



EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

RUNNING EFFECTIVE STANDING COMMITTEES

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Introduction

From the fundamentals of holding a committee meeting to more advanced long-term planning techniques, the information in this handbook provides a starting point for participating in a successful standing committee. This book is not all-inclusive; some locals may use different titles for different positions and may give other responsibilities to the same committee. You should always follow the UAW Constitution and your local union bylaws. If you have questions, check with your leadership.

The Foundation of Standing Committees

Across our union, thousands of UAW members participate in one or more local union standing committees. We are rewarded by a feeling of accomplishment, working with our co-workers on meaningful projects, and “being the change” we want to see for working people. But we need so many more activists! As members, we are the union. Engaging more members in our union’s work makes us stronger. It means better contracts, healthier communities, and brighter futures.

Making gains at the bargaining table is central to what we do as a union. To achieve these gains, we must demonstrate solidarity. This solidarity is born through our shared experiences and

shared values. That is why standing committees are crucial to our success as a union. Through committees, we discover our shared interests and learn to work together toward common goals.

Standing committees are also essential because we view our membership as a whole. We are more than just what we do for a living. We are voters, taxpayers, community members, and consumers. We care about the quality of our air and water, the safety of our food, how tax dollars are spent, the treatment of people, and more. We bring all these identities, passions, and concerns with us as we engage with our union. Our standing committees bring us together.



UAW Core Values

The work of our committees supports our UAW core values. These values explain where we came from and where we are going; they tell the world who we are. Our values have been constant for over 80 years, but we have learned to adapt to the conditions and circumstances we face.

UAW CORE VALUE #1: BUILD AND MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS IN CONTRACTS

The benefits we have bargained for in our contracts for over 80 years have given UAW members and our families better lives. It is not just about pay raises; it is about quality of life and ensuring that future members have a seat at the table. Contract gains are often dependent on how active the membership is. Standing committees work with local union leadership to take on the essential role of activating and educating members during contract negotiations and beyond.

UAW CORE VALUE #2: ALL ARE EQUAL

One of our union's fundamental principles is that all people are equal, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, skill, or education level. A struggle over whether unskilled labor had a right to be organized led to our union's formation. Our committees play a vital role in bridging gaps and breaking barriers to actualize these founding ideals in our diverse society.

UAW CORE VALUE #3: WE FIGHT FOR EVERYONE, NOT JUST OURSELVES

We are all connected. All working people deserve respect and dignity on the job and fair wages to raise families. But this goes beyond the workplace. It is about our communities and our world. We were there in 1963 with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the March on Washington. We supported Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, and the United Farm Workers. We advocated for the release of Nelson Mandela from imprisonment in South Africa. Knowledge is power; through education, we activate our members to act on behalf of common causes.

