



Michigan Main Street Committee Guide

MICHIGAN MAIN STREET



As community-driven initiatives, Main Street programs rely heavily on well-organized committees to advance their goals, enhance local economies, promote vibrant districts, and more. This guide will dive into the elements that contribute to the success of these committees, providing you with the knowledge and tools to foster collaboration and drive meaningful outcomes within your own community.

NAVIGATING THE GUIDE

Navigate your way through this document as it covers the inner workings and details of how Main Street Committees can work effectively and efficiently. Beginning with overviews and specifics of each of the four points and aligning responsibilities, the rest of this document is generally applicable across all committees for your organization.

Committee Structures

- Organization
- Economic Vitality
- Promotion
- Design

Roles and Responsibilities of a Committee Chair

- Effective Committee Chairs
- Expectations for a Committee Chair
- Roles and Responsibilities of a Committee Member

Executive Director Roles

Planning the Work of the Committee

- Project Planning
- Process Work Plans
- Effective Committee Meetings
- Tips for Managing Discussions

Committee Report Cards

Organization Committee

Organization means getting everyone working towards the same goal. The tough work of building consensus and cooperation among the groups that have an important stake in the district can be eased by creating a shared vision that converts the Main Street program’s mission into clear goals, defines the organization’s role in revitalizing the downtown or commercial corridor and builds structure for the board and staff.

The role of the organization committee involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.

On the organization committee you will often find yourself...

- ✓ **Holding meetings** to identify community resources, and brainstorm ideas and develop strategies to cultivate volunteers and encourage financial investment in the organization
- ✓ **Engaging with stakeholders** to solicit their support and update them on the organization’s plans
- ✓ **Promote the organization** to answer questions, deliver fresh news, or share data about successes
- ✓ **Coordinating projects** to help launch fundraising campaigns and volunteer recruitment and retention efforts
- ✓ **Meeting with board members** to oversee development of financial budgeting and reinvestment data tracking systems

Likely candidates for the Organization Committee:

- Merchants
- Property owners
- Residents
- Civic group volunteers
- Accountants
- Media Representatives
- Volunteer Specialists

Monthly Roles

- Confirm fundraising efforts and volunteer recruitment are occurring in alignment with the organization’s needs to ensure there is available capacity to implement strategic projects and programs.
- Provide oversight and support to Main Street staff, committees, and volunteers to ensure alignment with organizational priorities and objectives.
- Conduct regular evaluations and assessments of the Main Street organization’s programs, initiatives, and partnerships to identify areas for improvement and innovation.
- Engage with stakeholders, partners, and funders to build relationships, secure support, and advocate for the Main Street organization’s mission and impact.

Annual Roles

- Conduct an annual assessment of the Main Street organization’s capacity, structure, and effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals.
- Develop an annual fundraising plan and budget to guide the organization’s activities, priorities, and resource allocations.
- Recruit and onboard new board members, committee chairs, and volunteers to ensure a diverse, engaged, and effective leadership team.
- Evaluate the organization’s governance policies, procedures, and bylaws to ensure compliance, transparency, and accountability.

Organization Committee Effectiveness

Work Plan Effectiveness

Now that you've evaluated your committee's organizational patterns and behavior, the following questions may help you assess the effectiveness of the committee's work plan. Give yourself a "plus" for each positive response:

- + Do more people know about your organization and its mission than when the program started?
- + Has there been adequate financing to fund staff and office operations?
- + Does the program have a good budgeting and accounting system that is properly managed?
- + Are committees adequately "staffed" with appropriate, productive volunteers?
- + Has the staff's performance been evaluated regularly, using measurable standards?
- + Is fund-raising integrated into work plan objectives so that sponsors can be solicited for specific projects?
- + Are volunteers recognized publicly and regularly?

Add up your total and evaluate:

5-7 positive responses give your committee a GRADE A rating.

3-4 indicate you're MAKING AN IMPACT.

