



toolbox

Following through on task assignments

Much of the actual work for a project takes place outside regular meetings. As volunteers try to balance jobs, family life and their work in communities, finding time to follow-through on task assignments can be difficult. There are some steps that groups and individuals can take to make working on projects a little easier.

The whole group can:

✓ When the group decides a task needs to be done, be sure someone agrees to do it. Avoid the trap of saying something needs to happen but not assigning a name to the task.

✓ Assign a recorder during meetings. The recorder takes minutes and has them typed and distributed to all group members between meetings. The minutes should include clear reference to task assignments and the names of people who agreed to do them. Minutes should be sent out soon after the meeting and well before the task assignments are expected to be done, so people have a written reminder of their responsibilities.

✓ Assign someone to be the group reminder. The reminder calls people between meetings to remind them of task assignments and of the next meeting time and place.

✓ Divide tasks into smaller parts. For example, rather than assigning one person to find out about all the publicity possibilities for a group event, have an individual check into newspapers, another into radio, and another into the local cable station.

✓ Avoid asking too much of one person. Some people have a hard time saying no, and there is a real danger of burn out if other group members are not sensitive to the fact that one person may be taking on too much. Remember that assigning tasks to new members gives them real ownership of a project.

✓ Team people up on task assignments. Pair up someone who is experienced at a task with someone who wants to learn about that job. That way the group is providing a learning experience and increasing its own resource base.

✓ Plan fun work parties for large tasks or projects requiring lots of physical labor. Include refreshments or a meal and have fun awards for such things as most phone calls made, most envelopes stuffed or the oddest find in a trash cleanup.

As an individual you can:

✓ Keep track of tasks on your calendar. Write in things like when you expect to hear from someone or receive material and what you'll do if what you expect doesn't happen. From the calendar you can create a prioritized to-do list to help you plan ahead. Having some idea of the steps and time required to complete a task keeps you ready for the next move.