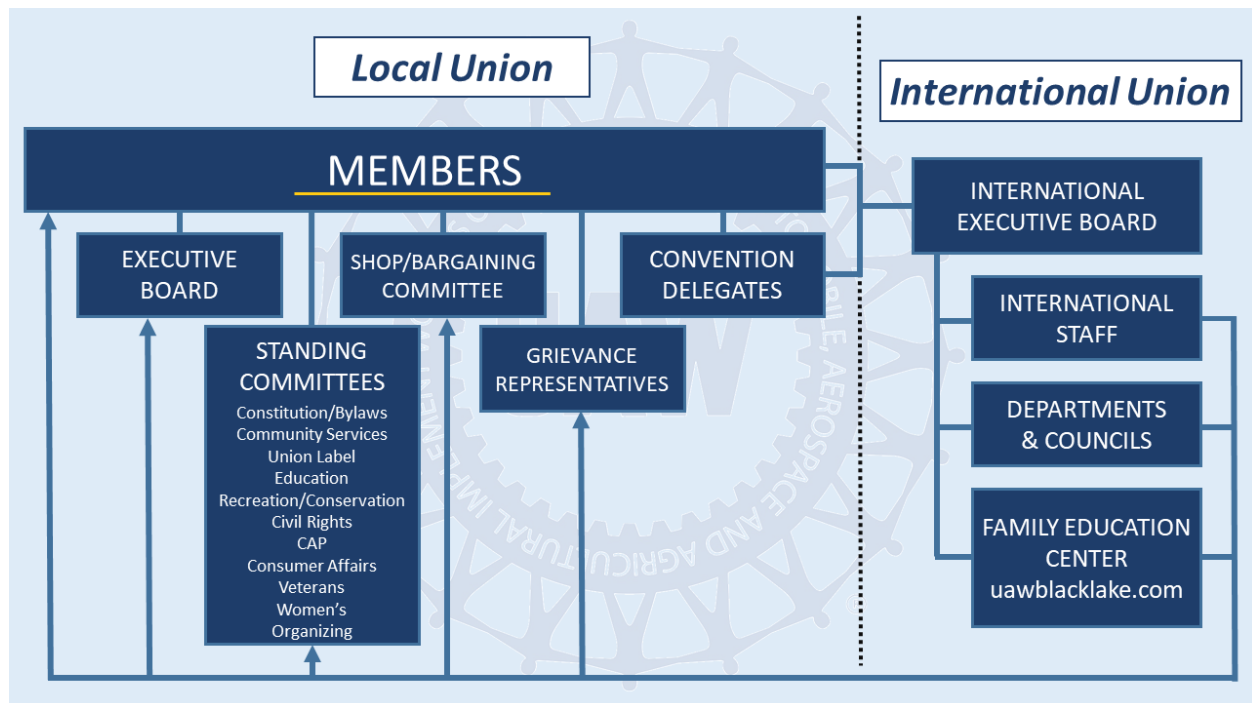
UAW CORE VALUE #4: THE BREAD BOX IS CONNECTED TO THE BALLOT BOX

Too often, the gains we make at the bargaining table are put in peril by Congress or state legislators. That is why our union has a robust political action program to protect members' interests, such as labor rights, workplace safety, and Social Security. Committees build unionists to take on our union's challenges in politics and beyond.



UAW Union Structure

As you can see in the chart (below), there are two major parts of our union. The left side of the chart displays the structure of local unions; the right side describes the role of the International. At the top of the chart is the highest governing body of our union, members like you! Members are the highest authority in our organization. Below the members are local elected positions. These are the local executive board, grievance handlers, shop committee, and convention delegates.



Local standing committees are an integral part of the local union structure. Members are elected or appointed to these committees, depending on your local union bylaws. These committees focus on different areas and provide several ways for you to become involved in our union.



UAW Constitution Article 44:

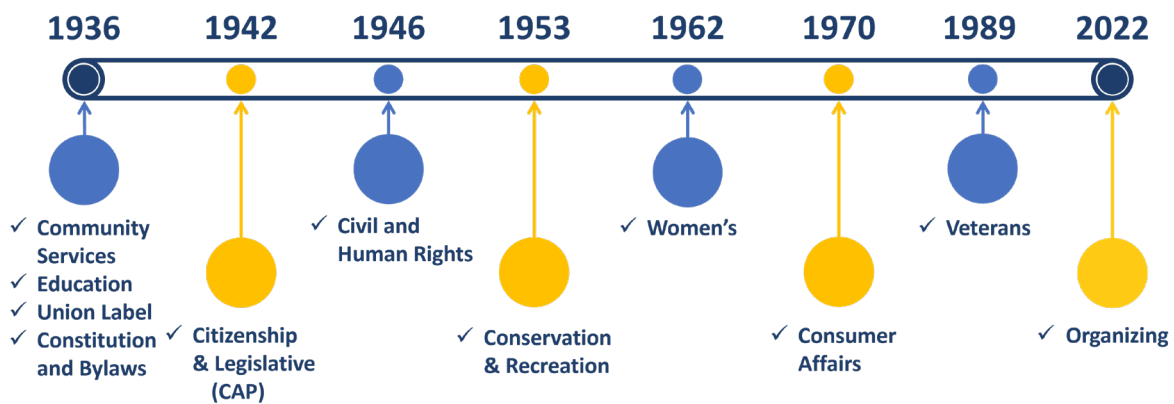
Local Union Committees

Article 44 of the UAW Constitution requires local unions to establish eleven committees. These committees have defined functions to perform for the local union membership.