0-2 show that your work plan needs MAJOR COURSE CORRECTION

Organization Committee Curriculum

Resources for on-boarding Organization Committee members.

Organization Four Point Overview:

[Michigan Main Street Organization Worksheet](#)

[Main Street America Foundations: Organization](#)

Outreach/Communication:

[Communication Plan](#)

Local Community Main 5 Communication Resources

Fundraising and Fund Development:

[Beginner's Guide to Fundraising](#)

[Fund Development Toolkit](#)

Volunteer Management:

[Volunteer Toolkit](#)

[Volunteer Management Webinar](#)

Economic Vitality Committee

Economic vitality focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

The role of the economic vitality committee is to identify new market opportunities, repurpose historic buildings, and stimulate investment. It develops a deep understanding of the district's economic condition and opportunities, focusing on incremental changes to strengthen the area's economic foundation and enable small business and property investments.

On the economic vitality committee, you will often find yourself...

- ✓ **Holding meetings** to analyze data, develop strategies, measure progress, and brainstorm ideas
- ✓ **Visiting business people** to get their ideas, find out how their businesses are doing, and get updates on their plans
- ✓ **Finding new economic uses** for Main Street buildings
- ✓ **Coordinating groups** to help conduct surveys, provide support to existing businesses, or meet with potential business prospects
- ✓ **Meeting with financiers** to develop incentive programs and identify sources of capital for building rehabilitation projects and business development
- ✓ **Working with realtors, developers, and property owners** to plan real estate improvement projects

Likely candidates for the economic vitality committee:

Merchants
Property owners
Realtors
Financial professionals
Developers
Business students
Marketing Professionals

Monthly roles

- Host monthly networking events, workshops, and seminars to support local businesses and foster collaboration within the business community.
- Monitor the performance of businesses in the Main Street district and identifying opportunities for improvement or intervention.
- Facilitate discussions and collaborations between property owners, landlords, and tenants to address challenges and opportunities related to leasing, property management, and business development.
- Advocate for policies, incentives, and resources that support small business growth, workforce development, and economic resilience within the Main Street district.

Annual roles:

- Conduct an annual assessment of the district's economic landscape, including business occupancy rates, vacancy trends, market demand, and economic indicators.
- Develop strategies and initiatives to support business retention, recruitment, and expansion efforts within the Main Street district.
- Facilitate partnerships with local entrepreneurs, investors, lenders, and business support organizations to stimulate economic growth and entrepreneurship.
- Provide resources, training, and technical assistance to businesses owners to enhance their operational efficiency, customer service, and marketing strategies.
- Provide resources, training and technical assistance to property owners to support strategic real-estate improvements to Main Street buildings and underutilized properties.

Economic Vitality Committee Effectiveness

Work Plan Effectiveness

Now that you've evaluated your committee's organizational patterns and behavior, the following questions may help assess the effectiveness of the committee's work plan. Give yourself a "plus" for each positive response:

- + Do business owners know more about changing market trends in the community today than when the program started?
- + Has the committee published market analysis findings in a concise, useful, and clear form that will be easily and quickly understood by the business community?
- + Has the Main Street program provided retailers with useful educational opportunities, such as workshops, publications, and services?
- + Has the main street program implemented incentives to encourage business development and building rehabs?
- + Does everyone in the organization understand and agree on an economic vitality strategy for Main Street?
- + Have more uses been found for buildings in the commercial district, and are these uses compatible with your market strategy for Main Street?
- + Have appropriate recruitment materials been compiled, using a "partnership" system with local economic development organizations?

Add up your total and evaluate:

5-7 positive responses give your committee a GRADE A rating.

3-4 indicate you're MAKING AN IMPACT.

