



How to Start a Sisters in the Brotherhood Committee

Gaining Leadership Support for Your Committee

1. Contact your EST by letter or email requesting support/approval for starting a committee in your area. Do this whether you are starting a committee in a Council or Local(s).
2. If you are establishing a committee for one Local, seek support/approval from the President of that Local. Additionally, as a courtesy, contact your EST (see step 1 above.)
3. A multi-Local committee works best sometimes if there are small numbers of women in a group of Locals that are geographically near each other. The people involved in creating a multi-local committee may include your EST, the President of your Council Delegate body, and the Presidents of the respective Locals.
4. If employed and the *only* possible time for your committee meeting conflicts with work schedules, seek support from the contractor prior to the meeting.
5. Contact Training Directors/Coordinators for the support of informing all apprentices and journeymen on the value and importance of supporting and/or participating in Women's Committees.
6. Depending on whether it is a Local, multi-Local, or Regional Council committee, check with the Council or Locals for financial support for refreshments for the meetings.

Planning Your First Meeting

1. Check with Locals to determine how many Sisters are in your area and who they are.
2. Determine the best method of contact. Due to the privacy act, personal information cannot be shared. Once the committee is approved, contact the President of the Local to about mailing a notice to all Sisters within the Local. If it is a Multi-Local Women's Committee, each Local President must be contacted.
3. The mailing should have a viable contact person. This could be the Sister who is chairing the committee.
4. When Sisters are contacted, obtain their approval to share personal contact information for future contact through email, text, phone, etc.
5. Give plenty of notice in advance of meeting. At least one week's notice with follow-up calls two days before for a reminder.
6. Determine the place and time where the meeting will be held. Check for availability and approval of a Local or training center
7. Invite job stewards to attend meetings.

Advertising Your Meeting

1. Announce at monthly Local Union meetings.
2. Post bulletins on Local and Training Center notice boards.
3. Announce at steward meetings.
4. Place announcement at jobsites where permitted.
5. Place an announcement on the Council, Local, or Training Fund website.

Conducting Your First Meeting

1. Decide if it is a formal or informal meeting.
2. Decide what the content of the first meeting should be, such as: meet and greet, political activities, community involvement, labor rally, etc.
3. Determine place and time where meeting(s) will be held.
4. Have copies of Robert's Rules of Order and the Constitution of the UBC, as well as note pads, pencils, and anything else that will be helpful.
5. Have a sign-in roster to collect contact information.
6. Provide information about the preliminary goals of your Committee.
7. Create an agenda for your meeting. Some possible agenda items are listed below:
 - Meet and greet.
 - Discussion of sharing personal contact information.
 - Selection of officers: president/chair person, treasurer, recording secretary, etc.
 - Decision on how often to hold meetings, meeting times, location, etc.
8. Keep good minutes. Ensure the meeting minutes contain:
 - Date, time, and place.
 - Information about who chaired the meeting.
 - Information about decisions and next steps.
 - Note: Minutes from committee meetings can be subpoenaed and used against the union in a variety of legal and labor board actions, so be very cautious in describing any discussion of specific employers, labor actions, etc. A good option is to record such open talk as "Discussion of union issues followed."
9. Establish the size of a *quorum* and ensure one is present when needed. *Quorum* may be the most important of Robert's Rules of Order. It is the minimum number of members of the committee who must be present in order to conduct *official* business at that meeting; this can prevent a few members from taking action that doesn't represent the majority.
10. Have refreshments available.

Making Your Meetings Productive

1. Prepare an agenda and distribute it to committee members and guests before the meeting.
2. Have a few reliable women agree to share responsibilities.
3. Introduce committee members at the outset, using first names.
4. Recognize guests and Sisters attending for the first time.
5. Welcome the attendance of Brothers.
6. Keep the meeting focused on discussing ideas, rather than debating differences.
7. Agree on a few short-term and long-term goals. Examples:
 - Short-term: Have three women participate in a current Local Union political campaign or volunteer together on a Habitat project.
 - Long-term: Work to have the most *active* women elected as Council Delegates.

Staying in Contact

1. Communicate with members regularly (email, text, facebook, etc.).
2. Communicate all pertinent information regarding committee activities and expectations.
3. Follow up every request so that committee members understand the specifics of what is requested.
4. Keep as many committee members involved as possible.
5. Answer all correspondence (email, text, etc.) as soon as possible.
6. Praise members' good work, both in writing and verbally at meetings.
7. Maintain a sense of humor; take nothing personally.

Criteria for Evaluating the Success of Your Committee

1. Whether the number of Sisters/members who attend your meetings is growing or declining.
2. Whether new pre-apprentices, apprentices, journey women, etc. are joining your committee and attending your meetings.
3. The number of volunteers who take on roles or assist with the meetings or other projects.
4. The number and types of community projects, political activities, etc. where your committee is actively involved.