- Citizenship and Legislative (CAP)
- Civil and Human Rights
- Community Services
- Consumer Affairs
- Conservation and Recreation
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Education
- Union Label
- Veterans
- Women's Committee
- Organizing

In addition to the standing committees listed, the UAW Constitution provides the freedom and flexibility for locals to add necessary committees. Such committees may focus on Youth, Work and Family, Special Events, etc.

Mandated Standing Committees



Why These Eleven?

There is a reason why our Constitution spells out these committees. In combination, these eleven committees are designed to be the building blocks upon which a successful local union is based. All committees have a purpose tied to our strength, vision, and values as a union.

Citizenship and Legislative (CAP): Walter Reuther said it best: “There’s a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls.” Our CAP committees are the political-legislative arm of the local union, responsible for get-out-the-vote efforts, educating our fellow members and communities about worker-friendly candidates and legislation, and publicizing the positions of public officials. We must be involved in politics if we are to protect and expand our rights as working people.

Civil and Human Rights: Our commitment to civil rights is at the core of who we are. This committee is the essential guardian of our non-discrimination clause and works to stamp out harassment, inequality, and discrimination in the workplace and society. Our non-discrimination clause is located in Article 2, Section 2 of the UAW Constitution, which states: “To unite in one organization, regardless of religion, race, creed, color, sex, political affiliation or nationality, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, all employees under the jurisdiction of this International Union.” We need a civil rights committee for many reasons, including the fact that human-made divisions and ‘isms’ are a genuine threat to our solidarity. We must be united if we are to succeed at the bargaining table and beyond.

Community Services: The Community Services Committee performs the critical task of getting help for members and their families in times of need. This committee also plays a pivotal role in worksite closings, strikes, and layoffs. This committee also connects with our communities through volunteer work and showcases our union values to the outside world.

Consumer Affairs: The Consumer Affairs Committee monitors the social conscience of companies to ensure members consume safe and honest products and services and are not targeted by scams and hoaxes. We need this committee for many reasons, including the fact that if we don’t look out for our members and inform them about frauds, scams, hoaxes, and consumer dangers, who will? We have always looked at the totality of our members’ lives, not just who we are and what we do at work.

Conservation and Recreation: The Conservation and Recreation Committee brings us together as a union family. Recreation events often serve as a recruitment vehicle for further union activism. Conservation is also our concern. What does it matter how much money we make or how many vacation days we negotiate if we can’t enjoy our leisure time or drink the water in our homes?



Why These Eleven?

We care about the safety of water, the quality of air, and the health of lakes and rivers. As working people, we know that our neighborhoods are often hit the hardest with air and water issues, like damaging air pollution.

Constitution and Bylaws: Members of this committee are responsible for submitting original and amended bylaw provisions to the local union membership for discussion and approval. This committee monitors the required local union bylaw amendment procedure to ensure compliance with the current bylaws and constitutional provisions. The bylaws of each local union, with the UAW Constitution, set out the rules by which the local union operates.

Education: The education committee is responsible for building the power of the movement through educating and training members of their local. Education aims to provide information and tools for each member to engage with our union in their current role. Education equips members to carry out their duties as they progress through their journey and take on new responsibilities. Through education, we also raise awareness of the many issues we face as members of society. We need educated members to take on the many fights we face as a labor movement. We also need members to be educated as they take on increasing responsibility within the local union. As they progress through their journey and take on new responsibilities.

Organizing: To continue to grow the density of our union, our locals need a committee that can provide resources and strategies to other workers who want to join our union. Committee members are trained and focused to assist these new members in their organizing campaigns.

Union Label: This committee helps to emphasize the importance of supporting goods and services produced by union members under union-won working conditions. We need strong advocates in our communities that educate and push for union-made products and services to ensure our livelihoods and the economic stability of our communities.