0-2 show that your work plan needs MAJOR COURSE CORRECTIONS

Economic Vitality Committee Curriculum

Resources for on-boarding Economic Vitality committee members

Economic Vitality Four-Point Overview

[Michigan Main Street Economic Vitality Worksheet](#)

[Main Street America Foundations: Economic Vitality](#)

District Data

[Main Street America Market Analysis for Community Transformation](#)

[Building and Business Inventory](#)

Local Market Snapshot

Local Visitor Data

Business Retention and Recruitment

[Business Development Toolkit](#)

[Guide to Supporting Entrepreneurs](#)

[Business Recruitment Webinar](#)

Real Estate

[Introduction to Planning for Downtown](#)

[Building Improvement Incentives Guide](#)

[Strategies for Filling Vacancies](#)

Real Estate Development Webinar Series

[Main Street and Economic Development](#)

[Turning Numbers into Opportunity](#)

[Getting Your Act Together Before You Market](#)

[Property Marketing 101](#)

Promotion Committee

Promotion positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases the community's unique characteristics.

The job of the promotion committee is to promote downtown as a center of commerce, culture, and community life for residents and visitors alike. By marketing the district to shoppers, investors, new businesses, and visitors, an effective promotion strategy forges a positive image through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events, and marketing campaigns carried out by local volunteers.

On the promotion committee you will often find yourself...

- ✓ **Holding meetings** to analyze data, identify community assets, develop marketing and promotion strategies, brainstorm ideas, and plan events
- ✓ **Visiting local merchants** to get their ideas, solicit participation at events, and update them on plans
- ✓ **Creating a Marketing Plan** to develop an image for the district, advertising strategy, and communication strategies including social media and website promotions
- ✓ **Coordinating groups** to participate, attend, sponsor, or be a partner for implementing promotional activities
- ✓ **Organizing events** to set up equipment, vendor booths, supervise volunteers, manage event activities, and evaluate events once complete

Likely candidates for the Promotion Committee:

Downtown merchants
Chamber of commerce members
Civic groups involved in the arts
Marketing/advertising professionals
Teachers of marketing or design
Reporters and editors
Graphic designers and artists
People who want to be "part of the action"

Monthly roles:

- Plan and coordinate monthly events, promotions, and marketing campaigns to drive foot traffic and sales in the district.
- Manage the Main Street organization's website, social media channels, and other communication platforms to share updates, promote events, and engage with the community.
- Cultivate partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and sponsors to support promotional efforts and maximize resources.
- Monitor trends in consumer behavior, tourism, and marketing strategies to inform promotional strategies and stay relevant in a dynamic marketplace.

Annual roles:

- Develop an annual marketing and promotions plan to attract visitors, shoppers, and patrons to the Main Street district.
- Identify key events, campaigns, and initiatives to showcase the district's unique assets, businesses, and cultural offerings.
- Collaborate with local media outlets, influencers, and partners to amplify the Main Street's messaging and reach target audiences.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of promotional activities and adjusting strategies based on feedback and performance metrics.

Promotion Committee Effectiveness

Work Plan Effectiveness

Now that you've evaluated your committee's organizational patterns and behavior, the following questions may help assess the effectiveness of the committee's work plan. Give yourself a "plus" for each positive response:

- + Do more people know about the downtown revitalization program today than when it started?
- + Has the committee produced publicity materials that create or enhance the image of the commercial district?
- + Were those materials effective?
- + Did the activities devoted to retail promotion have a measurable impact on sales?
- + Did the Main Street organization add any community events to the local promotion calendar?
- + Did Main Street assist other organizations in facilitating special events?
- + Have participants in the Promotion Committee's projects been thanked or honored in some way?

Add up your total and evaluate:

5-7 positive responses give your committee a GRADE A ranking.

3-4 indicate you're MAKING AN IMPACT.

0-2 show that your work plan needs MAJOR COURSE CORRECTIONS.

