasurer or putting out the newsletter. More frequently, they come to find out about the organization's work on an issue or to voice their own concern about discrimination. Membership meetings held for the sole purpose of addressing that need may prove important to bringing in activists!

**Robert's Rules: Parliamentary Procedures At-A-Glance**

<b>To Do This:<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>You Say This:</b>	<b>May You Interrupt the Speaker?</b>	<b>Must You Be Seconded?</b>	<b>Is the Motion Debatable?</b>	<b>Is the Motion Amendable?</b>	<b>What Vote is Required?</b>
Adjourn the meeting	"I move that we adjourn..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority vote required
Recess the meeting	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority vote required
Complain about noise, room temperature, etc.	"Point of privilege."	Yes	No	No <sup>2</sup>	No	No vote required <sup>3</sup>
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move we table it."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority vote required
End debate	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds vote required
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority vote required
Have something studied further	"I move we refer this matter to a committee."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority vote required
Amend a motion	"I move that her/his motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority vote required
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority vote required

<sup>1</sup>The motions or points above are listed in **established order of precedence**. When any one of them is pending you may not introduce another that is listed below it; but you may introduce another that is above it.

<sup>2</sup>In this case, any resulting motion is debatable.

<sup>3</sup>Chair decides.

## SPEAKING FOR NOW

As a NOW chapter, you will find yourselves "in the news," even when perhaps you'd rather not be. Current events at the local, state and national level frequently bring calls from the media, asking for comment or background on topics relating to NOW's issues, legislation, even last night's news. The best approach for the chapter is to determine *who* is going to speak to the press, and for that person to take whatever steps needed so that she or he can do the best possible job.

Please review the "Who Speaks for NOW" resolution (on the following page), so that the chapter has a clear understanding of who is the spokesperson and why. If needed, call the NOW Action Center for media tips. Additionally, the membership of a chapter, as well as its leadership, should be familiar and comfortable with NOW policy and positions. The Issues and Actions section of this manual contains brief profiles of NOW's priority issues and could be a part of every new member packet. Chapters might have brainstorming sessions, using everyone's ideas for the best, most effective responses to controversial or tricky questions.

Above all, remember that NOW's issue positions are frequently used by the media to divide and embarrass not only the feminist community, but our own membership as well. For example, if you "duck" questions about NOW's position on lesbian rights, you should realize that you are admitting this is something you (and your chapter) aren't completely comfortable with, perhaps even inadvertently sending a message to your opponents that you can be demoralized or discredited by simply bringing up that issue in a public forum. Best to sit down with your chapter members, talk something like this over, review all the facts, resolutions, and supporting materials on our positions at hand, and have good, solid lines for reporters, folks who genuinely want to know, and your opponents.

Never hesitate to say to a reporter that you need information, that you need to verify what the reporter is asking, or that you need to talk with your board or task force chair about the question at hand, and you'll call them back. Don't hesitate to call the NOW Action Center for background or the "press lines" our national leadership are using on a breaking news story. Never comment on something that sounds "fishy" or as if it has been taken out of context, or as if it might only be part of a longer statement or quote – tell the reporter you'll get back to her or him and make some more calls.

There are other issues you may want to find out more about, like pornography/violence against women, child care and family leave, etc. You can access the NOW Issues Policy Manual on our website for NOW chapter leaders. As always, feel free to call the Chapter Development Staff if you have questions.



## **Policy Statement: Who Speaks for NOW**

Public Speaking Policy- National NOW policies are defined in the organization's Statement of Purpose, its Bylaws, resolutions passed at National Conferences and Conventions, and motions passed by the National Board. National officers are responsible for communicating these policies in every-member NOW publications so that current and new members may be aware of them. Members, in turn, are responsible for familiarizing themselves with those policies.

NOW affirms the right of every member to voice their own opinions on feminist issues in public and private, in NOW meetings or meetings of other organizations. We expect and encourage lively debate on the issues before us. That right must be distinguished, however, from the right to speak on behalf of NOW in public forums. In public presentations the following rules shall pertain:

1. When the national organization has an established policy on a particular issue, officers of the national organization and its sub-units and members are obliged to state that policy when speaking or writing about that issue in any public forum. Members of NOW may speak for NOW only when authorized to do so by their sub-unit.
2. If a member has been, but is no longer, an officer in a unit of NOW, she/he must make clear in any public statement that current officers are the authorized spokespersons for that unit.
3. When national policy has not been defined on a particular issue, spokespersons shall so state. Spokespersons must identify, in any public statement, which unit of the organization they represent. They must also adhere to any rules on public statements established by the units they represent. Such rules may limit public statements on behalf of those units, but not an individual's right to express their own opinions.

We urge all sub-units of NOW to establish rules on public statements on their actions and policies, if they have not already done so.

Passed July, 1978

From the NOW Administrative Policy Manual

## SUGGESTED DUTIES FOR OFFICERS OF A NOW CHAPTER

The following suggested guidelines are *not* rules laid down by National NOW. They are merely suggestions for organizing your chapter's governing structure. Some NOW members dislike an overly organized approach, since it can sometimes become an excuse for inactivity. However, some organizational guidelines do allow for an efficient use of time and provide a framework for team effort. If yours is a brand new chapter, filling all the following offices may seem a bit overwhelming. Keep in mind, however, that these are merely suggestions, and that some offices can be combined. Think big! Determine chapter priorities and encourage growth of new task forces and committees as they are needed.

When writing out duties, it is advisable to list only basic responsibilities in the chapter bylaws, and then elaborate on these descriptions in the chapter operating rules. This makes the chapter structure more flexible.

### President/Coordinator

1. *Carries out the wishes of the board and the membership.* Many fledgling organizations have difficulties – often interpersonal ones – because the president or the membership mistakenly sees the president as an "authority" figure, which is incorrect. The president is responsible, not authoritative.
2. *Presides at meetings of the general membership and the board* and encourages a climate of free and open discussion. The President prepares an agenda for every meeting, but seeks the help of the membership and board in making the agenda.
3. *Usually acts as spokesperson for the chapter in dealings with the press or community/governmental contacts.* She or he may also delegate other members to speak for the chapter, especially on complex issues about which another member has the knowledge necessary to field questions. The chapter should agree on certain ground rules for dealing with the public. The President's name is signed to most official letters from the chapter, or jointly with any other member who has recognition or expertise in a particular area.

NOTE: Any statements by a local NOW officer or chapter member who is identified as such, may not contradict National NOW positions or policy. Any officer or member should always feel free to decline to directly or immediately answer questions from the press, in order to first consult with other chapter members or officers.

4. *Is an ex-officio member of all task forces and committees.* If chapter bylaws do not provide for committees and task forces to elect their own chairs, the President, with approval of the board and/or membership, may appoint these positions. The President should monitor their activities and can offer to help if they seem to need assistance.

5. *Is responsible for relaying state and national communications to the membership.* The President should review leadership communications and other alerts from the NOW Action Center about NOW's issues and activities. Such communications should always be shared with the board and membership as soon as possible, in the most reasonable way, whether via phone, email, web posting, postcard alert, or chapter newsletter.
6. *Provides for smooth transition of all new leadership.* This could include training sessions for new officers, board members, and task force chairs, as well as joint meetings of ingoing and outgoing officers. It is important to see that records and files are transferred to the new officers, particularly financial records and bank accounts.

### **Vice President**

1. *Assists the President* in all of the above duties as requested, and presides at meetings in the absence of the president.
2. *Other responsibilities* may be set forth in the bylaws or operating rules. These could include planning programs, making arrangements for meeting places, serving as coordinator of task force and/or committee work, fundraising, etc. Many chapters have several vice presidents: action, administrative, legislative, to name a few. Generally, it is an excellent position from which to learn the responsibilities of the President. Some chapter bylaws may provide that the Vice President automatically becomes the President when that office is vacated.

### **Secretary**

1. *Takes minutes at all meetings*, including the names of members present. S/he carefully records the exact wording of any motions passed and the names of persons delegated to take any particular responsibility. S/he keeps a permanent file of minutes of all meetings. S/he presents the minutes of each meeting for approval at the following meeting. Reviews past minutes occasionally, and brings any uncompleted decisions for action to the attention of the membership and the board.
2. *Types and duplicates the agenda* for each meeting and keeps a copy for chapter files.
3. *Types, secures proper signatures for, and mails* any official letters or communications sent by the chapter.
4. *Sends changes* in officers and task force representatives as well as changes in the chapter's address or contact person, to state and national office contacts. NOTE: Some chapters divide these duties between a Recording Secretary (or Recorder) and a Corresponding Secretary (or Correspondent).

## Treasurer

1. *Collects dues for new members only* and issues receipts. Sends the National portion of dues for new members to National NOW, and the state's portion to the state treasurer within 30 days. (This is particularly important because a member's right to vote at state, regional and national meetings often depends on dues having been paid by a certain time.) Note that all renewal dues are collected by National NOW, and a portion is rebated to the member's state and chapter.
2. *Maintains a list of current paid members* (this may be assigned to the Membership Chair) for voting purposes. This should include all new members who have joined since the last chapter roster was received from National NOW.
3. *Maintains bank accounts* and handles financial matters. Keeps complete records of chapter income and expenditures, and reports to the chapter board and membership at each meeting.
4. *Serves on the budget committee*. Helps the chapter prepare a budget and operate within its adopted budget.

## Membership Chair

1. *Keeps a complete file of all members* – past, present, or prospective. Keeping information on their skills, availability, or interests will be helpful to other chapter officers and committees.
2. *Coordinates for the chapter a planned program of membership and activist recruitment*. This should include distribution of membership brochures and applications, meeting and making prospective members feel welcome at meetings, and making sure that all activities of the chapter have a membership recruitment component. A working knowledge of the national and/or state membership processing system is necessary to help members with problems or questions.
3. *Does personal follow-up* with new and prospective members. Talks with new members to obtain information for the member survey or information form, or makes sure such a form is returned by each new member.
4. *Arranges for any necessary orientation meetings for new members*.
5. Depending on the chapter, she or he may *collect dues and forward them* to the chapter treasurer, and may be *responsible for newsletter mailing lists or chapter membership lists*.

6. *Updates chapter rosters* received from National NOW, and advises the NOW Action Center of any errors, omissions, or corrections.

### **Newsletter Editor**

1. *Coordinates the newsletter committee*, which prepares and distributes the newsletter, and sets the deadline for the inclusion of materials. Encourages all board members and chapter members to pass along materials to be included.
2. May be asked to *coordinate newsletter mailing lists*. If so, s/he may check with the treasurer/secretary/membership chair for the names of new or prospective members who should receive the newsletter.
3. Remembers that the Editor *doesn't control the content* of the chapter newsletter – the chapter leadership and ultimately the membership, does.

### **Public Relations Chair**

1. *Makes initial contacts to newspaper, radio and TV personnel* to introduce her/himself and to inquire as to deadlines, kinds of stories they use, and the format they require for incoming press releases. This will also serve to make the media aware of the new chapter, and the chair as the local contact person. Works with the President and the committee chairs in publicizing chapter actions and events. Looks for the PR possibilities in every event.
2. *Notifies all appropriate media contacts at least one week in advance* of upcoming events – time, place, and purpose or issue. (If the event is a meeting with a speaker or panel, mention that the public is welcome to attend.) Prepares press releases at the direction of the President or appropriate committee chair.
3. *Sets up news conferences* at the direction of the President, to publicize chapter positions or actions. Also *works with appropriate state or National NOW press staff* to coordinate coverage for any state or National NOW officers/staff who come into the chapter's area for events/actions.
4. Works with the President in *establishing and maintaining contacts with other organizations* in the community that have similar goals.
5. *Works with the President and other chapter officers to shape the “message” of the event or action.*

### **Legislative Task Force Coordinator**

1. *Responds to calls for legislative action* from state and national legislative coordinators and staff. Initiates such calls with consent of the chapter/board.
2. *Sets up a contact system* (phone trees and list serves are popular) for quickly getting other NOW members to write letters to support or protest legislation.
3. With PR and other appropriate committee chairs, *helps coordinate publicity surrounding organizational positions on legislation.*
4. S/he should *have knowledge of how state and national legislative bodies operate.* Serves as liaison with the state legislative coordinator on testimony before state or county legislative bodies. Follows chapter and state (if applicable) procedure regarding submission and approval of such testimony.

### **Individual Committee and Task Force Chairs**

1. The chair, depending on chapter bylaws, may be *responsible for calling committee meetings*, clarifying objectives, assigning jobs, and making a plan of action for accomplishing objectives. Should avoid doing all the work alone – delegate! May also be responsible for soliciting other members/participants for the task force/committee.
2. *Communicates with appropriate state and national task force or committee contacts.*
3. *Reports progress of the committee* to each monthly chapter meeting or board meeting and requests board or membership decisions when necessary. (Note: bylaws may require that written reports be submitted.)
4. *Communications information about the task force or committee to the newsletter editor* so that the membership may stay informed on the issue.
5. In her/his particular field of expertise, *drafts letters or fact sheets* and works closely with the Legislative Task Force or Committee, PR Chair and President to inform the membership and the public.

## SUGGESTED CHAPTER ELECTION PROCEDURES

Chapter officer election procedures that are fair and democratically developed help ensure representative chapter leadership. Each chapter is free to develop its own procedures for electing officers. These should be described in chapter operating rules rather than bylaws, so they can be adapted as the chapter grows. (The timing of the election of officers in your chapter's calendar *should* be designated in your bylaws, and might also be combined with chapter goal setting.)

A chapter in convening status may rely on the Convener and Treasurer designated on the Convener Authorization Form to chair initial meetings and transact financial business. The advantage of initially functioning as a group, or Committee of the Whole, is that all interested members participate in all the decisions and get to know each other. Larger chapters should feel free to hold elections as soon as they have members willing to take positions of leadership. Some chapters choose to continue this shared leadership style, once their convening process is completed. Others prefer the traditional style of president, vice presidents, and so forth, making specific leaders responsible for specific things, with some leaders having more power (and responsibility) than others.

NOW's chapter structure encourages democratic participation. Model Chapter Bylaws and Operating Rules have basic procedural protections or guidelines. If these are adopted, the election procedure is:

1. Elections are held at the Annual Meeting, in the month members have designated in their Chapter Bylaws or Operating Rules.
2. At least 90 days before the Annual Meeting, the President appoints and the chapter board approves a Nominations and an Election Committee. Any specifics regarding how these committee chairs are determined may be mentioned in your bylaws. (The chapter board usually consists of the officers after they are elected. Before the initial election, all chapter members may act as the board.)
3. Nominees must have been NOW members for some specific period of time. Six months' membership is a suggested minimum. The membership may wish to suspend this requirement in initial elections, particularly in a brand new chapter.
4. At least (30)(60) days before the Annual Meeting, the Election/Nomination Committee solicits officer nominations from the entire membership. This may be done by telephone in a small chapter, or by letter/newsletter in a smaller group.
5. At least 30 days before the Annual Meeting, the names of nominees (and a brief bio, if you wish) and a notice of the upcoming election is mailed to all members. This could be included in the chapter newsletter, instead of a separate mailing.

6. At the Annual Meeting:

- a. The Election Committee conducts the election.
- b. Additional nominations may be received from the floor. These names should be added to the ballot, which is then distributed to all the members "in good standing" –this is the general terminology for a member whose dues are current. A member whose expiration date is within 3 months is still within the "grace period" and therefore a current member.
- c. There is a secret ballot. After voting has occurred (set a time limit for the actual voting period) the Elections Committee tallies the votes and announces the results.
- d. Preferential balloting is used if more than 2 members are running for the same office. (See Administrative Policy Manual or Robert's Rules for these provisions.)
- e. The Bylaws Committee may want to consider the following additions to the simple election procedure outlined in the Model Bylaws and Operating Rules.
  - i. Additional officer standards such as a longer membership requirement, previous service as an officer of the chapter, or campaign speeches or presentations of a platform.
  - ii. An Affirmative Action policy or Diversity Plan to ensure that your officers and membership reflects your community.
  - iii. Specifications for Elections or Nominating Committee selection and membership.

For some chapters, more complex election procedures may be used to increase member participation and reduce the possibility of conflict. Some chapters experiment with various models of shared leadership. To avoid confusion, such experiments need to be written into Operating Rules, discussed and adopted in the same way as other procedures.

Officers need to be elected within the chapter's first year. After members have worked together and gotten to know each other, after bylaws have been passed, then an election/nominations committee is established and the election process is ready to begin. The procedures are simple. Following the election procedures that members have adopted helps to ensure a unified chapter whose members trust the chapter structure and officers.



# Model Chapter Bylaws

National Organization for Women



Adopted February 25, 1978

Revised November, 1983

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## ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of the organization shall be the \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of NOW.

## ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men. This purpose includes, but is not limited to, equal rights and responsibilities in all aspects of citizenship, public service, employment, education, and family life, and it includes freedom from discrimination because of race, ethnic origin, age, marital status, sexual preference/orientation, or parenthood.

## ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Any person who subscribes to its purpose and who is a member of National NOW may, upon payment of dues, be a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of NOW.

## ARTICLE IV. POLICY

The Chapter shall be bound by the National NOW bylaws and policy.

## ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

The Chapter shall hold at least eight (8) membership meetings each year. One of these meetings, designated the annual meeting, shall be the meeting at which election of officers shall take place. Additional rules regarding the number and types of meetings shall be contained in the operating rules of the Chapter.

## ARTICLE VI. DUES

### Section 1

Dues and specifics relating thereto shall be set forth in the operating rules of the Chapter.

### Section 2

The fiscal year shall be January 1 to December 31.

## **ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS/BOARD**

### **Section 1**

The officers shall be a President and a Treasurer and such other offices as may be determined by the operating rules. The composition and duties of the Board of Directors, if any, shall be specified in the operating rules of the Chapter.

### **Section 2**

The officers and board shall be elected annually at the annual meeting. The time and date of the annual meeting shall be set forth in the operating rules of Chapter.

## **ARTICLE VIII. COMMITTEES**

Type of committees, their purpose, leadership, and membership shall be determined by the operating rules of the Chapter.

## **ARTICLE IX. NOMINATIONS**

The nominating procedure shall be determined by the operating rules of the Chapter.