Veterans: This committee advocates for veterans' political and social concerns. The people who, when called upon, came to the aid of our nation, are valuable resources to the whole labor movement. We must support our veterans, including their unique employment-specific situations.

Women's Committee: Strong women make strong unions, but women are often under-represented in union leadership roles. Women's committees are often the springboard for our local women to gain experience to take on increasing levels of leadership. Women workers also face specific challenges, including a disproportionate amount of sexual harassment compared to men, and wage inequity. This committee educates members on these issues and pushes for change.



Standing Committee **Structure**

Standing committees help members better understand our union roles and move from passive observers to active participants. Standing committees – like our whole union – are stronger when people participate. Local union bylaws determine whether standing committee members are elected by local union members or appointed by the local union president. In either case, standing committees are most successful when members represent the local union’s diversity regarding race, sex, classification, work location, and other attributes relevant to the local union. Different voices coming together strengthen union solidarity and contribute to forming solutions that work for all members. Under Article 44 of the UAW Constitution, the local union president is an ex-officio member of all local union committees. General rules follow for each standing committee role. Check your local union bylaws for specific requirements.

Committee **Members**

Members form the team that offers ideas and executes the committee’s vision. No committee can fulfill its function without active committee members. They should attend and participate in committee meetings, be accountable to the committee, and seek opportunities to build skills that lift the union’s work. They should also communicate with members from across the local, identifying critical issues and helping craft the committee’s scope with their leadership.

Chair

The chair coordinates the committee’s activities and seeks local union leadership and membership support for programs. The chair must also oversee program implementation and help the committee accomplish its goals. The chair should be willing to work cooperatively with different people and consider new ideas.

The chair should also be prepared to:

- Plan meeting agendas with the recording secretary before meetings
- Lead discussion on the committee’s goals and plans with committee members
- Submit all committee plans for final approval to the local union executive board
- Preside at all meetings or make arrangements for the co-chair to preside in the chair’s absence
- Conduct the meeting consistent with the UAW Constitution and Robert’s Rules of Order
- Assist in the orderly transition of the committee in cooperation with the local union executive board at the end of the chair’s term or mandate



Committee Members

Co-Chair

The committee co-chair assists the chair by understanding the chair's duties, being an engaged partner, and presiding over committee meetings in the chair's absence.

Recording Secretary

The recording secretary supports the chair in committee meetings by having a copy of the UAW Constitution and local union bylaws at each meeting. The recording secretary is chiefly responsible for keeping accurate standing committee meeting minutes and these duties:

- Keeps the committee's important papers and documents
- Helps the chair prepare meeting agendas
- Keeps a record of committee attendance

Treasurer/Financial Secretary

Standing committees must transfer any money collected from members or committee activities to the local union's financial secretary. Many standing committees do not collect money and only request local union funds for approved projects. The treasurer or financial secretary must also:

- Keep a record of the committee's financial transactions
- Receive and record all money collected and transfer it to the local union financial secretary to receive a receipt verifying the transferred amount and transaction date
- Keep up-to-date on fundraising guidelines

Subcommittees/Task Forces

Committees often form subcommittees or task forces to examine particular subjects or plan and conduct specific activities. Subcommittees and task forces must understand their role, the reporting protocol, and their scope of responsibility.



Effective Committee Meetings

Standing committees meet regularly, consistent with local union bylaws or as determined by the committee, with proper approval. Meetings should involve everyone in the decision-making process and get real work done. When meetings are organized, they result in satisfied committee members and positive programs. Because committee meetings usually are less formal than regular local union membership meetings, it may be tempting not to plan. Don't make this mistake! Although committee meetings can be relatively informal and encourage open dialogue, they must be structured to be effective.

Before the Meeting

When planning a meeting, one of the tasks you must complete is determining the purpose or objective of the meeting. What is it that you want/need to do in this meeting? Do you want to inform or notify committee members on some specific topic? Do you want to plan a project or prepare a report for the membership? Do you want updates or need to review information?

Defining the objective or purpose of this meeting is a top priority. It will assist you in the remainder of all other tasks you need to complete. The meeting agenda should reflect the items that will help you achieve that purpose.

