



Ways to Learn Leadership Skills: Non-Committee Activities

There are many things you can do outside of your Women's Committee to learn leadership skills. Some things will involve taking advantage of opportunities that exist. Others will involve creating your own opportunities.

Sometimes this will mean moving “outside” of your comfort zone. At other times this will mean staying “within” your comfort zone. Accept all situations with the same amount of enthusiasm and willingness to learn. Consider the following examples:

A. Get Involved With Your Political Party

Go to Meetings: Call your local party to find out the time and location of these meetings.

Volunteer at Headquarters: Call a local candidate and offer to volunteer on the campaign.

Work on a Campaign: Call a local candidate and offer to volunteer on the campaign. Volunteers do everything from planning events to going door-to-door meeting the voters.

Start an Affiliated Party Organization: If you are a good organizer and feel up to the challenge, think about starting a local political organization or club in your community. There are numerous clubs you can start. There are also established groups that are looking to expand into new areas (e.g., Young Republicans, Young Democrats, Women's Groups).

Run for Office: Organizations such as Emerge America will teach you how to run for political office and win. Call party headquarters to ask what offices are up for election soon and whether candidates are needed for any of these races. There are probably dozens of offices you can run for in your area — start off small and work your way up.

B. Join a Professional Organization Related to Your Industry

One example is the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC). Get active in the organization by attending meetings. Join a committee and work toward becoming chairperson, secretary, or serving in some other leadership role.

C. Participate in Community Organizations That Offer Leadership Training Programs

Two examples include Toastmasters International and SoulzAtWork (Canada). These organizations will help you develop critical leadership skills like communicating clearly, presenting effectively, and managing teams.

D. Volunteer to Serve on Committees for Local Nonprofit Organizations

Check for opportunities at your place of worship, schools or charitable organizations. Some examples include American Red Cross, United Way, Homeless Shelters, and Habitat for Humanity. Become a project or committee chairperson to get the most leadership experience.

E. Sign up for a Leadership Class at your local Community College

While learning by doing is important, it is also important to get some educational development that will help you define and refine your leadership skills. Also, consider taking classes in Communication, Teamwork, and Presentations Skills. These are all critical to being an effective leader.

F. Ask Questions and Listen for Wisdom

Good leaders are all around you. Discuss with them their successes and find out the things they did to achieve good leadership skills. Listen wisely to the advice they share. If you ask good questions, you will appear genuinely interested in learning. Write your questions in advance and be prepared to take notes.