Evaluating Promotional Events:

In evaluating a particular promotional event or activity, the committee can direct the following questions to individual business owners:

- ✓ Were the date and time of the promotion appropriate for your business?
- ✓ Were the name, theme, and slogan of the promotion appropriate for your business?
- ✓ Would it be better to hold any part of this promotion at a different location next time? Where?
- ✓ If an advertising graphic was provided, was it appropriate for your business?
- ✓ If a poster or button was made available, was it appropriate?
- ✓ If a street banner was used, was it appropriate?
- ✓ If an in-store promotional flyer was provided, was it appropriate for your business?
- ✓ If a joint advertising promotion was utilized, was it appropriate for your business?
- ✓ Were you satisfied with the overall results of the promotion?

Promotion Committee Curriculum

Resources for on-boarding Promotion committee members

Promotion Four Point Overview

[Michigan Main Street Promotion Worksheet](#)

[Main Street America Foundations: Promotion](#)

Events

[Guide to Planning Strategic Events](#)

[Best Practices for Retail Events](#)

[Guide to Single-Ask Sponsorship Campaigns](#)

[Guide to Event Evaluation](#)

Marketing

[Asset Mapping](#)

[Organization and Destination Marketing 101](#)

[Design a Marketing Plan](#)

Design Committee

Design supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.

The design committee guides the visual and physical enhancement of Main Street by overseeing projects that highlight its historical and architectural assets, ensuring a cohesive and inviting atmosphere, and integrating design elements like window displays, parking areas, signage, sidewalks, streetlights, public amenities, art, and landscaping with broader revitalization goals.

On the design committee you will often find yourself

- ✓ **Holding meetings** to review design proposals, develop design strategies, brainstorm improvements, and plan enhancements.
- ✓ **Visiting local merchants** to gather their input, encourage involvement in design initiatives, and update them on progress.
- ✓ **Educating stakeholders** to encourage planning and best practices for historic preservation.
- ✓ **Coordinating with partners** to engage in, support, or sponsor design-related activities and projects.
- ✓ **Developing design incentives** to facilitate façade and building rehabilitation.
- ✓ **Organizing design initiatives** to supervise installations, manage logistics, and ensure successful execution of public space improvement projects.

Likely candidates for the Design Committee:

Architects or urban planners
Artists or graphic designers
Business owners
Property owners
Developers
Civic or Cultural groups
Landscape Architects
Interior designers

Monthly roles:

- Review proposed design projects and applications for façade grants or design assistance.
- Monitor progress on ongoing design initiatives and providing guidance as needed.
- Engage with property owners, business owners, and community members to solicit input and support for design-related efforts.
- Coordinate with other Main Street committees to ensure alignment and integration of design objectives with broader revitalization goals.

Annual roles:

- Conduct an annual assessment of the physical appearance of the Main Street district.
- Develop a strategic plan for enhancing the district's aesthetics, including streetscape improvements, façade renovations, public art installations, and historic preservation efforts.
- Collaborate with local stakeholders, architects, designers, and contractors to implement design projects and initiatives.
- Organize design-related training sessions, workshops, and resources for property owners and business operators.

Design Committee Effectiveness

Work Plan Effectiveness

Now that you've evaluated your committee's organizational patterns and behavior, the following questions may help assess the effectiveness of the committee's work plan. Give yourself a "plus" for each positive response:

- + Has the design committee successfully identified and highlighted the historical and architectural assets of the downtown area?
- + Have new design elements, such as signage and landscaping, been implemented to create a cohesive atmosphere?
- + Have these design enhancements contributed to a more inviting environment for residents and visitors?
- + Has the committee identified opportunities for rehabilitation or redevelopment and supporting financial incentives?
- + Did the design projects receive positive feedback from the community?
- + Have the design initiatives been integrated with broader revitalization goals?
- + Did the committee collaborate with local artists or designers to enrich the visual appeal of the district?
- + Have there been measurable improvements in foot traffic or engagement in areas that underwent design enhancements?

Add up your total and evaluate:

5-7 positive responses give your committee a GRADE A ranking.

3-4 indicate you're MAKING AN IMPACT.

0-2 show that your work plan needs MAJOR COURSE CORRECTIONS.