Identifying the logistics of the meeting will assist you in organizing your committee members.

- Who will be attending this meeting
- What is this meeting about
- When (what day and time) will this meeting occur
- Where will this meeting occur
- Why is this meeting necessary
- Get approvals

Reserve the meeting room. Arrange for audiovisual equipment, flip charts, and supplies. Additionally, obtain any approvals from leadership that are required. Send a meeting notice to members in accordance with your local union bylaws.



Effective Committee Meetings

The Agenda

Every meeting should have an agenda. When appropriate, provide opportunities for committee members to contribute to it. They can be handwritten and photocopied, or you can write them on a whiteboard or flipchart. An agenda contains the steps or items necessary to achieve the purpose of the meeting. When preparing, you must develop a list of topics or assignments that need to be addressed during this meeting. You should also specify a time limit for each item. Remember that the purpose of holding a meeting is to accomplish the goal or objective of the agenda. Items to include:

- Meeting date
- Meeting time
- Meeting location
- Objective or purpose of the meeting
- List of items to be discussed and time frame for each item

When possible, distribute the agenda before the meeting to provide committee members with clear expectations, so they arrive ready to work.

Many meetings can and should be completed in one hour. See page 13 for a typical format for a one-hour meeting.

During the Meeting

Robert's Rules of Order

There must be guidelines for how you conduct your meetings. Guidelines help to move through the agenda efficiently and democratically. Have you ever been in a meeting without rules on how decisions are made? It was likely chaotic. Although standing committee meetings are often more casual than local union meetings, they still need a process. The process used during membership meetings is called Robert's Rules of Order. It is the most widely used method of governing meetings across the world. Many organizations use Robert's Rules, from local union meetings and corporate board meetings, to church groups and neighborhood civic associations. These rules are used in virtually every type of meeting.

We may not all use Robert's Rules for our meetings, especially on small committees. However, we must be all familiar with the rules – especially if our goal is to grow our committees! Once you have many voices at the table, the need for order increases.

Find detailed training on incorporating Robert's Rules of Order in the "Keys to an Effective Standing Committee" and "Union Meetings and Me" workshops available from the UAW Education Department.

One-Hour Meeting Agenda

- 1) Roll Call
- 2) Reading of Minutes - 5 minutes
- 3) Reports of Officers - 10 minutes
 - a) Chair/Co-Chair
 - b) Secretary
 - c) Treasurer
 - d) Other
- 4) Meeting Content - 35 minutes
 - a) Unfinished (Old) Business
 - b) New Business
 - c) Action Items
 - d) Good and Welfare
- 5) Assignment/Agenda Setting for next meeting - 10 minutes
 - a) Assignments given for next meeting: responsibilities assigned
 - b) Agenda items created for next meeting
 - c) Meeting evaluation
 - d) Adjournment



Effective Committee Meetings

Chairing a Meeting Using Robert's Rules of Order

The following is an example of how the chair moves through the meeting agenda using Robert's Rules of Order. On the left side is the name of the event transpiring at the moment. On the right side is what the meeting chair might say.

Call to order	Chair: "This meeting will come to order."
Roll Call	Chair: "The recording secretary will call the roll." Each member responds when their name is called.
Reading of Minutes	Chair: "Are there any corrections to the minutes?" (Corrections are suggested without motion or vote.) Chairperson: "If there are no (further) corrections, the minutes stand approved as read."
Report of Officers, Subcommittee, and Task Force	Chair: "May we have the report of the _____."
Unfinished Business	Chair: "Is there any unfinished business?"
New Business	Chair: "The program today will be on _____ and will be led by _____."
Good and Welfare	Chair: "Is there any Good and Welfare?"
Adjournment	Chair: "If there is no further business, the meeting will stand adjourned."