## **ARTICLE X. ELECTIONS**

Officers and board members must be elected by a majority vote or a majority of preferences counted in the final tally, if preferential voting is used. All members of the Chapter are eligible to vote and must be notified of the election by the procedure prescribed in the operating rules of the Chapter. Other specific provisions relative to elections are detailed in the operating rules of the Chapter.

## **ARTICLE XI. DELEGATES TO NATIONAL CONFERENCES**

Delegates and alternatives to the national conferences shall be elected in the number, manner, and timing determined by the national bylaws and National Credentials Committee. All Chapter members must be notified 30 days in advance of this election. Further procedures for the election of delegates and alternates shall be detailed in the operating rules of the Chapter.

## **ARTICLE XII. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

There must be a grievance procedure specified in the operating rules of the Chapter.

## **ARTICLE XIII. OPERATING RULES OF THE CHAPTER**

There shall be a set of operating rules for the Chapter which must detail the items referred to in these bylaws and may contain any other operating rules the Chapter wishes. The operating rules must be accepted by a 2/3 vote of the Chapter members present and voting must provide a method for amending the rules to give the membership written notice of an intended change and require a 2/3 vote of the membership present and voting.

#### **ARTICLE XIV. AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be amended by a 2/3 vote at any meeting of the Chapter providing:

7. Proposed amendment has been submitted to the president 60 days in advance of the meeting.
8. The proposed amendment has been mailed to the members 30 days in advance of the meeting or published in an every member publication 30 days in advance of the meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XV. DISSOLUTION**

The Chapter may be dissolved upon a 2/3 vote of its members present and voting. Upon dissolution of the Chapter, the board and officers shall, after paying or making provisions for payment of all liabilities of the Chapter, remit all remaining assets to the state NOW organization, National NOW, or any local unit of NOW.

#### **NOTE: ALL ITEMS UNDERLINED MUST BE EXPANDED OR OUTLINED IN YOUR OPERATING RULES**

*It is acknowledged that no specific language is proposed for a chapter's Diversity or Affirmative Action Plan, which is required for all NOW chapters, in either these bylaws or in the Model Chapter Operating Rules. Chapters should contact Chapter Development Staff if they have questions concerning the development of language for their plans, or turn to the Diversifying NOW chapter in this manual.*

# Model Chapter Operating Rules

## I. Meetings

Chapter meetings shall be held at least eight (8) times a year, at such dates, times, and places as determined by the chapter board. Any number present shall constitute a quorum, except for the annual meeting at which a quorum shall consist of at least 10% of the actual chapter membership.

## II. Dues

1. Regular dues for new members: \$35. (\$40 for residents of AZ, CA, CT, IL, IN, MI, MO, NY, PA and TX.)
2. Reduced dues are available on a sliding scale from \$10 to \$34.
3. Lifetime membership: \$1000.
4. Renewing members' dues shall be determined by Central dues.

## III. Officers and Board (Chapters should feel free to expand on these duties.)

1. The officers and their duties shall be:
  - a. The President, who shall be the principal spokesperson and administrator of the chapter and manage the day-to-day affairs of the chapter between board and chapter meetings. The President shall preside at all board and chapter meetings.
  - b. The Vice-President, who shall assist the President and chair meetings in the absence of the President.
  - c. The Secretary, who shall take and keep the minutes of both board and chapter meetings and attend to general chapter correspondence.
  - d. The Treasurer, who shall receive all funds of the chapter and shall deposit them in such bank as may be designated by the board, and who shall disburse the funds by check in accordance with the budget or vote of the membership, and who shall make written reports to the board and membership.
2. These officers shall constitute the board. The board shall meet at least \_\_\_\_\_ times a year. The president or a majority of the board may call board meetings.
3. Vacancies. In the event of a vacancy in the office of president, the vice-president shall assume the office of president. Vacancies in other elected positions shall be filled by appointment by the board as soon as possible after the vacancy occurs.

4. Qualifications and terms of office.

- a. All officers shall have been members of NOW for six (6) months prior to election. Each officer shall serve a one-year term, and no officer may serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.
- b. No person may hold two offices concurrently.
- c. Officer's terms shall begin on \_\_\_\_\_ following the meeting at which they are elected and shall run through \_\_\_\_\_ of that year.
- d. Any person who is appointed to fill a vacancy or who assumes the office of president due to a vacancy, and officers elected shall be eligible to serve two full consecutive terms in their office.

**IV. Committees**

The Board shall have the power to appoint committees for specific purposes and dissolve them when those purposes have been fulfilled. Chairs of said committees shall be members of the chapter and shall be appointed by the board.

**V. Nominations**

The chapter board shall approve an election committee at least 90 days prior to the annual meeting. The election committee shall solicit nominations for officers from the entire membership at least 60 days prior to the annual meeting. At least 30 days before the annual meeting, the names of those persons who have been nominated shall be mailed to each chapter member with a notice of the date, time, and place of the annual meeting. Nominations may also be received from the floor at the annual meeting.

**VI. Elections**

- A. The election of officers shall take place at the annual meeting, which shall be held in \_\_\_\_\_ of each year.
- B. Elections shall be conducted by the Elections Committee. Preferential balloting shall be used if more than two persons are running for the same office.

**VII. Delegates to National Conference**

- A. Any member of the chapter who qualifies for election as a delegate/alternate to the National Conference shall be eligible to run for election. If the chapter is unable to fill all of its allotted delegate and alternate slots with chapter members, any eligible member of NOW may be elected.

- B. All chapter members are eligible to vote. There shall be separate ballots for delegate and alternate. Each member may cast as many ballots as there are delegate and alternate slots to be filled.
- C. Notice of the election of delegates and alternates shall be given as far in advance as possible. All nominations shall be from the floor. The president shall appoint at least two non-candidates to conduct nominations and elections.

### **VIII. Grievance Procedure**

In the event of a grievance, each side to the controversy will designate one arbitrator and these two arbitrators will select a third arbitrator. Any person who has a conflict of interest may not serve as an arbitrator. The arbitrators will conduct a private hearing on the matter at which both sides to the controversy may present their case. The arbitrators shall endeavor to resolve disputes to the mutual satisfaction of the parties. Should they fail to resolve the controversy, the matter may be referred to the state NOW.

### **IX. Amendments to Operating Rules**

- A. These operating rules may be amended provided that such amendments are proposed by the board or by any five (5) chapter members. Written notice of proposed amendments must be given to all chapter members at least 30 days before the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to be voted on.
- B. Amendments to these Operating Rules must be approved by 2/3 of those members present and voting.

Date of Adoption: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** These are *suggested* operating rules — they are not official. Chapters are urged to give serious thought to their structure and to adapt these as they wish. Questions may be referred to the National NOW office or the National Bylaws Committee chair.

***We acknowledge that no specific language is proposed for a chapter's Diversity or Affirmative Action Plan, which is required for all NOW chapters, in either these operating rules or in the Model Chapter Bylaws. Chapters should contact Chapter Development Staff if they have questions concerning the development of language for their plans, or turn to the Diversifying NOW chapter in this manual.***

## PLANNING A MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

Most activists in chapter and state leadership positions desperately want to increase membership. Large membership numbers give your chapter the opportunity to be more visible and active, wield more political clout, and give you the added advantage of greater financial resources. However, when it comes to actually recruiting members, you may feel frustrated. Past efforts may not have been as successful as expected, or your chapter membership may not reflect the diversity of your community. The best approach is a planned campaign, which should then evolve into a permanent part of your chapter or state organizational program and structure.

To begin: Brainstorm with active members – get their feedback on questions like:

1. Why did they join NOW?
2. What questions or doubts did they have when they first joined?
3. What is an ideal size for this chapter? Why?
4. How could the chapter be improved by additional new members?
5. What is a realistic membership goal?
6. Is the chapter diverse (i.e., racial, ethnic, economic)? What populations are not represented?
7. What are the chapter's leadership and skill needs (e.g., someone with PR experience, a newsletter editor, etc.)?
8. How much time and money will be needed for a membership campaign?

Reminding activists of what made NOW “click” with them will often help in reestablishing some membership recruitment techniques the chapter may have eliminated from its program to “save time” –such as calling new members to encourage them to come to meetings, or having someone at the door to greet people and introduce them to others. Helping you incorporate all this into a campaign and as an ongoing part of your chapter's program is the purpose of this report.

### **The Budget**

No chapter can afford not to recruit new members. Since chapters generally keep the greatest share of the division of a \$35 or \$40 membership dues payment, it's not hard to see how a recruitment campaign can pay for itself or even make a profit. There are costs such as telephone usage, printing of materials, mailings, advertising, and perhaps travel. These items serve other important chapter programs, such as community visibility, so their cost and benefit might be shared elsewhere in the chapter budget.

## Recruitment Committee

After discussing your chapter's goals and reviewing the budget, the membership or recruitment committee should plan its timelines and projects, making use of chapter actions, special events, chapter phone banks and list servs, the chapter bureau, a media campaign and any other chapter outreach – for example, information tables or leafletting. It is important to look at your lists of chapter contributors and subscribers who have never joined, as well as other possible targets: ads in newsletters of like-minded groups, flyers on bulletin boards in union halls, laundromats, and so forth.

At the kick-off meeting of the committee, delegate responsibility for particular aspects of the campaign, such as ordering supplies, preparing materials, or putting together a calendar of chapter events. Meetings with other task force or committee chairs can be helpful in integrating your recruiting plans into the overall chapter program.

It is helpful to motivate members of the committee and chapter activists in general by establishing a process for evaluating the campaign, monitoring membership numbers increases, and perhaps recognizing the most successful recruiters or recruiting methods as incentives to others.

## The Campaign – Actions and Outreach

Actions and outreach are two main avenues you'll want to use in recruiting members to NOW.

NOW chapters should recognize ACTIONS as their first priority. Successful actions bring in new members, build confidence and help us to achieve our goals. People who join NOW because of actions taken by a local chapter are more likely to become activists: women and men who want to do something about sex discrimination in our society.

Too often, we do not incorporate a membership recruitment component in our action planning. Remember to have applications for NOW membership at rallies, pickets, press conferences, debates, candidate events – every action your chapter takes should have a chapter development/membership recruitment component!

The following list suggests actions and member education programs on NOW's issues which could easily be incorporated with a membership recruitment plan:

petition drives	informational pickets	constituent visits/lobbying
letter writing	phone banks	leafletting
rallies/marches	vigils	signature/newspaper ads
public hearings, debates	billboards	online petitions
walkathons	get out the vote (GOTV)	social networking campaigns



## **Outreach**

The easiest (and often most successful) outreach is personal contact with friends and co-workers of the chapter's active members. In other words, ASK! Supply activists with membership forms and urge them to ask friends, family and neighbors to join. They'll be surprised at the positive response. An award or recognition for the most new members recruited may help.

Successful outreach is directed everywhere – media, community organizations which share our views, individuals who express common concerns – and a successful recruitment contains a strategy for each.

Alerting the media can be of some help in successful outreach. You may decide to contact them (local print, websites, radio and even TV) for purposes of announcing the campaign and distributing information about the chapter and its accomplishments. The chapter may wish to produce a press kit containing basic information about NOW, specific to the campaign, but also including organizational information about our history and local activities.

Other outreach strategies may include a meeting with a state regional, or even national officer or staff person to which press would be invited, presenting the history and accomplishments of NOW. Small discussion groups can be scheduled to which chapter members bring friends who are interested in learning more about the organization. If your chapter doesn't already have a local recruiting brochure describing chapter activities and contacts, now is a perfect time to produce one. Flyers announcing the chapter's membership recruitment campaign could be posted in libraries, supermarkets, and other public places.

## **Diversity**

NOW has a strong history and commitment to working for all women. However, in the past we have sometimes failed to address our issues in terms that are relevant to all women, particularly women of color. As well, lesbians may feel alienated from a chapter which never acknowledges their issues. To be successful in expanding the chapter in ways which include these groups, members much look at their own behavior to understand why women of color and lesbians might not be comfortable or feel welcome in the chapter.

A good place to begin such discussion might be to read over the supplement to this report which suggests awareness questions for the topics "Lesbians and Feminism" and "Double Discrimination: Race and Sex." These discussion topics address our use of certain words/language, the attitudes of our families towards different racial or ethnic groups, and putting ourselves in a very real way in the shoes of women of color and lesbians. Obviously, this approach addresses only the outer reaches of such problems. Make plans as a chapter to go further!! As your campaign progresses, take time to evaluate and make any changes necessary.

## **Orientation of New Members**

New member orientations are an excellent way to introduce new members to NOW and to encourage them to take an activist role. New members can be integrated into the chapter by completing questionnaires and identifying specific interests and talents. They also may benefit from receiving a member packet as an initial orientation to NOW.

A reception, featuring a state officer to speak on NOW's purpose, history and goals is another possible orientation event. The reception should have NOW materials available for new members, including new member packets and new member questionnaires.

A NOW issues briefing can help familiarize new members with NOW. Such a briefing might include a brief history of the involvement of that issue in NOW, fact sheets, current legislative information and literature of candidates who support our position on the issue.

## **Member Packets**

Chapters may wish to have different packets for potential members and for women and men who actually joined the chapter. Some suggestions for these two separate packets follow. Neither need to be elaborate – a simple one or two pocket folder, or even a large envelope with the chapter's name, contact number and a NOW logo or action/issues sticker (I support abortion rights and I organize). Some chapters include such a sticker or a button in such a packet as a "gift."

### *Potential Member Packet:*

1. History of NOW
2. Chapter brochure and/or purpose and goals
3. NOW general recruiting brochures
4. Issue brochures, and fact sheets
5. Chapter newsletter
6. National NOW Times
7. Elected official contact list
8. Chapter office contact list

### *Potential New Member Packet:*

1. Chapter bylaws and operating rules
2. Chapter committees and task force lists and responsibilities
3. Welcome letter from chapter president
4. Nuts and Bolts of NOW (Ms magazine)
5. Sheets explaining NOW dues policy/renewals through National NOW
6. Chapter business card
7. Chapter calendar
8. Button/sticker/certificate for a free t-shirt when they come to the next chapter meeting
9. Robert's Rules of Order at a glance

## Awareness Discussion for Chapters & States

In order to be credible in our membership recruitment, to both specific groups and the general public, we need to be aware of attitudes and behaviors we have as individuals and as a group, which might make potential members feel uncomfortable, dismissing our whole chapter as “insensitive.”

These behaviors might range from an inadvertent homophobic or racist remark, all the way down to simply having the chapter meetings in a member’s large, comfortable home or even in a public place which is not accessible for the disabled or for members who must depend on public transportation.

The best preparation for any outreach or membership recruitment activity is to plan a time for the members of the chapter to discuss among themselves some of their own feelings and attitudes about issues such as race, lesbian women and homosexuality, even class and economic issues. *Ideally*, your chapter could hold a workshop on unlearning prejudice, conducted by trained leaders, from some group similar to the National Coalition Building Institute, but any good open discussion will be helpful in beginning to open doors. Until we all confront our own “baggage” – the racist, sexist and homophobic feelings, speech and attitudes that we all carry, we cannot begin to be credible with women who are different from ourselves.

The following are two sample sets of such discussion questions.

### LESBIANS AND FEMINISM

*Political Points:* Social disapproval and legal oppression of lesbians are part of the oppression of all women. When women fear lesbians – usually they have few ideas why they have these feelings – they remain alienated from each other. The time and activity spent in fear of lesbians, known as homophobia, depletes the women’s movement of the unity it needs.

Lesbians face double discrimination. In addition to the oppression which all women experience, lesbians are socially and legally discriminated against. This discrimination may involve the loss of a job, an apartment, or custody of their children. The fear of being labeled “lesbian” prevents women from developing their own personalities, interests, and friendships. Oppression of lesbians becomes oppression of all women who are “kept in their place” out of fear of being identified with or as lesbians. A non-sexist society, based on free choice, would not judge people on the basis of their sexual preference.

*Circle questions:* [This session begins with two role-playing situations in which each member of the group takes her turn to answer questions – one in a role as a lesbian and one in a role as a heterosexual woman. The leader should be sure each woman uses “I” statements, regardless of whether she is a lesbian or a heterosexual.] The leader may begin by saying, “In the first role, we are all lesbian women and will respond to these questions as lesbians. Finish each statement with your own response.”

“I am a lesbian, and I am oppressed by ...”  
“I am a lesbian, and I fear heterosexual women because ...”  
“I am a lesbian, and I recognize other lesbians by ...”  
“I am a lesbian, and the first person I told was ...”

The leader may introduce the second part with something like, “In our second role, we are all heterosexual women and will respond to each question as such. Finish each statement with your own response.”

“I am a heterosexual woman, and I am oppressed by ...”  
“I am a heterosexual woman, and I fear lesbians because ...”  
“I am a heterosexual woman, and I recognize other heterosexual women by ...”  
“I am a heterosexual woman, and the first person I told was ...”

Additionally, your group may want to explore some of these questions:

♀ How are the lives and relationships of heterosexuals and lesbians alike and different? What are the “privileges” that heterosexuals have that lesbians do not?

♀ Have you ever heard the term homophobia? Heterosexism? What kind of behavior would be an example of each? What can we do to help lesbians and heterosexual women learn about each other?

♀ During World War II, the King of Denmark rode through the streets wearing a Star of David on his arm to prevent the Nazis from identifying Jews and killing them. Similarly, what steps can we take when we are, or a friend of ours, is labeled “lesbian?” If someone called you a “lesbian” as a threat or epithet, what would you do?

♀ Why are lesbian issues important to the women’s movement? Consider the feminist principle of control over one’s own body, the divide and conquer tradition, the double oppression of lesbians and the use of the lesbian issue as a scare tactic to keep women out of the movement. Lesbians do not primarily depend on men in their personal lives – does this threaten other groups by indicating that such dependence is not absolutely essential?

#### DOUBLE DISCRIMINATION: RACE AND SEX

*Political Points:* Racism is a feminist issue. Because we seek equality for all women in our society, we actively address and work to eliminate any form of discrimination which limits our progress. Women of color face double discrimination because of race as well as gender. While many feminists philosophically believe that we are all sisters, subtle forms of racism and difference in action priorities may divide us as we work toward the same goal.