Design Committee Curriculum

Resources for on-boarding Design committee members

Design Four Point Overview

[Michigan Main Street Design Worksheet](#)

[Main Street America Foundations: Design](#)

Preservation

[Main Street America Design Guide](#)

[Guide to Creating Design Guidelines](#)

Historic Preservation 101 Webinars

[What is Historic Preservation](#)

[Storefront Design](#)

[How to Encourage Catalytic Revitalization](#)

Place

[Project for Public Spaces Placemaking Overview](#)

[AARP Pop-up Placemaking Toolkit](#)

Roles and Responsibilities of a Committee Chair

Leadership and direction

Provide leadership and direction to the rest of the committee.

Ensure the committee continues to align with the overall goals of the Main Street organization board.

Planning and strategy

Develop a strategic plan for the committee.

Outline goals, objectives, and tactics for the committee to achieve desired outcomes in their specific area (e.g., economic development, design, promotion, organization).

Identify strategic projects that align with committee goals as well as board's goals and transformation strategy.

Scheduling/hosting committee meetings

Organize committee meetings and create agendas to discuss progress on projects and programs in an effective and efficient manner.

Ensure the committee identifies action items and relevant deadlines to accomplish tasks.

Team management

Recruit volunteers and engage committee members to foster a collaborative environment.

Assign tasks, coordinate efforts, and ensure active participation.

Coordination and communication

Act as the primary liaison between the committee and the Main Street board of directors.

Ensure effective communication of plans, progress, and challenges.

Coordinate quarterly meetings with other committee chairs to discuss committee and organizational priorities.

Work plan development

Ensure there are work plans for each project.

Ensure tasks and timelines are outlined and project volunteers are accountable.

Implementation oversight

Oversee the implementation of committee projects and initiatives and ensure they are executed effectively and within budget.

Problem-solving

Address and resolve problems that arise within the committee or in the execution of its projects.

Reporting and accountability

Regularly report on the committee's progress, challenges, and achievements to the Main Street board and other stakeholders.

Resource management

Assist in securing resources for committee projects, including fundraising, grant writing, volunteers, and resource allocation.

Community engagement

Engage with the community, stakeholders, and relevant parties to gather input, build support, and foster partnerships.

Compliance and best practices

Ensure that the committee's operations comply with organizational policies and best practices in community development and Main Street revitalization.

Continuous improvement

Evaluate the effectiveness of committee activities and implement improvements as necessary.

Advocacy

Promote the committee's initiatives and the overall mission of the Main Street program to the public, stakeholders, and potential supporters.

Effective Committee Chair

Qualities used to identify an effective committee chair:

- ✓ Understands and routinely teaches others about the Main Street Approach
- ✓ Has genuine desire to lead the committee and make great things happen
- ✓ Has strong organizational skills for self and others' work
- ✓ Enjoys leading and managing both people and projects
- ✓ Facilitates group discussion, making sure meeting agendas stay on track
- ✓ Maintains a positive attitude that encourages participation and enthusiasm by others
- ✓ Respects other peoples' viewpoints and skills
- ✓ Manages difficult personalities and conflicts to bring the group to consensus
- ✓ Communicates the committee's goals and progress to members and the public
- ✓ Displays integrity, self-confidence, persuasiveness, decisiveness, and creativity

Expectations for a Committee Chair

A chairperson should - at the minimum - expect to:

- ✓ Commit to at least one year of service
- ✓ Work 5 to 8 hours a month in committee
- ✓ Recruit and orient committee members
- ✓ Organize the committee's work plans
- ✓ Call and run committee meetings
- ✓ Delegate tasks to responsible members
- ✓ Take responsibility for committee results
- ✓ Appoint and oversee any subcommittees
- ✓ Represent the committee to the board
- ✓ Report on board issues to the committee
- ✓ Manage and reward volunteers' efforts
- ✓ Remove oneself from office if any conflicts of interest arise