Effective Committee Meetings

Tips For Chairing a Meeting

- Start on time
- Get everyone clear on the meeting's intent and state the purpose and objective of the meeting
- Establish ground rules
- Maintain time limits for the meeting as a whole and for specific agenda items (if necessary)
- Encourage committee members to speak out, resolve problems, and volunteer for assignments
- Let committee members know that all opinions count and should be heard. Ask for people to speak (by name) who haven't yet spoken
- Summarize frequently during the meeting; when participants understand what is happening and see clear progress, they are more apt to participate in the planning
- Get the group back on track when necessary

Tips For Contributing To a Meeting

All members should:

- Be on time and prepared
- Give their opinion
- Stay focused on the issue at hand; try not to get sidetracked
- Listen to others, keep an open mind
- Participate as a team player; keep in mind the saying, "you can be part of the problem or part of the solution"
- Volunteer for tasks/assignments
- Be flexible/listen. All plans are subject to change
- Focus on the goal



Effective Committee Meetings

How To Reach Decisions at a Meeting

Sometimes it's hard to reach a consensus. Differences of opinion are natural and expected. Welcome them and try to involve everyone in the decision-making process. Disagreements can improve the quality of the group decision. There is a greater chance that the group will create solutions with a broader range of opinions and information. There are several ways to make decisions, with and without following Robert's Rules of Order.

Majority Vote is the basic form of decision-making in Robert's Rules of Order. It is often necessary when committees cannot reach an agreement. The Chairperson, according to parliamentary procedure, calls for a vote, and the issue is resolved. For example, "a motion has been made to _____. All in favor say aye, (pause) all opposed say nay."

A Straw Vote is a non-committal vote to get a feel for where the group stands on an issue. When used at the beginning of any decision-making phase in a meeting, it's sometimes useful before a lengthy discussion. There are times when the discussion seems to be going in circles, and you may be closer to a decision than you realize.

Consensus Decision Making is when all standing committee members agree on a solution/decision. Consensus is often the preferred decision-making process because all committee members have contributed their opinions and participated in the decision. They have bought into the process and are willing to support it. Let's say your committee has generated a variety of recommendations for a decision. Suppose you think that one alternative is favored. In that case, you can shoot directly for consensus by asking, "Would someone like to propose a solution?" Someone volunteers solution A. Then ask, "Is there anyone who could not live with this?" Notice that you don't ask, "does everyone think that A is best?". If no one raises any objections to solution A, you are home free – you have consensus. If anyone has strong reservations, ask questions like, "Can you think of any changes to A that would satisfy your concern?" Or, "Can anyone see a way to deal with this concern?" After each proposal or addition, return to the question, "Can everyone live with that?" You reach a consensus upon agreement. If concerns continue, ask for another proposal and restart the process until a solution is chosen.

Chair Privilege is used when the chair may need to hear the committee members' suggestions but may need to be the only decision-maker. Sometimes committee members can't reach a consensus and must choose another alternative.



Effective Committee Meetings

When members are struggling to reach a decision, it usually means more information or discussion is needed. If more information is required, table it until the next meeting and assign someone to gather the information or bring in a subject matter expert. If more discussion is needed, one technique is to list all the pros and cons.

Whatever decision-making process you choose, it is essential to remember that the real benefits are completing the project and supporting our membership. Once you've reached a decision, it is time to move on.

At the end of the meeting, briefly summarize the discussion and review assignments or action items. Be sure that each committee member knows what they must do. Set the date and place for the next meeting. Always close meetings on a positive note. Thank the committee members for their participation and contributions.

After the Meeting

Evaluate

Each meeting is potentially a learning experience. Evaluate what went well and what you would change next time. After the meeting, ask yourself the following questions:

- Was the objective/goal of the meeting accomplished
- Was the meeting completed promptly
- Did the committee agree to move on projects/tasks
- Are there items to be followed up on that need my commitment
- Are there any items or materials I need to prepare for the next meeting

Communication System

Agreeing on a communication system to maintain a close, cohesive and active committee is important. A dependable system helps everyone conduct the committee's business reliably and on time. Technology allows committees to share cellphone numbers to text or email one another privately any day or time of the week. Avoid using the employer's communication system so that union communication remains private and protected.