Our words are limited when we attempt to describe the many forms of racism. The term “racism” encompasses everything from subtle, non-verbal behaviors to blatant acts of violence or “hate crimes,” from individual instances to institutionalized discrimination. Women of racial and ethnic diversity experience some of the same anger and frustration toward white women that many women feel in dealing with men whose sexism is subtle.

As feminists, we will work together to address double discrimination. We must examine and educate ourselves to alter personal and organizational patterns that are unconsciously racist. When we take the time to think about these patterns, we will, without question, be more effective at the anti-racist, anti-sexist political action we must take.

### *Circle Questions:*

♀ Do you remember when you first became aware of racial differences? When did you begin to treat people of another race differently? Did this cause your feelings and perceptions of others to change? How would you define racism?

♀ Offer aloud words that were used by your parents and grandparents to refer to other racial groups. [The leader should print out on a large tablet or chalk board the terms for all to see.] Add any other words you have heard to describe so-called brown, yellow, black, red, and white people. What feelings do you have when you hear or see these words? What purpose do these words serve?

♀ Discuss how you feel about what is generally referred to as “politically correct” language. The group needs to understand that often within some groups, and in different parts of the country, individuals may prefer different names. You may need to discuss how one should go about finding out how a group in your area might prefer being addressed.

♀ What differences are there between you and women of other races and ethnicities. What are the similarities? [The leader should encourage the group to discuss *all* aspects of women’s lives – children, food, work, clothes, relationships.]

♀ Do you feel that being white has advantages? If so, when did you start feeling this way? If not, why not?

♀ How is it that people who intellectually understand and abhor racism in its largest sense can exhibit racist behaviors? Is racism something only bad people do? Have you ever consciously identified a behavior of your own that was racist and worked to change it?

♀ Are all of the issues addressed by the women’s movement immediately relevant to the lives of women of color? [The leader may want to list these as they are named – as above – where all can see when discussing them.] What personal experience do you have on which to base your opinion? Which of the issues cut across race and class lines? Which issues might be viewed as racist because they do not? Which issues are more important to you?

♀ Have you ever made a political choice where you had to put your race before being a woman? What were your feelings about this? Must we choose between these two? What do women have to gain by speaking with a united voice?

♀ How can our organization more effectively act upon the concerns of women of racial and ethnic diversity?

♀ How hard is it to speak up when we hear a racist or ethnic slur in a group of friends, family members, or business associates who are not necessarily feminists?

In both discussions, it will be quite important to include the ramifications of economic discrimination any group faces. Keep in mind the fact that wage levels for women of ethnic and racial “minorities” are lower than for white women, and that a lesbian household may consist of two women who are earning the proverbial 78 cents for every dollar earned by men.

We encourage chapters to call us for more ideas on ways to reduce and unlearn prejudice, so that we will be more open as an organization to *all* women and men. We can put you in touch with groups that can work with you to make sure these discussions are productive and successful. Ask to speak with Chapter Development Staff.

## **DIVERSIFYING NOW**

NOW seeks to eliminate discrimination in all forms – including discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, disability, class, age, sexual orientation, religion, or size. Each form of discrimination has an insidious effect on our society and on us. Essential to our goal of creating more opportunities for all women is the elimination of the ways we may intentionally or subtly practice discrimination. After working through who we are and what we do, we must take action to ensure that NOW is representative and diverse.

Ideally, chapter members should represent a broad cross-section of your community in order to address all forms of discrimination and the issues of the entire community. This kind of diversity should be a goal of every NOW chapter.

This chapter development report will offer suggestions for chapters trying to increase their diversity: using discussion questions and role plays with members to better understand the issues, developing programs and using chapter structure to insure ongoing outreach and progress.

### **Identifying Diversity**

Many chapters have tried to recruit a diverse chapter membership. They invite members of African American, Latina, Native American or Asian/Pacific Islands communities to join their chapter. They include lesbian and gay organizations and disability rights groups on their newsletter mailing list or list serves. They try to identify issues their groups may have in common. NOW representatives or speakers are sent to these organizations to ask for their help on common concerns. Without meaning to, they may alienate the very people they mean to include.

Chapters should not assume these groups we seek to include need or want our help. It would probably be far more effective to use the activities below to heighten our own awareness.

By brainstorming with all your members and using your general knowledge about other organizations, determine what your organization already knows about the issues of women of color, lesbians, working class women, women of differing ages, etc., the problems and issues they face which might be of concern to members and actions they are taking. If overlapping ties do not exist, why do you think that is so?

### **Chapter Structure**

Your chapter or state should consider adding (if you don't already have) an affirmative action or diversity task force which would facilitate chapter diversity programs and activities. You may also want to:

1. Amend chapter bylaws and/or operating rules in accordance with National Conference and National Board resolutions on affirmative action. (These resolutions are available in the National Issues and Administrative Policy Manuals. Contact the NOW Action Center if you need help.)
2. Develop and include diversity goals in short-term and long-term chapter planning. This should also include an assessment of your chapter's structure for ways to increase diversity, providing for representation on chapter boards, committees, and task forces.
3. Coordinating ongoing diversity programs, such as:
  - a. Unlearning racism or multi-cultural awareness workshops.
  - b. Holding African American Women's Herstory Programs not only during Black History Month and Women's History Month.
  - c. Inviting women of color to speak on issues other than race, inviting "out" lesbians to speak on issues other than discrimination or homophobia, and so forth.
  - d. Producing regular newsletter articles, online features and chapter programs educating members on diversity issues.
  - e. Showing up at public events – marches, demonstrations, forums – a great way to show how NOW can produce people for other causes which are not organized by NOW.

### **Chapter and Community Assessment**

What diverse communities are represented in your chapter? In your chapter/leadership decision making? Which are not? For what reasons do you believe they are not? Do you have a task force or committee within your chapter which suggests goals and offers direction on chapter diversity? Does your chapter carry out actions on issues that affect a diverse group of women? Does the chapter public relations/newsletter/press contact seek out racially diverse and alternative media sources in your area?

Does your chapter have members who have experience in working on issues particularly affecting women of color? What contacts does your chapter have in your community with African American, Latina, Native American, and Asian-Pacific groups?

Does your city or state have a women's coalition which reflects diversity – disability rights organizations, older women's groups, racially and ethnically diverse organizations, lesbian/gay organizations, displaced homemakers or other groups dedicated to economic justice issues, women representing religious groups – as well as the more traditional women's groups such as the League of Women Voters and AAUW?



What has your chapter done to implement the NOW bylaw calling for affirmative action plans for states and chapters? How did your chapter members react when they learned of this requirement?

Look at your own chapter's practices:

1. Where does your chapter advertise meetings and activities? How could you promote the chapter to different audiences?
2. When you are reaching out to younger feminists/older feminists, where do you look?
3. Does your chapter consult various religious calendars when scheduling chapter meetings and programs? When scheduling an event, are you as sensitive to avoid Yom Kippur as you would be to avoiding Christmas? Even though we have differences with several religious denominations, especially on the issues of abortion and lesbian and gay rights, is your membership sensitive to the fact that some members may actively practice a religion?
4. Is the chapter meeting place near public transportation and accessible for persons with disabilities?
5. When you have an information table, do you always include information about lesbian rights and combating racism?
6. Are your meetings held in an all-white neighborhood? Think of your meeting location, and consider whether it is in a location where all races and classes feel comfortable going.
7. Does your chapter encourage women of low income to attend events by actively promoting a sliding fee scale, or offering scholarships? Do you make child care available at your meetings?
8. What types of events do you use as fundraisers? Does your chapter fundraising plan include a broad variety of events – location, price range, type?

### **Increasing Chapter Awareness**

*Role Playing:* This is a unique opportunity for chapter members to learn how another woman might feel in a situation and how she might respond. Ask the role player to really put herself in the shoes of the person she is playing, and then describe her feelings afterward.

1. A straight woman playing a lesbian coming out to a new friend in the chapter.

2. A non-African American playing an African American woman in a group where a racial comment has just been made.
3. A lesbian playing a straight woman who is explaining to her husband that there will be lesbian couples at the chapter holiday party.
4. Any chapter member playing a member who must ask for the sliding scale cost of a chapter event.
5. Two women of color, playing white women, discussing the privileges they enjoy because they are white.

*Brainstorming:* Plan sessions in which members can use their collective experiences to identify prejudice.

1. How do children learn to identify and discriminate on the basis of race?
2. What are the stereotypical words or behaviors for Latinas/os, Native Americans, Asian/Pacific or African American peoples, lesbians, Jews or Roman Catholics: what do the labels say about the way we think about them?
3. Make a list of the economic and heterosexual privileges – income tax filing for married couples is an obvious one, but have members considered that lesbians and gay men can't talk about their lives, have pictures of loved ones on their desks at work, or many other advantages straight people take for granted?
4. List what might be called owning-class privileges: mortgage interest deduction, upper class mobility, access to financial institutions, advantages of education, better health care, and so forth.

*More to consider:* We have all been in situation where we learn about discrimination by being in the minority ourselves. Encourage members to do some of the following exercises:

1. When one member of a social group needs to enter a restaurant or meeting place through a "handicapped" entrance, the entire group should use that entrance instead of sending the person with special needs alone.
2. Visit a food store catering to a specific ethnic population. How does it feel to be in a place where English is not the only language spoken or where you are the ethnic minority?
3. Take public transportation to an event to which you would usually drive. How many buses or trains must you take to get where you are going? How much longer does it take you?

4. Heterosexual women attend a “women only” music event or festival or a lesbian bar. This is a chance to participate in the fun, while understanding how it feels to be in the minority.
5. Caucasian chapter members attend an event in which they will be the racial minority – the PTA meeting of a primarily African American school, a religious service of a primarily African American congregation, or a play or musical event catering to a primarily African American audience. What similarities and differences do you experience?

### **Getting Involved**

After working on chapter education and awareness, invite the president of the local African American (or Latina, Asian, Native American, lesbian, disability rights) women’s organization to come to the NOW chapter as a speaker or presenter. You want to learn:

1. Their history and structure
2. Their activities – how they lobby, how they perceive action
3. What issues are most important to women in their organization
4. Anything about the culture they represent which explains their organization, their goals, their use of language to identify issues, and so forth
5. Any historical problems or division between your two groups which may still need to be resolved

Be clear with your chapter members and your invited speaker what goals you have for such a meeting or program, including possible outcomes. It is important to combine these activities with discussions of your own. Chapter members may have all kinds of cultural or religious backgrounds which will make it difficult for them to understand what they are hearing.

Look at the issues identified by diverse organizations and identify those the chapter will tackle – start by working on their issues that we see as a joint concern, rather than asking them to come and help on our issues that we believe should be of joint concern.

One of the problems identified by some groups, for example women and men of color, in attempts to work with white women and men, is their tendency to try to take over a project for people of color. You will need to remember that just because a group is not carrying out an action in the manner in which you are accustomed to seeing it done, this does not mean the group doesn’t know what they’re doing or that they are inexperienced. Many of these groups have a long history of organizing in this country. We are not suggesting you shouldn’t attempt to provide input and ideas. We are asking you to pay attention to how you provide such input.

## **Identifying Resources**

*NOW Materials:* The NOW Action Center has several resources to assist a chapter working on diversity. For both Lesbian Rights and Racial Diversity, these include a resource kit, fact sheets, and brochures.

*Community Contacts:* Nearly every community or area has racially and culturally diverse organizations that are working on issues which are of concern to us, too. On the following page is a starter list of national contacts which can help you identify local groups. Your goal is to understand thoroughly how these groups are organized, what they are doing and what resources they have to offer.

## National Contacts

National Asian Pacific American Women's  
Forum  
1322 18<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: 202.470.3170  
Fax: 202.470.3171  
info@napawf.org  
<http://napawf.org/>

Disability Rights Education and Defense  
Fund  
2212 Sixth Street  
Berkeley, CA 94710  
Tel: 510.644.2555  
Fax: 510.841.8645  
info@dredf.org  
[www.dredf.org](http://www.dredf.org)

National Council of Negro Women  
National Headquarters  
633 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20004  
Tel: 202.737.0120  
Fax: 202.737.0476  
ncnwinfo@ncnw.org  
[www.ncnw.org](http://www.ncnw.org)

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
1325 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005  
Tel: 202.393.5177  
Fax: 202.393.2241  
info@TheTaskForce.org  
[www.ngltf.org](http://www.ngltf.org)

Black Women's Health Imperative  
1726 M Street, N.W., Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: 202.548.4000  
Fax: 202.543.9743  
info@BlackWomensHealth.org  
[www.blackwomenshealth.org](http://www.blackwomenshealth.org)

National Council of Jewish Women  
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1901  
New York, NY 10115  
Tel: 212.645.4048  
Fax: 212.645.7466  
action@ncjw.org  
[www.ncjw.org](http://www.ncjw.org)

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority  
5656 South Stony Island Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60637  
Tel: 773.684.1282  
Fax: 773.288.8251  
exec@aka1908.com  
[www.aka1908.com](http://www.aka1908.com)

Older Women's League  
1828 L Street, N.W., Suite 801  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: 1.800.825.3695  
Fax: 202.332.2949  
owl@owl-national.org  
[www.owl-national.org](http://www.owl-national.org)

B'nai B'rith Women  
International Headquarters  
2020 K Street, N.W., 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: 202.857.6600  
cca@bnaibrith.org  
<http://bnaibrith.org>

National Association to Advance Fat  
Acceptance  
PO Box 22510  
Oakland, CA 94609  
Tel: 916.558.6880  
Fax: 916.558.6881  
<http://naafaonline.com>

## CHAPTER DIVERSITY PLAN

The following are steps toward building an affirmative action/diversity program. They are aimed at educating, integrating and diversifying the membership and leadership of a chapter. Make a timetable and, if necessary, a line item in the chapter's budget. The timeline should be realistic, but NOW chapters should realize that little else we do will be more important to the organization's overall effectiveness and goals than increasing diversity in our membership and leadership.

### **Community Assessment**

Compile statistics on the racial and ethnic diversity of the community or geographic area the chapter serves. What other kinds of diverse populations are present in your area? For example, an estimated 10% of the population is lesbian or gay.

Find out about groups or organizations representing racial diversity in the community, as well as lesbian and gay groups, people with disabilities, senior citizens, younger women (campus and pink/blue collar women's groups) as well as economic groups that are not represented in the chapter's membership. The Chambers of Commerce sometimes have lists that can identify local organizations and contact persons. Census Bureau data, available at your local library, can help in defining the racial make-up of the community.

### **Chapter Awareness/Sensitivity**

This step in the process is critical – if you need help at this point, please get it!

Work with your chapter to increase/heighten awareness and sensitivity about other groups not fully represented in your chapter's activist core. With help from representatives of these groups or organizations, or from some independent organizations/groups dedicated to unlearning prejudice, or from leaders within NOW (i.e., the NOW Action Center, or national or state leaders) plan structured discussions around your members' feelings about race, sexuality, and economic class.

Be aware of the way your chapter looks to others. Consider your choice of meeting places: are you meeting in a church or in an all-white suburb where some people would feel uncomfortable? Is the building (and its bathroom) wheelchair accessible? Do you make it relatively easy for women with small children to attend your meetings by offering child care upon request?

The sections of this manual entitled "Planning a Membership Campaign" and "Diversifying NOW" (see Running Smoothly) have suggestions of chapter discussion questions and role plays to begin this work.

## **Outreach**

The chapter's activists should approach the groups and organizations you have identified. Attend their meetings. Join as members. Ask what they are doing to advance their priority issues, what events they are working on, participating in or hosting, and come to these events as NOW members – join in and participate. Invite their leaders to NOW meetings to speak on their issues and for discussions with our members. Be prepared for criticism, talk of hurt feelings and advice on how we can improve. Plan joint events. Don't forget to include diverse media contacts in all publicity your chapter does.

Talk with political contacts you have, exchanging ideas and getting the names of some of their contacts in diverse communities.

Learn from these women and men, and **don't** assume they "need" our advice or expertise – they've been working on issues of concern to them for years and they know what works. We *don't* know it all. Don't get discouraged, since this "outreach" step may seem to take a long time. However, if you weren't doing this outreach before, or if you were doing it without some awareness discussions for your chapter's activists, it's a sure sign of progress toward diversity.

## **Invitations to Join NOW**

Invite individuals to join the chapter. Set goals for involving these activists in your chapter leadership. Encourage their participation in task forces and committees, as well as board positions. It isn't good enough for us to have members who might **understand** these concerns – we need diversity **everyone** can bring to the planning and implementation of NOW's agenda.

## **The Personal Is Political**

The ultimate test is your own chapter members' personal address books. When these names and addresses are diverse and truly reflect your community, your NOW chapter membership will also.

**CHAPTER/STATE DIVERSITY PLANNING FORM**

Chapter/State Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Demographics:** We found the following racial and cultural demographics (such as race, ethnicity, age, economic status, religion, disability) in that area which our chapter/state serves:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

We used these sources to determine demographics in our area (such as census data, public library, local chamber of commerce, city hall information desk, etc.):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_









# ISSUES AND ACTIONS

## PLANNING ACTIONS

The NOW statement of purpose drafted at its founding states "NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men."

The key words in the statement of purpose are "to take action." Actions enable us to change social attitudes, gain power and influence within our communities, recruit members, raise money, and publicize NOW's existence.

According to National NOW policy, all chapters of NOW are expected to complete three (3) actions/projects, each on a different issue during the twelve-month convening period. At least one of these must have been on one of the following: racism, lesbian rights, abortion and reproductive rights. Chapters should establish local goals and objectives to tackle those areas of sexism about which the chapter feels most strongly, in conjunction with state and national priorities: for example, working on a lobby campaign to encourage your U.S. Senator to co-sponsor a piece of legislation.

Before setting your goals, take time to analyze the community. Discover what tactics/strategies have been used in the past, and how successful they have been.

Identify who will be affected by your action, both positively and negatively. Always, always identify your targets, and make sure your action will affect them. Make sure your action is directed toward someone in a policy-making position.

Consider whether your chapter has enough "woman power" to make the action successful. You don't want to stage a mass rally with ten people.

Think through what message the action will send to both friend and foe. Try to envision how the press will report the action and the "picture" the community will see in the paper or on television.

Find out what local restrictions may apply concerning your action. For example, you may need to get a police permit for a picket, etc.