Roles and Responsibilities of a Committee Member

Expectations for a committee member:

- ✓ Commit to at least one year of service
- ✓ Work 3 to 5 hours a month
- ✓ Attend training sessions
- ✓ Read selected orientation materials
- ✓ Learn the Main Street Approach
- ✓ Recruit/orient new members
- ✓ Prepare in advance for meetings
- ✓ Cooperatively draft annual work plans and measure impacts/results
- ✓ Take responsibility for projects

Executive Director Roles on a Committee

1. Committee Development

- Helps committee and chair learn the mechanics of committee management; provides expert advice and concise information on revitalization and the Main Street approach.
- Collaborates with committee members and chair as a strategist/planner.
... does not have authority over the committee on its structure.

2. Work Plans

- Assists committee members in developing work plan document.
- Helps committee members complete their projects but doesn't assume responsibility for those activities.
- Integrates own work plan with the committee work plan.
... is not someone to whom volunteers delegate all their work.

3. Projects

I. Promotion

- Coordinates production of PR, graphic image, and other promotional materials.
- Helps members coordinate special events, retail promotions, and advertising activities.
... is not responsible for taking the lead on organizing or running the events.

II. Economic Vitality

- Coordinates data collection, analysis, financial incentive programs, and other economic development activities.
- Helps members coordinate business improvement seminars and workshops.
... is not responsible for taking the lead on projects or completing reports.

III. Organization

- Coordinate fundraising campaigns, newsletter production, volunteer communications, and financial systems.
- Helps members coordinate projects.
... is not responsible for raising money directly; that is the job of the board and volunteers.

IV. Design Specific Roles

- Coordinates design proposal reviews, downtown aesthetic improvements, and business/property owner engagement activities.
- Helps members coordinate project implementation, vendor coordination, and design element integration.

... is not responsible for fundraising for these projects.

4. Volunteer Management

- Helps chair develop good systems for recruitment, supervision, and reward of members.
- Helps develop volunteer capacity of committees by participating in recruitment efforts.

... does not become the volunteer's boss.

5. Committee Meetings

- Attends most meetings to provide technical information and professional opinions.
- Helps strategize and develop solutions.
- Works with chair to assure that decisions and assignments are made and completed.

... is not responsible for calling and running meetings or taking minutes.

Planning the Work of the Committee

Project Planning Process

A committee’s main role is to identify and develop projects that are designed to move the organization closer to achieving the transformation strategies, goals, and measures of success set by the Board.

An overview of the project planning process can be found in [the Main Street Transformation Strategy Guide](#), starting on page 18 in the *Strategy Implementation* section.

Work Plans

Work plans serve as indicators of performance relative to goals; they track the effectiveness of specific projects or programs, facilitate adjustments as needed, and help quantify the expected result of particular projects and programs. Committees should develop work plans to implement board-approved projects. The board can then use the work plans to develop the organization’s annual budget and acquire and allocate financial resources to ensure success.

Work Plan Components

Component	Purpose
1. Projects Definition	Define specific project this committee will undertake
2. Project Goals	State very broadly the end results the committee seeks with this project
3. Project Measures of Success	Serve as metrics to evaluate the project upon completion and should overlap with one or more measures of success identified by the Board
4. Tasks	Describe individual actions necessary to complete a project
5. Timetable	Set a realistic start and finish date for each task
6. Responsibility	Identify a project champion and specific members who will take the lead and be responsible for completion of each task
7. Budget	Outline all costs associated with each task, helping committee and board to set priorities

Effective Committee Meetings:

Refer to the [Board and Committee Agenda Guide](#) for more best practices for facilitating committee meetings.