Meeting Planning **Worksheet**

BEFORE THE MEETING

A. Specific Information

Meeting Date:	Start Time:	End Time:
Purpose:		
Desired Outcome:		

B. Logistics

Meeting logistics (Who's Responsible?)	Meeting needs (Who's Responsible?)
<input type="checkbox"/> Room: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Flipchart: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Set up: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Markers: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Laptop/Projector: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Internet Connection: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper, Pens: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Handouts: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

C. Invitees

D. Agenda Items



Meeting Planning **Worksheet**

AT THE MEETING

E. Attendance

F. Meeting Notes

G. Commitments-Delegated Tasks (Who's Responsible?)



Meeting Planning **Worksheet**

AFTER THE MEETING

H. Evaluate

Did the meeting?

- ☐ Start and stop on-time
- ☐ Follow the agenda
- ☐ Fulfill the purpose

What you would change for next time:

I. Follow-up - Who needs to be contacted?

Name	Reason	Date
------	--------	------

J. What needs to be completed for the next meeting?

Effective Committee Meetings

Reporting Committee Activities

Reports are a way to communicate committee progress and activities to the local union leadership and members. They can be formal or informal, oral, or written. Written reports are often submitted for membership approval or acceptance, and verbal reports are often used to update people on the committee's activities.

Topics to include in a report:

- Purpose of the report
- Dates and times of meetings
- Status of current projects
- Plans for future projects
- Requests for help and/or resources
- The success of the committee
- Specific actions recommended

At union meetings, your committee should give oral reports on your activities. The following is a sample script of an oral standing committee report:

I'm Toby Mitchell from the Education Standing Committee. The Education Committee is actively pursuing the following activities:

- We have scheduled new member orientation classes for the first of the year
- We are continuing to implement the Member-to-Member program
- We still need ten more communicators, so if anyone knows of someone who might be interested, please let me know, and I'll talk to them
- We are currently conducting monthly workshops on labor history. If anyone is interested in learning to teach this program, we have several train-the-trainer sessions scheduled later this year. Please see a standing committee member for more information. We have received very positive feedback from our first labor history class. The comments went from "I didn't know that labor was so involved in politics" to "everyone in our local should be required to take it." We are proud of this program and hope that all members get a chance to participate in it.



Effective Committee Meetings

A written report often includes all of the information listed in the oral report but takes on a different format because it generally has a purpose and becomes a record of events. A written report might also contain information requesting resources from the local. Before you develop your reports, identify what your leadership would like included and design a format that you can use to deliver your reports.

SAMPLE WRITTEN REPORT AND ORAL REPORT SCRIPT

Committee _____
Chair _____

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular Meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Approval |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Union Meetings Report Out | <input type="checkbox"/> Need Additional Information |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Request | <input type="checkbox"/> For Your Information |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Date/Time of Meeting: _____

Status of Current Projects/Activities: _____

Plans for Future Projects: _____

Requests for Help/Approval: _____

Success of Committee: _____



Strategic Planning to Grow Your Standing Committee: 10 Steps

A successful and dynamic standing committee is proactive, plans for the future, and reacts to today's events. This means that standing committee projects and programs are thought out in advance and coordinated with various local union activities. It means that your standing committee events do not happen in a vacuum. They are integrated with local union events. Together, they strengthen the members, the labor movement, and, most importantly, reflect our union's core values.

Planning involves believing that the future can be influenced and changed by what is done now. Planning is more than just an envisioning process; it helps create the future. Planning requires setting clear goals and identifying ways to attain the objectives in specified periods. Remember, when planning a project, it is vital that you keep in constant contact with your local union leadership from beginning to end. The local union leadership is responsible for and oversees all local union activities.

Step 1: Assess the Committee's Resources

The first step in planning the committee's activities is to assess the resources available to the committee. You need to take an inventory to find out what you have to work with. When we say this, people often think an inventory list is of materials, such as books or computers. Or some even consider their financial resources. But your inventory of resources should also include:

- Lists of members, current and past. Do you know how to contact them? When are they available for a meeting?
- Do you have documentation of what has been done in the past? Were reports given to the president? Published in your local's publication? Do you have minutes of past meetings?
- Equipment belonging to the committee and equipment available to the committee? If your committee requires specialized equipment, have you looked to your members to bring their own tools, etc., in the past?
- What commitments has your committee made – both specifically and historically? Is there an expectation that your committee will show up or participate in an event?