### **Planning the Action**

After you have determined what strategy or tactic you want to use, make a list of *everything* that needs to be done to make it successful. Develop a time line (including when you will mail press releases) and coordinate phone bank schedules. Your list should also include who will be responsible for each task.

Explore costs involved in your action. Printing, postage, and permits are normal costs of carrying out any action. Always try to offset the costs of your actions by including a fundraising component with your action. Sell buttons or T-shirts to commemorate the event, or you can take up a collection (check your permit for this activity).

The next important thing to consider when planning your action is how many people you want to participate. A silent vigil will only take a few people to actually participate, while a letter writing campaign may take several dozen.

To gather participants, identify your supporters outside of NOW. What other organizations or groups of people will be affected by the situation (i.e., older women, single parents, etc.)? Always call your membership to solicit their help in planning to staff the action.

Publicity is a crucial component of planning actions. The first thing to consider is how much publicity you want and then plan time lines and deadlines to attract the press. Cultivate good relationships with the reporters and photographers who cover your action and your chapter.

Chapters must designate a chapter spokesperson to the press. Usually this will be the chapter president and/or the task force chair for that issue. You may consider organizing press packets to inform the press of your activities. These will be given out at the event itself.

Because actions are the heart of NOW, it is very important that they are planned skillfully and with enough time to make them successful. Use the attached 'questions' sheet to discuss any action before you begin.

### **Service Verses Action**

The temptation to engage in service-oriented activities is great, for much work of this kind needs to be done. Many women are most comfortable in the role of "helper," and engaging in service activities provides an internal sense of achievement by reinforcing that self-image. Certainly, service activities are needed and are important. However, the personal choice of whether to engage in service or action must be separated from the organizational choice.

For example, the bad treatment of a rape victim by your local police department can be the impetus for a campaign to change the department's policies and procedures, and could lead you to pursue legislative changes so this will not happen to other women in the future. In the long run, this will be more effective for all women than orienting the chapter's activity toward individual "band-aids" such as volunteering at a local rape crisis center, although individual members may do this on their own.

NOW takes action to bring women, as a group, into full equality and to address problems at their root cause, rather than offering aid to individual women in achieving personal solutions or temporary relief from oppression. Of course, sometimes the plight of an individual can be the perfect "hook" for your chapter to take action that will make real change.

NOW's self-defined role has been to initiate institutional change at the broadest level, to affect the legal and institutional structures of our society in a way that systematically expands the choices and opportunities to all people.

### **Sample Actions**

Items shown that are not necessarily "actions" can certainly be used to make a total project effective. For example, if the chapter is working on a reproductive rights project, actions such as picketing, lobbying and petitioning can often be used in conjunction with educational programs. For example, a program meeting with a speaker on an aspect of reproductive rights can be a springboard for discussion among chapter members and those who might have come to the meeting to hear the speaker. From that point, chapter leaders can plan whatever activities are appropriate to focus on or accomplish the goal.

#### Activities That Are Actions:

1. Pickets/marches/protests/vigils
2. Lobbying public officials/legislators
3. Phone banking for actions
4. Drafting legislation and proposing improvements to state laws
5. Walk-a-thons to raise funds and educate the public
6. Street theater
7. Speak-outs or public hearings on NOW issues
8. Letter writing parties/post card campaigns
9. "Zap" (quickly pulled together) actions to call attention to discriminatory situations or practices
10. Court watch or media watch projects
11. "Bad ad" campaigns against sexist/negative images of women

#### Activities That Should Be Done In Conjunction With Actions, But Are NOT Actions Themselves:

1. Press releases on issues or events
2. Letters to the editor
3. Program meetings with guest speakers
4. Membership meetings/new member meetings
5. Book discussion groups
6. Consciousness-raising groups
7. Attending conferences or meetings
8. Blog posts

## Planning Your Action

1. Begin with a short discussion of what kind of press photo/story coverage you would like to see in/on the news, and what message you want to send in holding this action.
2. What has been done before? (Issue and tactics)
3. What was the result? What might be different now that would affect or change the result?
4. Identify your target(s) – is each target a decision-maker, someone who can affect the issue?
5. Who will be affected by this action? Look for both positive and negative effects.
6. What are the possible outcomes and results – positive and negative?
7. What outcome will you consider a "win?"
8. How many people do you want /need to participate?
9. Are you prepared to negotiate with your targets?
10. Do your members feel comfortable with the action?
11. What are the legal restrictions?
12. What are the financial costs? Organizational ramifications?
13. How much media do you want/need?
14. What are the risks involved?
15. What experience does your membership have with this tactic or situation, for example, local right wing religious leaders, that you can tap in the effort?
16. What coalition partners do you have on the issue, and to what extent do you want to involve them in the action?
17. Two events need to be scheduled after the action: a volunteer appreciation event of some kind, and a debriefing to help future chapter leaders plan actions!

## Sample Time Line and Check List For Actions

4 weeks prior	Choose site, date and time. Apply for any permits or make room reservations. Contact potential speakers/performers.
3 weeks prior	(or as soon as permit/space reservations are approved) Create a flyer listing date, site, time, purpose, and number to call for more information. Contact supportive local groups, coalition partners and campus supporters.

## CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT AND ACTION

Many NOW activists become very "task" oriented as we go about the work of changing the world. If a piece of legislation needs to be passed, we plan a lobbying campaign to pass it. If an individual or a group comes to us because they've been denied their civil rights, we set about targeting elected officials or corporation heads to right the wrong. If the chapter is asked to join in a National Action, we launch into getting and filling buses and making signs. But all too often, we pass up the chance to set and to achieve chapter development goals and objectives at the same time!

Every action or project in which a chapter participates, in addition to the goals of the action – numbers of people, diversity objectives for the crowd and speakers, good press for the issue – should also have the following chapter development objectives:

1. *Building your membership and activist base* – how many new members will join the chapter around this action or project? How many chapter members who haven't been very active in the past can we inspire to become more involved? Being able to report "We got X new members" is a real "win" for any chapter.
2. *Building your financial base for this and future actions* – Few chapters have a financial cushion that enables them to participate in actions without doing fundraising, and many chapters don't do actions because they feel they can't afford them. Issue fundraising (selling message-specific buttons, bumper stickers, T-shirts) as well as asking non-active chapter members for contributions to fund the event will not only pay most of the bills, but will also increase the number of people who have a stake in the action.
3. *Increasing the chapter's visibility in the community* – Set goals for the amount of publicity you want to get and don't give up because one kind of media isn't an option (the local newspaper editor may be unfriendly, but a local radio station might welcome the chapter president on a talk show or the TV station might do a story). If all else fails, fundraise around visibility for the action, so you can buy ad space in/on the best form of media for the event.
4. *Strengthening community contacts and coalition contacts* – This is a good time to look at how the chapter might work on diversity goals – making certain that all possible allies are represented in a coalition, and/or involving groups with which we haven't had much opportunity for contact. This goal could also involve simply finding a good feminist-owned copy shop that will work on "NOW" time schedules (last minute), or finding out that a member of the school board also supports reproductive freedom and will work with us on that issue in the future.

All too often, our actions and projects don't result in clear cut "wins." The legislation passed isn't all we wanted, the crowd at the rally falls short of expectations, or the court case we're supporting comes down against us. Setting clear and specific chapter development goals will often give the chapter the "wins" we didn't get otherwise, and a sense of power to try again.



## NOW'S PRIORITY ISSUES

Constitutional Equality – Equality in pay, job opportunities, political structure, social security and education will remain an elusive dream without a constitutional equality amendment. The progress we have made -- and must continue to make -- towards women's equality can be lost at any time because women are not granted equal rights in the Constitution. Without constitutional equality, women workers face repeated and varied forms of discrimination, and the patterns of sex discrimination in the workplace will never change. Winning a constitutional guarantee of equality for women remains one of NOW's top priorities.

Reproductive Rights – NOW affirms that reproductive rights are issues of life and death for women, not mere matters of choice. NOW fully supports access to safe and legal abortion, to effective birth control, to reproductive health and education for all women. We oppose attempts to restrict these rights through legislation, regulation or constitutional amendment.

Combating Racism – NOW condemns the racism which inflicts a double burden of race and sex discrimination on women of color. Seeing human rights as indivisible, we are committed to identifying and fighting against those barriers to equality and justice that are imposed by racism. A leader in the struggle for civil rights since its inception in 1966, NOW continues to fight for equal opportunities for women of color in all areas including employment, education and reproductive rights. NOW recognizes these multiple forms of discrimination and is committed to eliminating racist and sexist policies that hinder women of color from achieving full equality.

Lesbian Rights – NOW is committed to fighting discrimination based on sexual orientation in all areas, including employment, housing, public accommodations, health services, child custody and military policies. NOW is committed to educational efforts which combat the adverse effects of homophobia, promote positive images in the media of lesbians and ultimately ensure civil rights protection for all. NOW asserts the right of lesbians to live their lives with dignity and security.

Stopping Violence Against Women – NOW is unique in its approach to the issue of violence against women, emphasizing that there are many interrelated aspects to the issue: domestic violence; sexual assault; sexual harassment; clinic violence; hate crimes across lines of gender, sexuality and race; the gender bias in our judicial system that further victimizes the victims of violence; and the violence of poverty emphasized by the radical right's attacks on poor women and children -- all of these resulting from society's attitudes toward women and efforts to "keep women in their place."

Economic Justice – NOW has repeatedly taken clear stands on the wide range of economic justice issues affecting women, from the cement floor to the glass ceiling. These include welfare reform, livable wage, comparable worth, and pay equity. In addition to addressing poverty and welfare here at home, NOW has begun important work on economic issues affecting women globally.



# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The need for leadership development within NOW is critical to the long term stability and effectiveness of our organization. The most often-asked questions asked by chapters involve the evolution of members into activists and then into leaders.

For some of us, our own progression from member to leader was so subtle that we often can't specifically describe it, much less explain it to others. One thing is certain-- nothing is more frustrating for chapter leaders than to have women come to a meeting or two, join NOW, and then fade into the background of the chapter, seemingly unwilling to take on chapter responsibilities. How do we capture the interest and enthusiasm of new members to make them activists, and leaders?

It is essential to understand power, and learn how to make women aware of their own power and their ability as a group to change institutions - and why they might want to be leaders. It is equally helpful for women and men who are currently in leadership positions in the chapter to review criteria for effective, feminist leadership. This report will examine both aspects of leadership development.

## The Transition

A major component of leadership in NOW is the use of action-oriented techniques to identify and mobilize people and resources. For nearly fifty years, we have been empowering feminists to "take action" - we have been helping them to realize their own political efficacy as women - a sense that they "can make a difference." This awareness of power will inevitably alter the relationships within which we all work in society.

Once we understand that we as individuals can do something that expresses our views - participating in an action, for example, we can see that we are not alone. We experience first-hand the feeling that as a member of a group we can alter the power relationships that affect our lives. This realization can have a powerful, positive influence - "I know I can make a difference and I will do it again." The ability to organize individuals to work toward such a goal requires leadership. Leadership is not just one skill, but many. Some leadership skills come naturally to individuals, others are skills which must be learned or developed.

## Power

In our society, women often never experience power. The promise of becoming so powerful as to effect societal change brings women to NOW. Chapter leaders express frustration when women express interest, but then disappear. *It may actually be because the activities of the chapter in which they are invited to participate do not involve power or change.* All too often, they are invited to help assemble the newsletter or make four phone calls. This is why a new member's initial experiences should involve joining in a lobbying visit or participating in a fact-

finding visit to the County Health Department -- something which promises to bring about change.

Power is a tool used to effect change. The power of a NOW chapter lies in its members and their ability and willingness to take direct action. The responsibility of a NOW chapter leader is to effectively channel and utilize the power of the organization to influence others to change society.

### **Effective Leadership**

Women and men who come to NOW bring with them a tremendous and rich variety of backgrounds and experiences. Many will have views that do not fit neatly into our issue and position categories. They will have the same general end goals, but often vastly different ideas or "means" which with to get there! As leaders we must often invest significant amounts of energy into helping a meeting room of these folks blend all these ideas into a common set of objectives. Leadership is **not** a process of choosing the women and men you want to work with and getting "rid" of the rest. Further, a "silenced" member is not a "converted" member. Try to bring everyone along!

Leaders must know or be willing to learn our organizational structure. They should know how to set goals, communicate clearly with others, follow through with responsibilities and analyze problems. They should not underestimate the importance of good record keeping and personal organization, which is essential to the chapter's continuity and stability. This "herstory" can be a valuable resource in motivating new members who need a sense of continuity. They **must** have a vision of the chapter's role in the local community. Above all, they must understand the importance of inclusiveness, delegation, and of leadership training.

The following is a short list of some of the qualities of a good leader:

1. Respect for and recognition of others
2. Ability to plan and set goals
3. Communication of clear expectations for self and others
4. Commitment to NOW and ability to delegate
5. Understanding the importance of good record keeping
6. Good follow-through and evaluation practices
7. Ability to analyze problems
8. Ability to visualize the role of the chapter in the local community
9. Commitment to ongoing leadership training

### **Training Your Replacement**

Among the first things a new leader should do is to identify and cultivate the members of the chapter she would like to have in chapter offices next year. This doesn't mean to imply that the present leaders aren't good or wouldn't want to continue in office. What it does do is to

broaden the potential leadership base of the chapter. It maintains chapter stability and growth, lessens chances of burnout, and gives the chapter expanded possibilities of expertise and skill.

A primary leadership skill is motivating others to take action. Key ingredients for motivating others are enthusiasm and a positive attitude. Usually the leaders' attitudes set the "tone" for the chapter. Bringing about the desired change, "winning" an issue, gaining personal satisfaction, learning new skills, and being recognized by one's chapter are key benefits to taking action. Make sure your leadership brings about these benefits to your active members.

A leader can demoralize chapter members and diminish the effectiveness of the chapter if she or he:

1. Takes all the credit for a project or action
2. Fails to delegate responsibility
3. Expects all leaders to be "just like her/him"
4. Constantly criticizes the contributions of others
5. Ignores newcomers or "puts down" their ideas

It is important to identify leadership skills that members have and to delegate appropriate activities that will help develop these abilities and develop new ones. Above all, provide a safe environment where potential leaders can make their own decisions (and their own mistakes), and develop their own leadership style.

Structured training might include participation in chapter leadership retreats where outgoing and incoming officers have an opportunity to share information and experiences. It is critical to encourage participation in state and national conferences and in the leadership and issues training and chapter development workshops generally offered at such events.

NOW state and chapter organizations that promote ongoing leadership training and development will be able to maintain stability for the chapter and to remain effective in the community. Many of us realize that the initial commitment we made to NOW - perhaps to work on the ERA or to stop a parental consent bill in the state's legislature -has become a way of life for us. Even as the political, economic and social change we seek requires "eternal vigilance," activists move, or change their lives, responsibilities, and interests.

There are many written resources which are available, including this manual. The existence of these resources is really no secret, but many leaders, for a variety of reasons, don't know about them.

### **Evaluating Leadership**

In recruiting and developing leaders, it is important to evaluate both organizational and interpersonal skills possessed by each prospective leader. This leadership self-evaluation is a sample of an assessment chapter leaders might use.

1. Do you prefer to find someone new to do a job, or would you rather do it yourself?
2. Do you like delegating responsibility, or do you feel that it is more like asking someone to do your job for you?
3. Do you take on too much work and find yourself burning out quickly, but then feel like the organization asks too much?
4. Do you like taking on new jobs, or do you find you keep performing routine tasks that others could easily do?
5. Are you able to push yourself to do things you don't like to do, or delegate them to someone - or do you put them off and find yourself not doing them at all?
6. Do you enjoy passing on leadership skills to others?
7. Do you keep yourself informed by attending planning meetings and conference workshops, reading organizational publications, and taking notes you can use?
8. When you have a problem, can you ask for help from other leaders?
9. Is recruiting members and volunteers and delegating responsibility specified in the written job description for your organization's leadership? (If not, do you believe it should be?)
10. Do you agree that there is some role in the organization within the capabilities of every member?
11. Do you believe a feminist organization should attempt to provide opportunities for its own members to experience working together in what might be their first feminist experience with other women and men (and with women as the leaders)?
12. Have you drawn up a written list of all the separate tasks your committee(s) could be performing so that members can be recruited directly for specific activities?
13. Before asking someone to do a task, do you prepare a few simpler alternatives to offer, to increase the likelihood of a "yes" answer from the member and provide an opportunity for another member to make some positive contribution?
14. Have you distinguished between the delegation of short-term tasks (like finding a location for a press conference) and the delegation of on-going responsibilities (like typing the newsletter each month) so that you do not have to repeatedly recruit for the same tasks?
15. Have you used every method of recruiting activists, including direct contact, newspaper publicity, sign-up sheets at every gathering, attendance sheets at meetings, and sponsoring an interesting action that attracts new activists?
16. Are you making every effort to plan ahead, set goals with a timetable for completion, line up needed help, regularly follow up with those who are helping, avoid surprises, and offer encouragement, praise, and criticism when warranted?
17. Are you comfortable working with others who exhibit non-traditional characteristics such as competitiveness, managerial and executive ability, assertiveness, ambition, self-esteem, power, and brains?
18. Do you invite new activists to "tag along" on press interviews, legislative visits, etc. as an initial step in leadership development?

19. Are you comfortable with issues involving diversity in NOW? Is creating a positive environment for women and men of vastly different backgrounds, races and ethnicities, and sexual orientations a goal you feel you can work on?
20. Are you training your replacement?

Leadership in NOW chapters is an ongoing process of identifying and mobilizing people and resources to take direct action to change a sexist society. To mobilize human and material resources to take action, NOW leaders must have an understanding of the issues and the community, have the ability to plan and set goals, and must delegate responsibilities of the organizing process to encourage leadership development in others.

An effective leader recognizes that not all leadership styles are alike. An effective leader motivates and influences the chapter and community to effect positive changes in society. An effective leader uses power and influence to accomplish NOW's goals. Finally, an effective leader knows when to step aside to make room for others.

# MOTIVATING YOUR MEMBERS

Scenario One: "What are you doing about child support enforcement?" "How will the Supreme Court decision affect us here?" "There is so much sexual harassment down at the plant it's impossible to work there. What can YOU do?" It's a NOW chapter meeting and these might be the questions on the mind of a potential new member. Unfortunately, the chapter leaders are looking at the new recruit and thinking..."Great, maybe she'll take the newsletter off our hands." Trouble ahead! Chapter leaders are frustrated when an enthusiastic new person shows up for one or two meetings and then never comes back! New members are frustrated when they come to NOW wanting to "change the world" and end up phoning for a rummage sale.