Use the work plan to guide committee meetings:

- ✓ Formulate committee agendas based on the project work plans
- ✓ Committee/team members report progress on tasks they are responsible for at committee meetings
 - Coordinate tasks needing to be accomplished by the next meeting
- ✓ Committee chairs use the work plans to report to the Board on committee activities
- ✓ Immediately after each project is complete, review the work plan and make changes/adjustments for next year and evaluate the success of the project using defined measures of success and share results with the Board

Defining an effective committee meeting:

A poor meeting...	A strong meeting...
..has no written agenda.	...has a clear agenda and purpose.
...starts/ends late.	...starts and finishes on time.
...has the wrong people there.	...assembles the right people.
...is too long.	... has agreed upon ground rules.
...has no purpose or conclusions.	...reaches conclusions.
...only one director/chair does all of the talking.	...has a good facilitator/leader.
...has members who are unprepared.	...has active group discussion.

Avoiding Committee Conflict

1. You might disagree in a private meeting about any issue related to the committee, but when you walk out the door, you are an “ambassador” to the public, and must represent the committee’s view, despite any lingering personal misgivings about the group’s decision.
2. Your committee may be opposed to a board policy. If so, you have an obligation to clarify your position, and the reasons for it, as well as ultimately to accept and publicly support the board's final decision.

3. **Your chairperson is the key link between the board and the committee.** The chair reports committee ideas and actions to the board and other committees and in turn represents and explains board policy and decisions to the committee.
4. **Your support is essential.** If you find yourself in regular conflict with your committee or board's decisions or direction, you should consider stepping down from your position. You'll do yourself a

Meeting Best Practices

1. **Do we really need a meeting?** Meetings are necessary when group action is required, or face-to-face discussion is important. Otherwise, consider a written memo, personal phone calls, or even a conference call.
2. **Are we prepared to meet?** Choose a meeting time well in advance, usually a month. Give everyone adequate notice, two weeks at a minimum. Prepare and deliver a written agenda, preferably in advance.
3. **Has the room been prepared for the meeting?** When people are comfortable, they can be productive. Make sure the room has adequate tables, chairs, space, lighting, privacy, and necessary equipment, such as a flipchart. Refreshments make early morning, noon, or after-work sessions more appealing.
4. **Are the right people in the room?** Meetings are fruitless when key players are missing or when unnecessary people are included. Keep the number manageable, usually five to seven people, and make sure key individuals will be able to attend.

Tips for Managing Discussions

1. **Make a plan.** In addition to the agenda items, you should have a strategy for conducting the meeting. Anticipate the comments and reactions each topic will spur. How will you keep the meeting from getting sidetracked? Decide now what results you want, and how to get there.
2. **Zip your lip.** A sure sign of problems is a meeting dominated by the chair or program manager. Set an agenda that allows others to lead discussions, make presentations, or propose actions. If you want real participation by committee members, consider yourself a "traffic cop" for discussions, and a quiet leader toward your goals. Don't let the staff, or your ego, squelch other people's enthusiasm.

Committee Report Card

As your committee grows and matures, it's a good idea periodically to evaluate your operations and effectiveness. The following review will signal whether your committee is moving in the right direction.

Organizational Procedures

(Give yourself a "plus" for every yes answer, a "minus" for every no.)

Does the Committee:

Have a good chair and members who are...

- Open and flexible
- Operate together as a group

Communicate its message and progress to...

- The community
- Its constituents
- Board members
- Program staff

Meet regularly with agendas that

- Have clear objectives
- Emphasize action items
- Result in attainable outcomes

Conduct meetings that:

- Start and end on time
- Have an informal, relaxed atmosphere
- Provide informational materials for review and study

Produce updated work plans annually that:

- Modify existing projects
- Identify new objectives
- Are accepted by the community
- Contribute to the organization's goals

Analyze completed projects to determine if they...

- Meet their stated objective(s) and measures of success
- Harmonized with community partners' plans
- Complemented other committee's work plans

Add up your total and evaluate:

15-19 pluses place the committee in a **superior category**

10-14 mean you're on track and **headed to the top**

5-9 indicate that the committee **needs to make improvements**

0-4 show a need to **make immediate corrections**