

Basic Functions of a Committee

- ◇ Formulate and sustain the mission of the committee. Make sure that every component is consistent with the Association's vision.
- ◇ Represent the interests of the members of the Association, whose resources allow the Association to pursue its mission, while balancing those interest with the interests of the state as a whole.
- ◇ Translate values into policies that serve to guide the operations of the Association.
- ◇ Account to the public and to the members of the Association for the actions of the committee.
- ◇ Work with the Executive Director to develop long range plans and revise periodically.
- ◇ Ensure that all legal and ethical responsibilities of the committee are being fulfilled.
- ◇ Ensure that the committee's goals and objectives are being achieved as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Duty of Loyalty

Committee members have a duty to refrain from engaging in personal activities that may injure or take advantage of the Association. Each has an obligation to refrain from furthering one's own interests at the expense of the committee or the Association.

Conflict of Interest is a contradiction between one's obligation to the Committee/Association and one's self interest.

Duty of Due Care

Committee members have an obligation to perform committee duties in good faith and always with consideration to the best interest of the Association.



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The Importance of Montana Association of Counties Committees

Agriculture

Community, Economic Development
& Labor

Conference Planning

Energy

Health & Human Services

Justice & Public Safety

Land Use, Planning & Development

Public Lands

Resolutions & Legislative

Tax, Budget & Finance

Transportation

Committees are essential to an Association's operation.

The major function of committees is to advise. Committees generate alternatives, recommend courses of action, and/or solve problems. The purpose, scope and authority must be agreed upon.

How to Be a Better Committee Member

Orient Yourself to the Association and the Committee

Research the Association's vision, mission, structure and operations. If you were appointed to serve on the committee, our orientation should help you answer the question, "Why am I here?" and "Why does the committee exist and what is its history?"

Learn the Field of Interest

Continually study the issues and environment toward which your committee's mission is directed. Ask staff to provide you with information on the issues and environment as well as conduct your own research.

Build a Trusting Environment

Get to know the other committee members in terms of their level of commitment to the Association, how they see their roles as committee members, and their visions of the committee and its purpose. This will help you answer the question, "What level of involvement will I risk?" and "What will the other members expect from me?"

Understand the Goals

Seek clarification of individual committee goals, the intent of these goals and the process used to set these goals.

Understand the Roles, Responsibilities of Committee and Staff and Expectations of You

Find out the function that each committee member needs to perform to be effective. Are

there special roles that committee members must undertake to help the committee run smoothly? (i.e. facilitator, recorder, etc.) Learn committee staff roles, the boundaries and how they compliment each other. Find out what is exactly expected from you based on the by-laws and perspectives of others in the committee.

Determine the Appropriateness of the Committee's Structure

Learn how the committee is organized. Does the structure and organization of the committee enable it to effectively manage its responsibilities in building a strong Association? Can you function effectively in this structure? Review the by-laws, committee structure, and any state, federal and local laws, rules and regulations affecting your committee and compare these with the vision and purpose of the Association.

Determine the Effectiveness of the Committee's Operating Norms

Examine how the committee makes decisions. Is it a good decision-making body? Are you familiar or comfortable with the way the committee makes decisions? Is the committee's decision-making philosophy similar to yours? If not, can you suggest change? Does the committee exhibit behaviors that enhance its effectiveness, i.e. starting and ending on time, coming to meetings prepared, constructively dealing with conflict, etc.? If not, can you affect change on these behaviors?

Keys to Effective Service

- Commitment
More than attending one committee meeting.
- Teamwork
Requires that you understand and believe in "the team".
- Learn the Job
Includes roles, responsibilities and expectations.
- Ethics
Involves conscience yours and the committee's.
- Collective
It should be more than just the letter of the law.

Seek Opportunities to Develop Your Leadership Skills

Find out what is required of leadership within the committee and learn how the Association encourages individual committee members to develop leadership potential. Ask yourself whether you should, or need to, avail yourself of these activities that encourage leadership development? Do you have suggestions on how the organization can better encourage leadership development?

Tap Your Constituents

Remain in touch with those you represent and/or those your Association serves in order to assess the environment, issues and their perceptions of your Association. Are your decision-making and actions consistent with your constituents' desires or beliefs?

Appreciate the Value of Different Styles

Understand and respect the other committee members' group and leadership styles. Learn the value of each style and how to deal effectively with varying group and leadership styles. What is your style? What advantages and disadvantages does your style bring to the committee?

Engage in Planning

Encourage your committee to engage in an ongoing process of creating the Association's future and devising strategies with clearly delineated responsibilities and deadlines.

Assess Your Effort

Regularly examine your effectiveness as a committee member. In what areas do you excel? In what areas do you struggle? How can you improve weakness? Do you still 'got it' to give?

Smell the Roses– Renewal

Take time to recognize your own and the committee's efforts. Celebrate accomplishments. Develop shared excitement about the Association's vision and the committee's role in realizing this. Encourage individuals to share new ideas that will help shape the committee.