Scenario Two: The chapter has decided on an abortion rights action at the state capitol, but (as usual) it's the same few people doing all of the work. The chapter president says, "I'd love to delegate more, but the people who know what they're doing aren't willing to help." Chapter leaders are frustrated that more of the activists aren't sharing the load. At the same time, new members who are capable of helping (and learning new skills) are reluctant to volunteer -- they say things like: "I don't feel like I understand things well enough to be of much help," "It seems they only want people with experience," "I didn't want to make a mistake or do it wrong," or "They've all done this before and it seems like everything's all set up."

## Motivation, Then Delegation

Motivation and delegation are both essentials of "leadership" -- but don't get them in the wrong order! If the leader starts delegating tasks before the member is motivated to do them, you have a standoff: the member feels "put upon" and the leader feels that the member "doesn't care" about the issue or event. However, the needs of the new member and the needs of the leader don't have to be on a collision course. You can prevent such a conflict by getting to know your members and tailoring your approach accordingly. Put simply, you first have to figure out where each individual member is "coming from" before you can figure out how to motivate her to participate in chapter activities. Once she wants to help with the issue or event, then you're ready to delegate tasks!

## What Motivates NOW members?

Answer: For the most part, the same things that motivate everyone, depending on the circumstances, e.g., altruism, fear or anger, guilt or duty, a desire to be accepted, opportunities for growth or change, incentives such as recognition or money. To find out what motivates folks in *your* chapter, ASK them. Seriously -- it is a good exercise for all chapter leadership to bring together a group of activists to talk about their own experiences in NOW.

1. What motivated you to come to your first NOW meeting?
2. Why did (didn't) you come back to a second meeting?
3. Why did you get active in NOW, instead of another group?



4. Why do you volunteer your time for certain events/activities and not for others? Do you respond better to requests from some leaders than from others? Why?
5. Did different things motivate your participation when you were a new member?  
Remember a successful event -- what motivated your involvement in it?

When you do this exercise, you will probably find that very new members, regardless of age, are more likely to come to NOW out of anger (at something they've seen or experienced) or fear (of losing abortion rights, for example). They often want YOU to take some immediate action on the burning issue that brought them to NOW.

Effective veteran activists usually have turned their anger/fear into positive goals such as change or growth. They are often motivated by duty (to the organization, an issue or individual) and possibly guilt ("If I don't do this, it won't get done."), but *positive* motivation will be more effective.

### **Positive Motivation Builds Leadership**

Whether you're talking about chapter attitude, or a specific event or action, you must be POSITIVE about what is happening, your members, and the outcome. Delegation to new people as part of the structure of the plan will help you include everyone.

1. Prepare: For an event or action, list the jobs that can be done by new people. Sometimes this means breaking down into smaller parts a responsibility usually done by a single experienced member. If you're looking at structure, you might want to consider a goal of some minimum number of *new* members on each task force in the chapter. Think through each specific job you want to delegate carefully. Be sure to give folks a *clear* explanation of what you want them to do, along with the "big picture" view -- what the chapter gains with the event's success.
2. Go: Let the project take off, having given your members some authority as well as responsibility. Build in opportunities (task force meetings, touchdowns, debriefings) to find out how they're doing. Let the members report, don't conduct quizzes. Reports from those involved in other aspects of the project help keep the members focused on the "end goal," as well as to build enthusiasm.
3. Lead: As the leader, you are responsible for the results. Let your presence and interest be felt along the way. Give praise and recognition for good results. If there are problems, give the members the chance to evaluate what went wrong first.

Here are some helpful sentences to practice for better motivation:

1. *Verbal recognition*: "You did an excellent job with that right-to-lifer!"
2. *What you expect*: "We should be able to get this done in two weeks."
3. *Criticism*: - *to be said in private*: "You've missed a lot of meetings -- is there a problem?" or "Let's talk this over and see what we can work out."
4. *Acknowledge the situation*: "I know this is a rush job, but I appreciate you taking it on."

5. *Respect*: "That's a good idea - we'll take a look at it at the next meeting and see what folks think."
6. *Confidence*: "I'm looking forward to working with you." "I know you can do it."
7. *Apologize*: "I'm sorry." "It's my oversight." "I just didn't think that would happen."

We know there are many additional ways to motivate members in a positive way. Some negative motivators may not be so obvious:

1. *Phone banking for the rummage sale with no explanation of the chapter's fundraising goal*. Be sure to give them the long as well as the short term gain of the project. (Your chapter's New Member Orientations are good occasions to go over some of the chapter's plans.)
2. *Sending a new person out to do a Q&A on an issue, just after a new bill has been introduced on that question in the state legislature, without that information*. Provide a safety net -- two people working together, or be sure they have enough information to do the job.
3. *Asking someone who hates to write to do an article, or asking a single woman with small children to cover a weekend event for which there is no child care*. You need to match the person with the job or event. New member surveys are a MUST. It's helpful to think about other people's limitations as well as your own.
4. *Public criticism - private thanks*. Don't get them mixed up - it should be PUBLIC THANKS - PRIVATE CRITICISM.
5. *Having chapter business meetings that go on and on, or events that aren't well-planned*. These leave members drained, not energized. Everyone's time is valuable - not just yours.

Also, sometimes your own feelings about the way things should be done create roadblocks to delegating. For example, if you are a perfectionist, with no room for mistakes, you send the message that "I can do it better/easier/faster myself." If you have to have complete control over the project, e.g., "I'll take care of that" spoken over and over during the planning of an event, it leaves members feeling that you really don't trust them to do a good enough job. It helps to look in the mirror at YOU as a leader.

Approaching the problems of activism in your chapter by looking at the way you motivate and delegate to your chapter members will take time and energy. However, it's the best way to insure the development of future leadership. Assessing your own style will help you see how you come across to your members.

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict is inevitable in any group situation, and NOW chapters are no exception. Conflict occurs between two or more individuals when self-interests differ – these self-interests can be personal and/or political. The result of unresolved differences among those individuals can adversely affect working relationships among the members, and personal as well as overall chapter productivity. The way a chapter handles conflict will affect its ability to keep members and work toward its goals.

The purpose of this section is to help chapters recognize conflict and to explore the ways in which conflict can be prevented, minimized and if necessary, resolved within the organizational structure.

## Recognizing Conflict

Disagreements within a NOW chapter are often personalized. One member criticizes another member's character or motivation, when the disagreement is, in fact, a political disagreement. Our chapters need *more* activists, not fewer! Destructive personal attacks can and do ruin chapters.

Sometimes inexperience in organizational structures causes us to internalize conflict. Perhaps we feel we must "go along" because we are all feminists, working for the same goals. Many of us have not had the experience that would train us to interpret disagreements politically rather than personally. Good leaders learn how to negotiate disagreements so that the players don't lose face. Understanding disagreements and teaching members to disagree with decisions or judgments on a political basis is an essential leadership skill.

Consistently suppressing conflict in your chapter is not a solution. It will manifest itself in vastly different ways: high stress, defensiveness, sarcasm, burn-out, diminished productivity. In the crisis which ultimately erupts, it is difficult if not impossible to sort everything out. A leader may feel like an archeologist uncovering who said what to whom several months or years back. It's important to remember that suppressed conflict doesn't go away: it simply reemerges in a different and more destructive form.

## Preventing and Managing Conflicts/Disagreements

Poorly managed conflict hinders organizational effectiveness in goal accomplishment. It drains valuable energy and resources, and forces chapter members "to take sides." Poorly managed conflict will affect the quality of decisions made in the chapter, deter activist involvement and hinder membership recruitment.

Surprisingly, leaders and chapters can act organizationally to eliminate many sources of conflict and disagreement. Chapter bylaws and operating rules should be current and in use – accessible to everyone. Officers' job descriptions need to be spelled out and clearly understood by everyone. Everyone in the chapter should understand the meeting format – do you use

consensus with occasional reference to Robert's Rules, or do even small meetings function exclusively by Robert's? Good minutes, with all decisions recorded, and notations of who agrees to do what, are essential. The president should verbally recap all the decisions made at the end of each business meeting. Agendas need to be pre-circulated along with the previous meeting's minutes, if possible. Goal setting can go a long way toward keeping everyone on the same track. Lastly, chapters, states and even regions need to have a clear grievance procedure.

On a personal level, the potential for conflict exists whenever people interact. NOW has many activists who have a diversity of opinion on how to best accomplish our goals. Good communication skills will eliminate much conflict. Members need to remember and to remind others that it is the member's idea that is being debated, not the member her/himself. Everyone can afford to learn/relearn listening skills. Be open-minded and remember that we can gain strength from our different backgrounds and outlooks. We all need to think through our feelings about power and leadership, and what "winning" means.

### **Confronting Conflict/Disagreement**

Members should understand the difference between a conflict and disagreement within the chapter that is, in fact, a conflict or disagreement, and one that is truly a grievance. A grievance procedure is called into practice when there has been a clear violation of a written bylaw or operating rule concerning the sub-unit – be it chapter, state, region or even national bylaw. A disagreement of process, a misunderstanding, or a violation of what we feel are feminist principles can be handled in a less formal way, but in a way that treats the misunderstanding or conflict seriously.

Basic rules for conflict or disagreement mediation are:

1. Identify the problem, and the goal for the mediation process. Does the disagreement concern the goal, or the means by which it should be reached?
2. Decisions concerning logistics for meeting should be handled in advance and be agreed to by all parties: neutral meeting space, refreshments, no alcohol, etc. Agreement should be made in advance concerning the use and choice of facilitators and mediators, as well as whether there will be active participants and/or observers.
3. It will be helpful if each party to the conflict prepares a chronological history of the events in the conflict, from beginning to present.
4. Agreement to confidentiality as to the details of the session is important for the participants. This encourages trust and discourages defensiveness and gossip. The terms of the agreement should be the only public information, and even these may be inappropriate for public disclosure. The parties should agree that the mediation of the conflict will be binding.

Conflict management is the process by which differences can be resolved with mutually agreed upon solutions. It is an on-going process, both personal and organizational. Chapters that are able to identify conflict, deal with it, and develop good strategies for preventing and managing it are more likely to devote greater energy to accomplishing NOW's goals.

## FIGHTING BURNOUT

Activists have long used the term "burnout" to describe a variety of feelings ranging from despair and discouragement to depression. Few realize it may be a physiological condition, not unlike depression in its symptoms. Even fewer realize that it largely preventable.

*"She came in and really was very active several years ago, but now she won't even return our calls."*

*"She's constantly complaining about how much work the (checkbook, newsletter, memberships, phoning, etc.) is, but she won't let anyone help her."*

*"She's so negative; any new members who come to our meetings and talk with her never come back."*

All of these members can be suffering from burnout. But what can chapter leaders do...especially if the burnout victim is also a chapter leader?

There's no standard solution, but there are some things we can do to help activists who are "burned out," and there are definitely some things we can do to discourage -- even prevent -- burnout in the members and leaders of our organization.

Sometimes a chapter's or state's structure and ways of operating may contribute to burnout in its members and leaders -- so watch out for this if burnout becomes epidemic or seems to "always happen" to your leadership.

**CAUTION!** The signs of burnout may be only the visible part of a deeper problem, so don't assume that everyone who says they are burned-out "just needs a rest." Encourage members who seem overwhelmed, unable to prioritize, or who need to be in constant control of everything that happens in a chapter to seek help. Allowing them to drop out or drift away without some acknowledgment of your concern may confirm a feeling of inadequacy or worthlessness. Becoming angry at the damage they do - not completing their responsibilities, turning off new people -- and wishing they'd leave or trying to drive them away won't solve the problem either, and may only aggravate the situation.

Could changing your leadership style help prevent burnout? How can you recognize burnout and keep from becoming a victim yourself?

### Signs of Burnout

Stress is helpful when it motivates us to do our best. But, when physical and mental health begin to suffer, it is time to get some help. Some of the symptoms of burnout may be:

1. Irritability/being critical of others

2. Frequent illness
3. Insomnia/fatigue
4. Increased use of drugs, nicotine or alcohol
5. Weight gain or loss/eating disorders
6. Low self-esteem/feeling trapped or helpless
7. Coming early and staying late or
8. Coming late and leaving early

These reactions to stress can pose *real* health risks. When burnout goes unchecked, high blood-pressure, ulcers, and chronic illnesses may be the result. In fact, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ranked the inability to deal with stress as one of the top five critical health threats to Americans today.

### **Examining Your Leadership Style**

States and chapters must address the fact that although many women have inherently wonderful leadership abilities and skills, some women don't. They may not have had good mentors or role models where issues of power and control are concerned, and may need help learning to balance and complement their concern and vision for women with positive leadership skills. You can encourage good leadership development by training future officers in good delegation and motivation techniques, conflict resolution skills, and building teams of leaders.

Each level of leadership sets an example -- good or bad -- in the way we conduct ourselves, delegate, disagree, and do business. It's important to support each other. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. When we tear down our own leaders with whom we disagree or whom we don't like, we add our own voices to those who say women can't lead. We also make women fearful of taking leadership roles when it becomes clear that their weaknesses will be emphasized and exploited, just as past leaders of the chapter or state may have been "trashed."

One phenomenon of many movements -- including ours -- is called leadership oppression. This involves targeting leaders for criticism, holding them to impossible standards, and then walking away. Building a team requires that leaders honestly state their strengths and weaknesses, so that as members of the team they complement each other's skills. Everyone has a chance to do the things she does best or most easily, and put her skills to the best use.

Some more specific burnout solutions (or preventions) are:

1. Get to know your officers and activists, their strengths and weaknesses, and expand on their strengths. It is unfair and inefficient, for example, to ask a new member to head up a committee on her own, or assign someone a task that she is not interested in.
2. Once you determine the strengths and skills of your members, delegate! No one person -- or even a few people -- can be expected to accomplish all the tasks, large and small, of

an activist organization. Break down jobs to their smallest component parts and ask others to take responsibility for them. Then follow up to make sure your activists understand the tasks and have the support they need to succeed. You will find that there are members who are just waiting to be asked for their help. Many leaders are stunned to learn that new members perceive them as not needing help, having all the answers, or as unwelcoming of new people.

3. Find those who are truly interested and able, and take them under your wing as "new leaders." Expanding the chapter's leadership base makes the organization stronger, more active, more egalitarian, and less stressful for everyone involved.
4. Remind yourself that *your* best is good enough -- and trust that others will also do their best. Setting standards too high, or being openly critical of others, only succeeds in making others hesitant to become active.
5. Deal openly and honestly with yourself and others to decrease anxiety and resentment within the chapter. When problems arise, evaluate the situation -- what can be done? Don't keep these problems to yourself -- approach the group and find solutions.
6. Strive for efficiency: memos might be more practical than meetings, and committees can get specific duties accomplished quickly. If you're not an 'organized' person, you may find it will greatly decrease your stress level to become one. There are many good books on the market on getting organized - find a system of personal organization and use it.

### **Preventing or Coping With Burnout**

In no case should short-changing yourself where your health or welfare is concerned be confused with real dedication to our cause!

1. Take time for yourself. Then you'll feel less resentful and more rested when the demands of the organization and your leadership responsibilities present themselves. Learn some relaxation techniques for your brain as well as your body.
2. Mental health is vital for total wellness. Being mentally fit involves possessing "a positive approach to a healthful way of life." Essentially, mental health is having a balance between what you do.
3. A sense of humor is important in remaining mentally fit. The feminist movement is fraught with struggles and disappointments. Learning to laugh at the things we cannot control can keep us from taking ourselves and our work *too* seriously. Not all of us are naturally funny, but possessing some sense of humor also tends to make us relaxed and less judgmental.
4. Learn how to say "no." When you spread yourself too thin, you don't work to your full potential. Being honest about what you can accomplish in a day or week will decrease resentment and anxiety all around. Don't forget that doing a lot of work is *good* for you as long as it's positive and rewarding and feels good. That's positive stress.
5. Develop a support system of family and friends, both in the movement and removed from it. We are social beings and we need others in our lives to make them complete.

Also, realize that some problems need professional help, and don't hesitate to seek therapy if you feel that your problems seem to follow you everywhere you go.

6. Although many members are deeply troubled by the oppression of women by organized religion, many also find spirituality or religion a way to experience inner peace. Some find meditation helpful. Many find renewal in nature or in listening to music.
7. Get in touch with yourself and what you want/need. Take the time to think, write in a journal, and evaluate who you are and what you stand for.
8. If you are feeling overwhelmed, discouraged, unfocused, or restless, and nothing seems to help, you may want to seriously evaluate your reasons for wanting to be an activist. It may not be right for you at this time. If you feel a 'break' or 'sabbatical' would help, try it. However, seriously evaluating and reflecting on other issues, such as how you take on projects or tasks, may help more in the long run.

Finally, *take care of yourself*, so that you can be an effective activist and leader.

1. *Exercise* is very important, even if it's just walking. Meetings must have long enough breaks to provide a real relief from sitting. Using a meeting break to walk - as a group - around the block, or doing group stretches is recommended.
2. *Eat right!* As activists we joke about the late night dinners or dinner meetings, or the meals grabbed at a fast food drive-through. This is actually a serious problem. It's no more time consuming to eat right! Getting in the habit of eating a full, rich meal late at night can contribute to many serious health problems. Learn what good nutrition for your body is and stick to it.
3. *Get enough sleep!* Late-nighters at a conference or meeting may be unavoidable, and driving to the post office at 1:00 a.m. may happen from time to time, but as a way of life, it doesn't make for productive or energetic activists.
4. *Be responsible* about the amount of your *financial resources* you give to the movement. We want activists to come to events: marches, conferences or fundraisers. We need money, but not if it's your rent or car insurance payment. It's stressful to be constantly one jump ahead of the credit bureau, and financial stress is not positive stress. Budget wisely, and make it okay for others as well to say, "I can only afford \_\_\_\_\_."
5. *Have a hobby*, take a vacation, or learn to mix "business" with pleasure simply by changing the subject at a dinner with activists to discuss feminist writers, or stopping to visit an antique shop on the way to your meeting or work session -- you get the idea. Do things to change the scenery. Hot or mineral baths are one good way to rest both mind and body.

Our movement needs enthusiastic new activists – women who will stay with our organization, lending their experience and insight as years go by. Burnout robs us of these long-time, seasoned members and our chapters and states can't afford it. Personal, as well as structural, prevention helps us strong and balanced – and as effective and experienced as we can possibly be.





# MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCES

# MEMBERSHIP PROCESSING INFORMATION

## Sending in Memberships

When someone wants to join your NOW chapter, it doesn't have to be hard to get their memberships processed and their names on your roster in a timely fashion. Old materials you may have in the "box" you got when you accepted this responsibility may have incorrect addresses or instructions that now seem confusing (maybe they were written when we had a different database service provider). It would be helpful if you would discard any other membership processing instructions you might have in your chapter files so as not to confuse future chapter leaders. Please see the "New Chapter" section below if yours is a new chapter that is processing memberships for the first time. Here's a quick summary!

PLEASE SEND ALL MEMBERSHIPS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT MEMBERSHIPS DIRECTLY TO:

**Membership Department  
National NOW Action Center  
1100 H Street NW, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005**

**DO NOT USE ANY OTHER ADDRESS OR POST OFFICE BOX IN SENDING MEMBERSHIPS TO BE PROCESSED!**

**DO INCLUDE A NAME (e-mail if available) AND DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER OF THE PERSON WHO PROCESSED THE MEMBERSHIPS, SO WE CAN CONTACT THEM IF WE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.**

1. **NEW MEMBERS:** Send in \$10 or \$15, depending on how much the new person paid to join<sup>1</sup>. Send us their name, address, phone and email all printed carefully so they can be easily read by our processing staff. If you send in more money, we cannot refund it to you later. Also, we cannot cash checks made out to chapters unless they are endorsed over to National NOW.
2. **PREVIOUS MEMBERS:** If a person who's been a member in the past rejoins, their membership is termed a "Reinstatement." The amount you send to reinstate their membership is the same as for a new membership – \$10 or \$15 – and depends on how much the person paid to re-join. However, it is important to let us know that the person may already be in our database, especially if you believe under a different address.

<sup>1</sup> NOW's sliding scale requires that chapters send \$10 for members who pay \$20 or less to the chapter, and \$15 if the members pays more than \$20 to join the chapter.

3. **RENEWALS:** Please encourage members to send in their own renewals with the correct form, which directs them to the NOW Action Center, or to complete a form online at [www.now.org/renew](http://www.now.org/renew). Please DON'T suggest that members send their renewals to your chapter's address. We include a business reply envelope (BRE) with every renewal notice. However, you may have someone in your chapter who thinks they are due to renew and gives a renewal to a chapter leader. You must send us their check, so that your State and National entities can also receive their share of this renewal, according to NOW policy. Just send us their check and any information you may have about how their name appears on your roster, including their membership ID number, and any changes in name, address, email address, or phone number may be included.

### **Additional Tips**

1. NOW has a sliding scale for new members. You need to make this information known in the most prominent way on your forms. Please don't list this as "Low Income" or "Hardship" categories. If you want to create other categories, like a "senior" or "student" rate, that's OK, but this simple statement would also send the message about sliding scales: "NOW dues are \$35 or \$40 (check to see what rate your state sets for dues). NOW's sliding scale is available to any person for any reason." Your lowest amount can be as low as you want, but you must send at least \$10 to the Membership Department, regardless of what the person pays. (Many chapters maintain a "scholarship" fund, transferring small amounts of money into their general fund for low-cost memberships to cover newsletter and other costs.)
2. The U.S. population is a very mobile one! Folks move all over the country, but usually bring their feminist interests with them to their new city and state. Sometimes they let us know about their address changes and maintain a current membership in NOW, regardless of where they live. (They will appear on your state or chapter printouts as "Transfers"). However, having been a member of a chapter previously, they might come to your chapter meeting and join again as a new member, which confuses our database! It's helpful to include a check box or note on your membership forms: "Please let us know if you've been a NOW member in the past."

### **New Chapter Memberships**

There can be a bit of financial confusion about sending in those first memberships when a new chapter is just getting started, since it may take a few weeks to get a bank account set up and to apply for your Tax ID number from the IRS. The first few members probably won't object to making out two checks for their membership - one check made out to National NOW for their minimum amount (\$10 or \$15) and one made out in the new chapter's name for the rest of the amount they can pay. Then your treasurer can deposit the funds into the chapter's account as soon as it's set up. Remember to pay your state NOW organization its share of the membership dues as well.

Please note: NOW does not officially offer joint memberships. If two people want to share a membership, please make it clear to them that only one of the names can vote at chapter, state and national meetings and conferences. That name should be listed first on the form.

### **Processing Memberships**

Our organization's national bylaws require that chapters process membership dues in a "timely fashion." From the time we receive your new member names and correct amounts of money for processing, or a member's renewal notice and their check made out to National NOW, that material is processed in less than 10 days. Please remember that when you accept money from an individual you are actually legally responsible as well as organizationally responsible to process it quickly and correctly. It's against most state laws to accept money from individuals for something like organizational dues and not do what you are required to fulfill your contractual obligation.

At the least, new members are irritated when they pay and don't get anything in the way of correspondence from us. The NOW National Action Center – and your state offices – cannot send them member mailings unless we have their names and membership fees. In addition, that new member may someday want to run for NOW office. It's certainly been the case for a person to be ineligible – or their qualifications questioned – for such a position because their membership money wasn't processed appropriately. Make sure your chapter treasurer understands her/his responsibilities, and set up some processes so that if memberships aren't being sent in and money isn't been processed correctly, other chapter officers will know and can address the problem.

There are several places where we describe the membership processing system in more detail, and we can also provide you with a detailed explanation of the various codes and fields on the computer reports we send to your chapter. If you have questions, please contact the National NOW Action Center:

by phone: (202) 628.8669

by e-mail: [member@now.org](mailto:member@now.org) - Membership  
[chapteam@now.org](mailto:chapteam@now.org) - Chapter Development/Field Team

write us:

Membership/Chapter Development Department  
National NOW Action Center  
1100 H Street NW, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005

## ACQUIRING AND SPENDING CHAPTER MONEY

Chapters have a variety of sources from which to raise money to support their activities, but few chapters regularly report large savings accounts and/or surplus funds. As with personal financial management, it is to any chapter's advantage to develop a good budget, realistically set income and expense goals, and review those goals frequently throughout the year.

Membership dues are a consistent source of income for all NOW units, and are the primary source of support for chapter, state, and national operations. One of the best fundraisers can be an extensive membership drive, since your chapter keeps the majority of the first year's dues for any new members you recruit.

Giving money is often the first commitment a person makes to NOW, and once they have joined or donated they may feel they have some "investment" in the chapter's activities, so it benefits the chapter, in intangible as well as tangible ways, when you solicit contributions or in-kind support.

The report in this section of the Manual entitled "Chapter Fundraising" will help your group to constructively discuss its fundraising efforts, since they will undoubtedly be a part of your financial plans. As shown in our Example #1 (Sample Annual Budget), each fundraising activity shows a specific amount the chapter expects to raise from that effort. While your original estimates can be revised if necessary, having them in the budget reminds the chapter of the need to meet a financial goal for that particular activity in order to keep the chapter financially sound.

Because NOW's chapter officers have a special duty of accountability to our members, you should *always* require the signatures of two officers (usually the President and Treasurer) for every check, and a financial report should be distributed at every meeting. Every officer should receive a copy of the monthly bank statement.

NOW chapters should budget democratically and report regularly on income and disbursements. Never let your spending exceed your income. If fundraising or membership drives don't meet budget expectations, your expenditures must be reduced immediately, until/unless you can add an "emergency" fundraiser to make up the difference.

As shown in our Sample Annual Budget, newsletters are often the largest regular expense, since communication among members is vital. Officers should be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses such as postage, phone calls or travel; you should require receipts for most expenses and you may want to prepare standard reimbursement forms.

## **Planning Your Chapter Budget**

The chapter budget estimates income and expenses for the planning period, usually the chapter's fiscal year. Chapters often set the fiscal year to begin when new officers assume office, perhaps the first day of the month following your election of officers. Plans should include general operation, as well as expenses for task forces and special projects that are chapter priorities.

The Budget Committee, which includes the President, the Treasurer, and one or two other members, receives budget items from task forces and committees as well as reviewing past records for estimates of anticipated income and expenses. They meet periodically after the budget's adoption to assess income and expenditures and to propose revisions, if necessary. Any revisions must be brought to the membership for adoption.

The Treasurer presents a financial report of actual income and expenditures at each chapter or board meeting, and can advise the group whether or not the budget is on track. However, each item in the budget is the responsibility of someone in the chapter, be it a task force or committee chair or officer. If a particular project doesn't meet its goal, that chair should be involved in any decision-making or revision.

## **Record Keeping**

Please see the sample annual chapter budget and sample chapter project budget. The sample project budget includes space to record actual income and expenses for comparison, and shows the day-to-day recordkeeping that helps track of when checks were written, and, in the case of membership transmittals to the Action Center, tells what new members' money went with what check.

## SAMPLE ANNUAL CHAPTER BUDGET

### INCOME

Dues – new members		
September phone bank – 20 members @ \$35		\$700
January recruitment – 10 members @ \$35		\$350
Dues – renewals (rebates at your state’s rate of \$7*)		
All current members – 100 members/ 80% @ \$7*		\$560
Fundraisers – Annual		
Garage Sale (June)		\$500
Holiday Dance (December)		\$200
Newsletter		
Ads		\$100
Subscriptions		\$60
Sales		
Greeting Cards		\$100
Bumper Stickers		\$100
Signature Ad (see Project Budget)		\$500
	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$3,170</b>

### EXPENSES

Dues Transmittals		
National      30 members @ \$10		\$300
State            30 members @ \$5		\$150
Recruitment Expenses		\$150
Fundraising Costs		
Garage Sale		\$50
Dance		\$50
Newsletters    10 @ 100/month		\$1,000
Officer Expenses		
President		\$270
Vice-President		\$50
Secretary		\$100
Treasurer		\$50
Program Expenses (Speakers)		\$100
Federal Judiciary Appointment Protest		\$100
Lesbian Rights Task Force		\$100
Signature Ad (See Project Budget)		\$500
Contingency Fund (Special Expenses)		\$200
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3,170</b>

\*The \$7 figure is an estimate of actual rebate per renewal

**SAMPLE CHAPTER PROJECT BUDGET**

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Signature Ad 100 @ \$25	\$500	_____
	_____	_____
TOTAL INCOME	\$500	_____
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Brochure	\$350	_____
Meeting Space	\$50	_____
Ad Cost	\$100	_____
	_____	_____
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$500	_____



## CHAPTER FUNDRAISING

Financial stability and regular fundraising planning help make a chapter strong and effective. However, it is the one aspect of being a non-profit organization that creates nearly universal jitters! The purpose of this section is to help you think through why we fundraise, and work on overcoming the fear many of us tend to have when asking others for money.

### **The Purpose of Fundraising**

Fundraising activities should complement and support the message of chapter actions, and should convey NOW's purpose: "to take action to bring women into the mainstream of American society NOW."

The goal of effective fundraising is to make the most money with the least amount of time and effort, and to incorporate fundraising components into all chapter actions.

For example, PAC fundraisers publicize our efforts to elect more women to political office and enable NOW to make contributions to key campaigns with the funds we raise. A signature ad in the local newspaper on reproductive rights will raise money and mobilize community consciousness for a NOW priority issue, as well as increase chapter visibility. A 78-cent bake sale will draw attention to pay equity issues (items are sold to women for 78-cents, to men for \$1.00) – and it makes a great news story.

So, although the main goal of fundraising is to raise money for our actions, it is also an important tool for:

1. Keeping our issues in the news
2. Developing leadership
3. Recruiting new members
4. Mobilizing financial support from inactive members
5. Educating the community
6. Increasing chapter visibility

Fundraising need not only focus on bringing in cash. Non-monetary contributions can increase a chapter's effectiveness and reach out to potential new supporters as well. Non-monetary or "in kind" contributions could include:

1. Paper
2. Office equipment/appliances
3. Computers/Internet access/web hosting
4. Printing
5. Stamps
6. Locations/rooms for events

7. Food/beverages
8. Transportation
9. Free or exchange advertising
10. Child care

Such contributions allow businesses and individuals to contribute in accomplishing NOW's purpose. Effective fundraising activity accomplishes more than making a profit – it also ensures the continuation and expansion of chapter actions and serves to unify the chapter program.

### **The Annual Plan**

The annual fundraising plan is critical to the success of a chapter. It should tie in closely with the chapter's annual goals, the budget and the calendar of events.

The fundraising plan should reflect the budget needs for the year, and the chapter budget needs should reflect its annual action and organizational goals. Most chapters set their annual goals after new officers are elected. Fundraising goals should be written in the same format as chapter organization and action goals, and should include start-up costs, and anticipated net profit.

The most manageable fundraising plan consists of a mixture of smaller monthly or bi-monthly projects and major, ongoing efforts. A plan will help the chapter focus on when, where and why they are allocating the chapter's energy and resources.

One way to raise money for specific budget items is to ask people to fund them directly. Postage or printing funds for the chapter newsletter, or the monthly base charge for the office phone or rent, are a form of "sustainer" contribution to the chapter budget. Some individuals may be quite willing to give a specific amount every month when they know what it will buy. If the donor gives permission, acknowledgments can be made in the chapter newsletter or website, perhaps encouraging others to make donations.

### **The Fundraising Committee**

Since most chapters find that raising financial resources for chapter actions is a job for more than one person, there should be a standing fundraising committee with its role clearly defined in the chapter operating rules.

The function of the fundraising committee should be:

1. To propose realistic fundraising goals and design fundraising plans in which every chapter member can participate
2. To evaluate progress toward fundraising goals on a regular basis
3. To ensure that plans are on schedule
4. To motivate and encourage chapter members to learn new fundraising skills

5. To keep records and files on all fundraising efforts

The Fundraising Committee should also be responsible for evaluating each project at completion, and keeping a written summary in the files for future use. Ask yourself, in evaluating each fundraising event/effort:

1. Did it raise the anticipated net profit?
2. Did it recruit members?
3. Did it increase chapter visibility?
4. Did people have fun?
5. Did chapter members develop skills?

The answers will measure the success of a fundraising project and help determine whether or not to repeat it.

### **The Fear of Asking for Money**

Fundraising is in large part a matter of attitude. The single, most limiting factor chapters face in fundraising is the reluctance of most people to ask for a donation. People do not generally contribute money for social change unless they are asked to do so, and people respond to people.

Encouraging chapter activists to practice asking for contributions and setting up skills training will help overcome their fears. The following exercises, designed to share experiences and information, will provide a basis for internal chapter training on fundraising.

*EXERCISE ONE:* The purpose of this exercise will examine how and why we make the decisions of *where*, *when* and *if* to contribute money to an organization or cause. Ask the workshop or committee participants to answer each of these questions: Do you see patterns emerging?

1. What organization/individuals have asked you for money?
2. To whom did you give?
3. Why? Why not?
4. What type of fundraising solicitation do you receive most frequently?
5. What type do you respond to most frequently?

Chances are that what appealed to individuals – the things that prompted individuals to give – will appeal to others and motivate them to contribute as well.

*EXERCISE TWO:* The purpose of this exercise will help chapter members and activists articulate why they are active in NOW. Since people respond to people, articulating your own commitment, enthusiasm and sincerity for NOW's purpose will motivate others.

1. Why do you contribute time and money to NOW?

2. List three reasons you believe NOW is the most effective organization advocating for women's rights.
3. List three recent accomplishments of your chapter.
4. Verbalize why your chapter is important to your community.

Remember to be as concise as possible. After your chapter has gone through this exercise role, play a face-to-face solicitation by having one person play the "prospect" (contributor) and another play the "solicitor" (person asking for money). After the role play, have other chapter members provide feedback on body language, enthusiasm, sincerity, presentation and so forth. Repeat this exercise until each participant has had an opportunity to play a role.

## **Raising the Money**

Raising money to support the issues and projects you work on doesn't have to be daunting. NOW rebates to each chapter part of the money from that chapter's members renewal dues, but chapters and action teams/committees within the chapter usually need to have additional fundraising projects to support their activities. Paying for copies of flyers or printing a newsletter, postage, advertising/publicity costs, and other supplies can all add up. Making fundraising a key part of everything you do will help you do more – don not let lack of funds put a stop to your enthusiasm.

There are several basic kinds of fundraising that groups find successful and it's best to fit the amount of money you'd like to raise with the type of fundraising you're doing (e.g., don't try to raise money for an airline ticket by selling buttons, unless you have lots of people and time!).

1. Event Fundraising
  - a. Putting on a reception or dinner, hosting a speaker, or having some kind of program to which you charge admission can be very draining. On the other hand, a well-known speaker who comes to your community to give a speech may agree to come to a fundraising reception and the event will give your chapter much needed publicity and visibility, in addition to some money! Use the same basic strategy and timelines you would for planning an action.
  - b. Some other ideas for event fundraising are an issue-focused 10K run, walk-a-thon, softball tournament, or bowl-a-thon. If there are sympathetic artists in your area, you might put on a benefit concert or play, as well as host feminist book sales and art shows or auctions. Many chapters have various types of parties with location, food, and beverages donated. Another fun idea is for local eateries to donate food or desserts, with the chapter charging admission to taste the food (for example, an all-chocolate night or an occasion with only ethnic restaurants providing samples).
  - c. If the purpose of the fundraiser is to raise money to get chapter members to an event, like a rally or march, make a banner you'll carry with you and get donations from local folks to sign their names to the banner so they can "go" with you to the event. Also, if you're signing people for buses to the event,

calculate the price per person you'll need and add \$5 or \$10, offering "free" NOW memberships to the first several non-members to sign up.

## 2. Issue Fundraising

- a. Selling products (buttons, bumper stickers or t-shirts) with a message can be a great way to raise money *and* spread the word. In addition, you may want to figure out a way to sell folks something with a message/issue, and get their names and addresses at the same time (for example, a petition drive calling for better police protection in certain areas of the city, for which you have ball point pens that say "Stop the Violence NOW" that folks sign with, and then buy. You can contact them later to do additional lobbying on behalf of your action focus, and invite them to join the chapter.
- b. Another idea for issue fundraising is to sell arm bands or ribbon-type pins on a holiday or anniversary as a reminder of certain important issues (e.g., red on Valentine's Day as a reminder of domestic violence).

## 3. Commercial Fundraising

- a. Selling products or services solely to raise funds is non-issue related, or commercial fundraising. It should be well-publicized that the fundraising effort is for NOW, and be sure to have NOW information on hand. Some ideas that have done well in the past are selling local dining or movie coupon or entertainment books (ask members and businesses to donate items; ask restaurants to donate "dinner for two"), and yard sales. Auctions or raffles with donated items can also bring in revenue, especially if they are repeated year after year. Help bring down newsletter costs by selling ads – even several business card-sized ads each month can help cover postage.
- b. It should be pointed out that in most cases, businesses will want publicity for a contribution, just as we want NOW's name out there when we do something. Chapters should make sure that the businesses with whom you are dealing are women-friendly workplaces, don't use sexist advertising messages, or have ties to political or religious groups with whom we're working in opposition. Don't be used by some groups that are trying to show how "good" they are by giving money or services to NOW, at the same time they are fighting allegations of workplace discrimination or harassment.
- c. Chapter members might enjoy a "service auction" where members pay for services or tangibles donated by other members. Basically, have participants make wish lists, and then see what wishes can be fulfilled. One chapter member is a great cook, and another would like a special occasion catered. The host/hostess pays the chapter and the cook does the "work." Popular items might include overnights/weekends at lake cottages, gardening chores, sewing/mending tasks, or even help calculating tax returns.

#### 4. Direct Solicitation Fundraising

- a. Some people have more money than time. They are more likely to give you money for your work if you tell them how much you need and what it will be used for. Draw up a list of the “expenditures” in your chapter’s budget – 100 stamps for \$37.00, printing 500 rally flyers for \$35.00, 50 buttons purchased in bulk for resale later cost \$40.00, an ad in a community flyer newspaper costs \$20.00, post office box rent might be as high as \$70.00. Give people the option of selecting what “item” they’d like to pay for. (Wish lists can also work wonders – advertising for someone to donate a scanner or a printer may very well get you one!) Again, folks are more likely to give you a contribution if they know specific needs and know it will be put to good use.

#### 5. NOW Membership Drives

- a. Since National NOW only requires \$10 or \$15 of a new members’ dues to pay costs at the national level (see the section titled “Sending In Memberships” for processing information), and depending on state rules for dues processing of new members, getting memberships for your chapter can be a major source of revenue. Just as you should always think of fundraising when you are planning an action event, also do not overlook the simple strategy of always having membership applications for every activist to carry with her, and of simply asking others to join NOW.

Successful fundraising is mostly a matter of attitude, planning and practice. It is an important tool in developing leadership, mobilizing membership for action, increasing chapter visibility and ensuring a healthy, active chapter. The key to effective, manageable fundraising is mixing short- and long-term projects into an annual plan.

Fundraising is a process of building a base of community support and extending it annually. Over time, chapters will find that fundraising becomes easier and more predictable.



# FACTS ABOUT NOW

# ABOUT NOW

## Vision Statement

Since its founding in 1966, NOW's goal has been to take action to bring about equality for all women. NOW works to eliminate discrimination and harassment in the workplace, schools, the justice system, and all other sectors of society; secure abortion, birth control and reproductive rights for all women; end all forms of violence against women; eradicate racism, sexism and homophobia; and promote equality and justice in our society.

## NOW Herstory

NOW was conceived in a conversation and born at a women's conference with a paper napkin serving as its birth certificate. It all started when Pauli Murray, an African American Feminist and Episcopalian minister, suggested to Feminine Mystique author Betty Freidan that women needed a group to advocate on their behalf, much as the NAACP advocated for African Americans. Then in June of 1966 at the Third National Conference of the Commission on the Status of Women, which was held in Washington, D.C., 27 women and one man, including Freidan and Murray, established the National Organization for Women. NOW's official statement of purpose, which Freidan scribbled on a napkin, remains the same today: "to take action to bring women into the full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men."

In the last 30 years, NOW has adopted more than a dozen resolutions and stances on an array of issues, including women in poverty, the Equal Rights Amendment and lesbian rights. NOW has evolved into a diverse organization that continues to combine grassroots activism and national lobbying.

*From Ms. Magazine July/August 1996*

*Used with permission*

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# NOW'S STRUCTURE

## Local Chapters

Most of NOW's politicking and organizing is carried out by hundreds of local chapters that do everything from staging protest marches and pickets to coordinating educational programs. Each chapter must have at least ten members and each elects its own, generally unpaid, officers. Each chapter must elect a president and treasurer and usually elects additional officers such as a vice president. In a handful of large cities, local officers get paid.

Local chapters also elect delegates who attend NOW's yearly National Conference. NOW's bylaws stipulate that "the National Conference shall be the supreme governing body of NOW." It is at these conferences held every June or July that policies are decided. Delegates vote on a wide range of proposals from establishing a new staff position to setting forth the group's stance on such issues as welfare reform. Once the organization takes a position on an issue, an action campaign is developed.

Decisions made at these conferences are binding to all members of NOW. Aside from having to adhere to the bylaws and policies decided at the national conventions, local chapters are relatively autonomous, working on issues that best suit their communities.

## State Organizations

Each state also has a state organization which focuses on public policy and advocacy in the various state legislatures. The only leadership position that the state organizations must have is a state coordinator, also referred to as the state president. But often there are other officers who, along with the president, are elected at state conferences. Officers at the state level are usually volunteers, although a state organization might hire a lobbyist. In some cases, the paid lobbyist and the president are one and the same. State organizations are run by a board made up of a handful of local chapter representatives, and the state president and other elected officers. States have their own bylaws, none of which can conflict with the national ones.

## Regions

There are also nine regional segments of NOW, but, unlike other levels, the regional offices don't do much in the way of initiating protests or lobbying. Their main purpose is to elect members to the national board and ease communication among the states in a particular region. The number of members within each region determines the maximum number of board members allowed from an individual state and the minimum number of board seats that must be filled by women of color. Regions do not solicit members.

## **National**

The national board of directors is comprised of NOW members elected from the group's nine regions. They meet about every two months and discuss issues such as funding. The national board also makes policy decisions that would normally be made at the National Conference but because the National Conference is held only once per year, the national board must sometimes vote on issues in the periods between the conferences. The board's actions must not violate bylaws or any of the decisions that come out of the National Conference. However, the national board does have the authority to remove NOW officers, board members, members of chapters if they have acted against NOW's policies. The national officers are run together on a slate and are elected by delegates from the local chapters at the national conventions. They serve four-year terms and can serve a maximum of two full consecutive terms in a particular office.

All levels of NOW work together to some degree almost all of the time. While local chapters have freedom to do the work they want, rarely will they stage an action without help from the national and state organizations.

## **NOW Foundation**

The NOW Foundation is the education and legal arm of NOW, and is our tax-deductible 501(c)(3) sister organization. NOW Foundation is known for its policy and advocacy work, the Women's Health Project, the Love Your Body campaign and the groundbreaking *NOW v. Scheidler* case against anti-abortion terrorists. NOW and the NOW Foundation have the same national priorities and leadership, and share some staff and office space in Washington, D.C., but remain separate entities.

## **NOW Political Action Committee (NOW/PAC)**

NOW/PAC is an electoral politics arm of NOW. NOW/PAC endorses and supports feminist candidates for federal office (e.g., U.S. House and Senate). Like NOW Foundation, NOW/PAC shares priorities, leadership, staff and office space with NOW. Pursuant to Federal Election Commission rules, only NOW members may contribute to NOW/PAC.

## **NOW Equality PAC (NEP)**

NEP is a separate entity that supports the election of feminist candidates for state and local offices around the country, such as governor, state legislature or city council. Anyone may contribute to NEP. Many individual NOW chapters also form their own separate PACs to support local candidates.

# NATIONAL BYLAWS

## Article I. Name

The name of this national membership organization of women and men is "National Organization for Women, Inc." (NOW).

## Article II. Statement of Purpose

NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men. This purpose includes, but is not limited to, equal rights and responsibilities in all aspects of citizenship, public service, employment, education, and family life, and it includes freedom from discrimination because of race, ethnic origin, age, marital status, sexual preference/orientation, or parenthood.

## Article III. Membership

Any person who subscribes to NOW's purpose shall be eligible to become a member of NOW and upon payment of national dues shall be enrolled as a member, with all rights, privileges, and responsibilities thereof. All members of subunits of NOW must be members of the national organization. No person who subscribes to NOW's purpose shall be excluded from membership, segregated, or otherwise discriminated against within the organization.

## Article IV. Subunits

### Section 1. Chapters

- A. Members residing or working in a given state, county, municipality, or a regional or metropolitan area shall be encouraged to form a chapter, or members may join or form virtual chapters that are not tied to a geographic region. A chapter shall consist of no fewer than ten members, formulate bylaws consistent with these bylaws, convene and operate for the stated purpose of NOW, and elect its officers. Chapters shall be chartered by the national organization upon meeting these requirements.
- B. Implementation of all virtual chapter bylaws changes shall be delayed. In the meantime, a taskforce of up to 15 NOW members, with a diverse experience of leadership and grassroots organizing within NOW, shall be appointed by the NOW President, with the advice and consent of the Board, to advise the Board on recommended policies and any necessary bylaws changes on virtual chapters and related matters.
- C. The policies and programs of each chapter shall be defined by its members so long as such policies and programs are not contrary to those enacted by the national bylaws, National Conference or National Board.

D. Membership in a chapter and voting privileges in the election of chapter officers shall be open to all NOW members who meet the chapter dues and length-of-membership requirements, if any; provided however that members may be voting members of only one chapter. All persons elected to leadership positions in the chapter must be members of NOW.

E. The local, grassroots chapters are the building blocks of NOW, serving as the focus of feminist action.

## **Section 2. States**

A. Each state and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (hereinafter referred to as a state) which does not now have an existing state organization may apply to convene a state organization with the approval of a majority of the chapters or members of that state. States shall be convened and chartered upon meeting requirements set by the National Board or National Conference. States must continue to meet such requirements to maintain their state status, subject to the removal of their state charters in accordance with the procedures set forth in Article XIII, Section 2. State organizations shall convene chapters within their state, with the exception of virtual chapters, which shall be convened with the authorization of a national officer. If a state organization fails to approve or disapprove a convening request within 60 days, the national organization may convene the chapter.

B. The policies and programs of each state organization shall be defined by its members and chapters so long as such policies and programs are not contrary to those established by the national bylaws, National Conference or National Board.

C. Membership in state organizations and voting privileges in the election of state officers shall be open to all NOW members who meet the state dues and length-of-membership requirements, if any; provided however that members may be voting members of only one state organization. All persons elected to leadership positions in the state organization must be members of NOW.

D. In states without a state organization, that region's Regional Director, in consultation with the regional Board members, may appoint a State Coordinator/President to serve until elections are held, not to exceed one year.

## **Section 3. Regions**

A. There shall be regions, each of which shall elect National Board members (hereinafter referred to as Board members or, collectively, the Board or National Board) and shall formulate bylaws consistent with the national bylaws. The region's bylaws specify, among other things, the method by which the National Board members from

the region are to be elected. The region's bylaws shall be adopted by a majority vote of the members of the region present and voting at a regional conference.

B. The policies and programs of each region shall be defined by its members and states, so long as such policies and programs are not contrary to those enacted by the national bylaws, National Conference or National Board.

C. Membership in a region and voting privileges in the election of National Board members and other regional officers shall be open to all NOW members who meet the length-of-membership requirements set forth in Article VII, Section 5 hereof; provided however that members may be voting members of only one region. National Board members from each region shall be elected in accordance with Article VII, Section 5 hereof, and such other requirements for regional elections as may be proposed by the National Board and adopted by the National Conference. All persons elected to leadership positions in the region must be members of NOW.

#### **Section 4. Affirmative Action**

A. Subunits shall have an affirmative action plan aimed at increasing diversity of participation at all levels of NOW.

#### **Article V. International Affiliates**

The national organization may establish affiliates or may affiliate with existing organizations in other countries to promote feminism worldwide.

#### **Article VI. Officers**

The national officers may delegate such duties as may be necessary to allow them to implement the performance of their office, but they may not delegate their responsibility. The officers shall be responsible at all times to the full National Board and to the members.

#### **Section 1. Titles and Duties**

A. President. There shall be a President who shall be salaried and shall be voting member of the National Board. The President shall be the principal spokesperson and chief executive and financial officer of the organization, shall call the meetings of the Board, the Executive Committee, and the National Conference and shall preside at these meetings.

B. Vice President-Executive. There shall be a Vice President-Executive who shall be salaried and shall be a voting member of the National Board. The Vice President-Executive shall directly supervise the administrative staff, preside at all meetings in the

absence of the President, and perform such other duties as may be delegated by the President and Board.

C. Vice President-Action. There shall be a Vice President-Action who shall be salaried and shall be a voting member of the National Board. The Vice President-Action shall coordinate the action programs, supervise the action-program staff, and perform such other duties as may be delegated by the President and Board.

D. Vice President-Membership. There shall be a Vice President-Membership who shall be salaried and shall be a voting member of the National Board. The Vice President-Membership shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Board, the Executive Committee and the National Conference; shall be responsible for the general correspondence of the corporation; shall be the custodian of the records; and shall maintain the membership records. The Vice President-Membership shall perform such other duties as may be delegated by the President and Board. For corporate purposes, when necessary this position shall be designated Secretary/Treasurer.

## **Section 2. Qualifications and Terms of Office**

A. All national officers shall have been members of NOW for at least four years immediately prior to election and shall have served at least one year as a chapter or state officer or National Board member. Each term of office shall be four years and shall begin 30 days following the election at the National Conference. Four year terms shall begin with officer elections held in 1993. Each officer shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

B. In the case of officers elected to fill a vacancy under Article XII, their partial terms shall not be considered in determining the term limitation.

## **Section 3. Executive Committee**

A. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the national officers. Where action is necessary between meetings of the Board, the Executive Committee may act on behalf of the Board, provided that the action is consistent with existing NOW policy. The Executive Committee shall report all of its actions and decisions to the Board. A meeting of the Executive Committee shall be held only after adequate notice to all officers. The Executive Committee may meet by any means, such as a conference telephone call, which will allow the officers to confer as a body. A quorum of the Executive Committee shall be three officers.

## **Section 4. Nominations**

A. Nominations for officers tickets shall be submitted to the Nominating Committee in writing together with an information sheet about each candidate on the ticket in accordance with Article IX, Section 1, B, provided that nothing in this shall be

interpreted to require tickets for the election of national Board members in the regions. Each officer ticket submitted to the Committee must contain a nomination for every officer position. After the report of the Nominating Committee is given at the National Conference, nominations for additional officer tickets will be taken from the floor.

### **Section 5. Elections**

A. One of the proposed officer tickets shall be elected by a majority vote of the duly credentialed delegates present whose preferences are counted in the final tally at the National Conference. If there are more than two officer tickets nominated preferential voting shall be used, and balloting shall be conducted according to the parliamentary authority prescribed in these bylaws.

### **Section 6. Salaries and Fees**

A. The Board shall set the salaries of the paid officers for the next term, except that officers may not vote on matters of officers' salaries.

B. All officers who receive honoraria as a result of their elected position shall remit to the NOW general fund one hundred percent of the said honoraria minus expenses.

## **Article VII. The National Board**

### **Section 1. Composition**

A. The National Board shall be composed of the Board members, elected by members of the regions, the national officers, and the President of the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund.

### **Section 2. Duties and Powers**

A. Administrative – The Board shall manage the affairs and control the funds and property of the organization; approve all appointments; and adopt necessary rules and regulations, provided that none of the Board's actions shall conflict with or modify the actions or directives of the national Conference or be inconsistent with the purpose of the organization.

B. Action – The Board shall develop and plan the action agenda, implement conference resolutions, and facilitate national actions and the exchange of information.

C. National Board members shall be responsible to present the concerns (including actions and programs) of the states and chapters within their regions to the National Board and to report National Board decisions to the states and chapters within their regions. Further duties of National Board members within their regions may be defined by their region's bylaws and policies.

### Section 3. Meetings

The Board shall meet at least three times each calendar year at the call of the President or at the request of one-fourth of the Board members. At least thirty days' notice shall be given for regular meetings of the Board. At least seven days' notice shall be given for special meetings.

### Section 4. Regional Election of Board Members

A. There shall be nine Regions which shall be:

1. **Northeast-** Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Rhode Island;
2. **Mid-Atlantic-** New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia;
3. **Southeast-** North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands;
4. **Mid-South-** Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana;
5. **South Central-** Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Kansas, Colorado;
6. **Great Lakes-** Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky;
7. **Prairie States-** Minnesota, Missouri, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska;
8. **Northwest-** Washington, Alaska, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming; and
9. **Southwest-** California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

B. Based on the number of members within the region as defined in this section, each region shall be allocated (1) a number of Board seats; (2) a maximum number of Board members allowed from an individual state; and (3) the minimum number of Board seats which shall be filled by persons of color. The paid NOW membership on national records as of January 1 of the year in which the election of Board members is held shall be used to determine allocation of the Board seats.

1. Regions with 12,500 members or fewer shall be allocated three Board seats; no more than two Board members may come from any one state; a minimum of one Board seat shall be filled by a person of color.
2. Regions with at least 12,501 members and fewer than 25,001 members shall be allocated four Board seats; no more than two Board members may come from any one state; a minimum of one Board seat shall be filled by a person of color.
3. Regions with at least 25,001 members and fewer than 37,501 members shall be allocated five Board seats; no more than three Board members may come from any one state, except that no more than four shall be from the state of California; a minimum of two Board seats shall be filled by persons of color.



4. Regions with at least 37,501 members shall be allocated six Board seats; no more than four Board members may come from any one state; a minimum of two Board seats shall be filled by persons of color.

### **Section 5. Procedures and Standards for Elections in Regions**

A. Any NOW member who has been a member in good standing for at least two years immediately prior to the date of election shall be eligible to serve on the National Board. Board members must remain residents of the region from which elected in order to remain on the Board.

B. All National Board members shall be elected at regional conferences at which all members of the region in good standing whose dues are received by the national organization or its appropriate subunits at least ninety days prior to the conference and who are present may vote.

C. Minimum procedures shall be:

1. The National Board members must be elected by a majority of the votes cast. Preferential or cumulative voting is permissible. In preferential voting, Board members must be elected by a majority of preferences counted in the final tally.
2. At least sixty days notice in an every-member NOW publication must be given of regional elections for National Board members.
3. The site(s) of the conference must be chosen by a majority vote of the State Coordinators voting.
4. The procedure for nominating National Board members in the regions shall be the same as that for nominating officers of the national organization. The State Coordinators in each region or their designees shall serve as the nominating committee for that region.
5. Regional elections shall be held in the month of March, April, or May of even-numbered years.

### **Section 6. Term of Office**

A. National Board members elected in the regions shall hold office for a term of two years or until their successors are elected; except that Board members elected in 1983 shall serve three year terms until 1986. Subsequent terms shall be for two years.

B. Board members shall take office at the close of the National Conference in the year in which they are elected.

C. No Board members shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms. In the case of Board members elected to fill a vacancy under Article XII, their partial term shall not be considered in determining the term limitation.

D. Any National Board member who is absent from three consecutive National Board meetings for which reimbursement is provided shall be automatically removed from the National Board without recourse to Article XIII, Section 2, Removals.

### **Section 7. Regional Directors**

One National Board member from each region may be designated by the region to serve as the Regional Director of the region.

## **Article VIII. Membership Meetings**

### **Section 1. National Conference**

A. There shall be an annual meeting of the membership (hereinafter referred to as the National Conference or the Conference) which shall rotate through the regions and shall be held for the purpose of transacting the business of the organization.

B. The National Conference shall be the supreme governing body of NOW.

C. The Conference shall be held in the month of June or July, and at such other times as the membership may decide by written petition of ten percent of the membership or a majority vote of the National Board. The Board shall fix the exact date and place of the national Conference and give at least sixty days' advance notice thereof in an every-member NOW publication. It shall make arrangements for hotel and meeting place accommodations and determine the Conference agenda.

D. In the even-numbered years, the National Conference shall include a special issue or constituency summit in the event that NOW Foundation does not sponsor such a summit.

E. The above changes adopted at the 2003 Conference shall take effect after the 2004 Conference.

F. No membership meeting at any level of NOW shall require NOW members in good standing to pay a registration fee or any other fee in order to participate in the business events or activities of said meeting. No distinction of any kind shall be drawn by the Conference or the Committee between those able to pay fees over and above basic dues and those unable to pay such fees.

### **Section 2. Voting Privileges**

A. Only delegates in good standing whose dues are received by the national organization or its appropriate subunits at least ninety days prior to the Conference and who are duly registered and in attendance shall be eligible to vote at the Conference. Each delegate shall have one vote. Delegates shall be chosen from the chapters, with one delegate for

the first ten members and one delegate for each additional thirty members or major fraction thereof. Alternates equal in number to one-fourth of the delegates in the chapter shall be elected and numbered according to the order in which they will be called upon to serve. Chapters shall elect at least one alternate. Members-at-large shall elect alternates on the same basis as chapters. Members-at-large shall elect one delegate for the first ten members and one delegate for each additional thirty members or major fraction thereof present and eligible to vote at a state conference. National officers, National Board members, and State Coordinators/Presidents shall be voting delegates at the National Conference.

B. A Credentials Committee of at least six members shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Board. The paid NOW membership on national records on the date 120 days before the national Conference shall be used to determine allocation of the delegates. The Credentials Committee shall notify the chapters and state organizations at least ninety days in advance of the National Conference of the number of delegates eligible from the chapter or state at-large membership. Chapters and states shall submit names of delegates to the Credentials Committee. Delegates' names sent no fewer than thirty days before the first day of the National Conference shall be pre-credentialed.

C. Use of the unit rule is prohibited. There shall be no proxy voting.

D. A quorum shall be twenty-five percent of those members registered and eligible to vote as delegates and shall include one officer and two other National Board members.

### **Section 3. Participation in Conference**

The National Conference shall be open to all NOW members. Only delegates shall be entitled to vote, but all NOW members shall be entitled to speak.

## **Article IX. Committees**

### **Section 1. Nominating Committee for the Election of Officers**

A. Election – The members of the Nominating Committee shall be elected in their regions. There shall be one member from each region. The committee shall designate the chair from among its members.

B. Duties – The Nominating Committee shall not endorse an individual officer ticket but shall instead:

1. Publicize and distribute in an every-member NOW publication information on the deadlines for submission of nominations and officer ticket information. These deadlines shall be set by the National Board in accordance with the

schedules for printing the every-member NOW publication and Conference materials.

2. Accept officer ticket nominations from members.
3. Determine each nominee meets the qualifications as described in these bylaws.
4. Provide uniform information sheets to be submitted by the officer tickets.
5. Assume responsibility for the distribution of information on all eligible officer tickets.
6. Publish and distribute officer ticket information in an every-member NOW publication at least thirty days before the Conference.

## **Section 2. Standing Committees of the National Board**

A. There may be standing committees of the Board, which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Public Relations
2. Finance and Budget
3. Legislation
4. Membership
5. Publications
6. Legal

B. The members of the standing committees shall serve for the duration of the term of the administration under which they serve.

C. The standing committees shall report to the Board at regular intervals and to the membership at the annual Conference or through an every-member NOW publication.

D. The President shall designate the chair of each committee subject to the approval of the National Board.

E. The chair of a standing committee shall be any NOW member unless otherwise provided for in these bylaws.

F. The members of the standing committees shall be appointed by the Board.

G. The functions and duties of the standing committees shall be designated by the Board.

### **Section 3. Advisory Committee**

There may be a National Advisory Committee appointed by the Board which shall consist of a chair appointed by the Board and not more than one-hundred NOW members who shall serve two years. The Advisory Committee shall be available to the Board for advice and consultation as requested and for assistance in fundraising. The chair shall be a non-voting member of the Board and shall serve for a term of two years, the completion of the term to be at the close of the National Conference in odd-numbered years.

### **Section 4. Special Committees of the National Board**

There shall be other committees which do not have the authority of the Board for management of the corporation, but which may advise the Board, officers, and membership-at-large, or may perform such other duties as the Board, National Conference, or President may wish to assign. This will include a permanent task force of young feminists aged 30 or under to be appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the board to advise the Board of Directors and National Conference on matters of agenda, leadership recruitment and issue prioritization regarding young feminists in NOW.

### **Section 5. Committees to Implement Conference Resolutions**

There shall be committees to implement Conference resolutions. Such committees can be established and their membership and direction be determined by the National Conference, the President, or the Board. Chairs of such committees shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Board. Chairs of such committees shall report to the Vice President-Action, who shall report to the Board and National Conference on implementation of Conference resolutions.

### **Section 6. Composition**

Although a committee or task force may allow participation by non-NOW members in its activities, all positions of responsibility or decision making authority shall be held by current NOW members.

## **Article X. Finance**

### **Section 1. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

### **Section 2. Dues**

A. Annual dues shall be paid on the anniversary date of the day on which the member joined. The amount of dues shall be set by a two-thirds vote of the Board, which shall

establish regular and hardship dues. Any member whose dues are in arrears for one month following the anniversary date on which the membership was first recorded in the national records shall be dropped from membership rolls one month after the mailing of a warning notice that the membership has become delinquent.

B. Chapter members shall pay annual dues to the chapter Treasurer, who shall be responsible for forwarding state and national portions to the appropriate units at least monthly. At-large members shall pay annual dues to the national Treasurer, who shall be responsible for rebating the state portion to the appropriate state organization at least quarterly.

C. Notwithstanding the above, if the majority of chapters in a state concur, dues for any or all units of NOW may be collected by the state organization and forwarded to the appropriate unit at least monthly.

D. The membership of persons who remit national dues during a National Conference shall take effect upon adjournment of the Conference.

### **Section 3. National Budget**

The Finance and Budget Committee shall prepare a proposed line-item budget for the fiscal year. The budget, after having been published in a NOW leadership mailing, shall be approved by a majority vote of the members of the Board present and voting at a meeting preceding the commencement of the fiscal year on January 1. After the budget is adopted, an abbreviated version will be printed in an every-member NOW publication. Review and revision of the budget may occur at any regular or special meeting of the Board by a majority vote of those present and voting, with subsequent notification to the membership indicating a summary of the revision and current financial experience to date.

### **Section 4. Audit**

The results of every audit shall be available to the members upon request.

## **Article XI. Grievances**

Grievance procedures shall be determined by the National Board.

## **Article XII. Vacancies**

### **Section 1. President**

In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice President-Executive shall immediately assume the office and duties of President.

## **Section 2. Other Officers**

In the event of a vacancy in any other national office, the Board shall appoint any member of NOW who meets the criteria for elective office in the national organization. Officers so appointed shall take office within thirty days of the appointment.

## **Section 3. National Board Members Elected from the Regions**

A. Vacancies in regionally elected National Board positions shall be filled by any member of that region who meets the criteria for national office and is elected by a vote of two-thirds of the State Coordinators and the remaining Board member(s) of that region.

B. The existence of a vacancy shall be consistent with the provision of Article VII, Section 4, B.

## **Article XIII. Recall and Removal**

### **Section 1. Recall**

#### **A. National Board Members Elected in Regions**

A petition signed by ten percent of the membership of the region shall initiate the recall of a National Board member elected from that region. The petition shall designate either a Conference vote or a postal ballot as the method of recall. The National Board has the responsibility to carry out the mandate of the petition. In the case of a postal ballot, the voting procedures shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

#### **B. Officers**

1. A petition signed by ten percent of the NOW membership from each region shall be necessary to initiate the recall of a national officer. Recall charges shall be filed with the Vice President-Membership. Time for collecting signatures shall be no more than 120 days from the date of publication of charges in an every-member NOW publication. Petition signatures shall be filed with or mailed to the Vice President-Membership. Mailed petitions shall be postmarked no later than midnight of the 120th day.
2. Grounds for recall must be stated in writing and submitted to the Vice President-Membership. Stated grounds for recall must appear on each individual petition. Petitions shall be limited to no more than thirty signatures per page.
3. A petition containing the required number of signatures, after having been filed with the Vice President-Membership, shall be certified by the VP-Membership within fourteen calendar days. Both the officer subject to recall and the

person(s) filing the signatures shall be notified in writing of the status of the recall petition by the Vice President-Membership within three days of the date of certification or failure thereof. The required number of signatures shall be determined by the total national membership at the time of the National Conference prior to the date of the filing of recall charges with the Vice President-Membership. After certification, recall notice must be published in the next every-member NOW publication.

4. The original filing of charges and each petition shall designate a postal ballot as the method of recall so long as the recall vote shall be in accordance with the procedures for election. In case of a postal ballot, voting procedures shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. The National Board has the responsibility to carry out the mandate of the petition.
5. The postal ballot shall be mailed to all delegates elected to attend the prior national Conference. The recall vote shall be approved by an absolute majority of delegates. The time for delegates to return ballots shall be no more than seventeen calendar days.
6. Under no circumstances shall the time for recall extend beyond ninety days after the date the recall signatures have been certified by the Vice President-Membership.

## **Section 2. Removals**

After notice and opportunity for a hearing, the National Board, by a two-thirds vote of its actual membership, may remove any officer, Board member, chapter charter, or membership if the Board determines the actions in question are contrary to the purposes of NOW and injurious to the organization.

## **Article XIV. Amendments**

### **Section 1. National Conference**

These bylaws may be amended by a three-fifths vote at the national Conference, provided that:

- A. The amendment is proposed by either a majority vote of the National Board, 500 members, two state organizations, or fifty chapters.
- B. The proposed amendment is submitted to the Board at least 120 days in advance of the national Conference for publication in an every-member NOW publication.
- C. The existent bylaw plus the proposed amendment is published in an every-member NOW publication at least sixty days prior to the meeting of the National Conference.



## **Section 2. Postal Ballot**

These Bylaws may be amended by a referendum of postal ballots in which a majority of the valid returned ballots show approval of the change, provided that:

A. The amendment has been proposed by either a majority vote of the National Conference, the majority of the Board, 2,000 members, seventeen state organizations, or one hundred-fifty chapters.

B. At least sixty days before the mailing of the ballots, an announcement is made in an every-member NOW publication, including the existent bylaw, the proposed amendment, and pro and con arguments written by representatives of opposing sides.

C. The above announcement is repeated in the ballot mailing.

## **Section 3. Publication of Amendments**

The National Board shall print in an every-member NOW publication announcements of all amendments submitted to it within proper deadlines by proper bodies as defined in Sections 1 and 2 above.

## **Article XV. Parliamentary Authority**

Except as herein provided, all proceedings of NOW shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

## **Article XVI. Dissolution**

### **Section 1. Method**

The corporation may be dissolved in the following manner: A petition for dissolution signed by ten percent of the members of each of a minimum of fifteen chapters from at least ten states shall be submitted to the National Board and a postal ballot to dissolve shall be sent to all members and shall require a two-thirds vote of those valid returned ballots to uphold the petition to dissolve.

### **Section 2. Disposition of Assets**

Upon the dissolution of the organization, the National Board shall, after paying or making provisions for payment of all liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets in a manner appropriate to that purpose or to such organization or organizations as shall at the time qualify as devoted to the purpose of NOW.



# MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

## NOW MATERIALS INFORMATION

### Ordering NOW Materials

Orders for NOW materials are available through the NOW Action Center. We have posted many chapter development materials on the chapters-only section of the NOW website, including leadership materials, recent action kits and PDF files of membership forms and brochures. Many items are free, for some there is a small charge. Other items such as rounds, jewelry, shirts, buttons and books may be ordered through the NOW store at [www.now.org/store](http://www.now.org/store). Not all items are available at a discount. Please note especially the mugs and shirts we have available with Margaret Mead's famous quote "Never doubt that a small group...." which make great thank you gifts and awards.

We know that often things come up that no one could foresee. However, if you can give us a week to 10 days to get materials to you, it will save both your chapter and National NOW a great deal of money in special mail fees.

## **NOW RESOURCES INFORMATION**

### **National NOW Action Center Resources for Chapters**

Chapter Development Staff at the National Action Center are available to answer your questions and talk with you about any problems you may be having. We can send various manuals or handouts, and can also refer you to where some of these things might be posted on the National NOW web site.

The NOW website [www.now.org](http://www.now.org) is a remarkable resource for all chapter leaders. From the chapters tab at the top of the homepage, visitors can link to a state and see all chapters in the state listed. Any e-mail or web address a chapter has can be linked from that site.

The chapters-only section of the NOW website is password protected. We mail out a notice to chapters when we are planning to change the password, and encourage you to give it to chapter officers who need access to this kind of resource. We do NOT like to send the password to you by e-mail, the whole point being that even with substantial precautions we can't be sure such an e-mail will stay within NOW.

This site posts leadership mailings, board minutes and lots of internal memos and documents. Also available from this site are lots of chapter resources: order e-files or labels of your membership, get copies of NOW documents and copies of chapter development materials, logos and information about ordering products from our NOW catalog that are discounted for chapters.

### **NOW Policy Manuals for Administration and Issues**

The National Organization for Women has kept a very good record of all of the policies that we are bound by in the work we do. In areas of administration, they deal with the operation of the Action Center, how elections are run, how preferential balloting works, along with many policies affecting our chapters and state organizations. The section of issue policies contains all the various resolutions that have passed over the years developing our stands and implementation of issues of that our activists use in planning their work.

At present the manuals are huge. They are, however, available to chapters through the chapters-only website. If you have a question about a specific area of policy, we suggest you call the NOW Action Center.

If you do not see something you feel you need or have a question about something we've mentioned here, please contact Chapter Development Staff.

## Staying Connected: NOW's Website

NOW's website has all you ever wanted to know about HOW we are changing the world for women! Here are some examples of projects that we've taken on - using the links in newsletters and flyers will make it easy for members to take ACTION and, in doing so, become activists!

1. Equal Marriage Campaign
  - a. At the 2004 National Conference, NOW delegates approved a resolution calling for equal marriage rights for lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals. The resolution specifically encourages NOW chapters and leaders to engage in debate and education on this issue and to conduct a proactive media campaign. NOW encourages you to hold educational meetings in your communities, participate in forums, enlist other groups in this effort, write Op-Eds and letters to your local papers, protest in front of state/federal court buildings, and engage in a public debate.  
<http://www.now.org/issues/marriage/index.html>
2. Wal-Mart: Merchant of Shame
  - a. "Wal-Mart ALWAYS discriminates!" Justice for Wal-Mart employees, most of whom are women, will happen only with the efforts of activists taking steps to communicate to consumers and to workers that this company, the largest employer in the United States, engages in unfair labor practices. Contact [chapdev@now.org](mailto:chapdev@now.org) or visit the chapters-only section of the web to learn more about the palm cards, flyers and buttons NOW offers to chapters. Wal-Mart workers need a VOICE!  
<http://www.now.org/chapters/internal/toolkits/walmart/index.html>
3. Love Your Body Day
  - a. Celebrate NOW's annual Love Your Body Day. Love Your Body Day is a national day to speak out against ads and images of women that are offensive, harmful, dangerous, and disrespectful and speak up for media images of women and girls that are diverse and realistic, promoting health and self-esteem. (As noted, this is an annual campaign sponsored by NOW's Foundation. Watch for information and ideas for chapter action each year!)  
<http://www.nowfoundation.org/>

## Staying Connected: Taking Action

1. Get action alerts
  - a. Sign up to receive NOW's national action alerts. This includes our Legislative Update, as well as other periodic action alerts. To sign up, visit:  
<http://www.now.org/actions/signup.html>

2. NOW in the news

- a. Sign up to receive all national news releases as they are sent to media outlets across the U.S. To sign up, visit: <http://www.now.org/press/signup.html>

3. Status of legislation

- a. How do I find out about the status of a piece of legislation in Congress? Research your issue or bill at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

To find out more information on your state or region contact networks, or for more information about NOW's resources for states and chapters, check the chapters-only website for updated materials and action ideas. Write to [chapdev@now.org](mailto:chapdev@now.org) or [field@now.org](mailto:field@now.org) for more information.