In the process of gathering this information, you may discover other areas worth exploring. At the end of this process, you will know one of two things. You'll know exactly what is on hand or how much is unclear because records are now lost, or the members who had the information are now gone. Either way, you need a starting point and will only fully understand what that is after engaging in this assessment.



Strategic Planning to Grow Your Standing Committee: 10 Steps

THE INVENTORY WORKSHEET

Inventory Date:	Compiled By:
Name of Standing Committee:	UAW Local #:
When was the standing committee started?	
What do the local union bylaws say about the committee?	
Are the committee members elected or appointed, or is another process used?	
Do you have a list of current members and their contact information?	
Work schedule of current committee members	
Description of the committee's activities over the last five years	
Minutes of previous committee meetings	
Articles written about the committee and its activities	
Equipment used by the committee? Where is it? Who owns it?	
Partners with any outside groups? If so, describe:	
Commitments made by the committee	
Any attempts made to get new members	
Is the committee discussed in new member orientation?	
When was the last time the committee's work was reported in local union publications/social media?	
What else is noteworthy about your committee?	



Strategic Planning to Grow Your Standing Committee: 10 Steps

Step 2: Assess the Communication Structure

Much like the committee's resources need to be assessed, how the committee communicates also must be assessed.

- How will the members of the committee connect with each other?
- What avenues are available for the committee to communicate the membership of the local?
- Are there specific processes that need to be followed?
- Who will review/approve the content before it is distributed?

Testing the communication structure is very important. It tells you if the system is working or not. There are easy ways to test lists – sending out holiday greetings, for example. If your local gives out shirts around events like Labor Day, send out an email asking members to write back with their shirt sizes. Likely, the challenges you flag through testing are also challenges to other standing committees or the local as a whole. Improving the communication network might be a good project for all standing committees to work on with the local leadership.

COMMITTEE COMMUNICATION AUDIT FORM

- 1) Local union address:
- 2) Local union phone number:
- 3) Name of local union publication:
- 4) How often it is distributed:
- 5) Member-to-Member network? Last tested/updated?
- 6) Does the local have an updated email distribution list?
- 7) Does the local have an updated text distribution list?
- 8) How does the local collect email addresses/cell numbers?
- 9) Facebook page name:
- 10) Twitter handle:
- 11) Does the local have any specific communication processes/procedures?
- 12) How will the members communicate internally?
- 13) How and how often will the committee communicate activities with the local leadership?



Strategic Planning to Grow Your Standing Committee: 10 Steps

Step 3: Know the Law, Know the Rules

Many standing committees are governed by special rules, some of which are mandated by the government, others by the UAW Constitution or the local union bylaws. For example, The Federal Election Commission (FEC) governs raising political contributions. UAW Administrative Letters and our Constitution also give clear instructions on various matters such as fundraising, dealing with vendors, or our conduct as union representatives. Do you know all of the laws and rules that cover your committee's activities? If additional training is needed, the administrative letters governing standing committees can be found in the workshop "Strategic Planning to Grow Your Standing Committee." Contact your local leadership for assistance. Be sure to acquire all the information you can. Ignorance of the law is not a defense.

Step 4: Create Goals and Assess Needs

The first three steps give you the lay of the land. Now it is time to start thinking about what you want to get done, and the first part of that is setting a goal.

We can see that standing committees are a powerful tool for locals. But we also know that they do not thrive without the hard work of the local committee leaders and members. To be the most successful, it takes more than hard work – it also takes strategic planning and the ability to come up with unique and insightful ideas to advance toward an outcome. In other words, strategic planning helps us to reach our goals.

It is helpful to think along two tracks – long- and short-term. If you create only short-term goals, your committee will be task driven. That is, its guiding principle will be the completion of tasks. On the other hand, if you also have a long-term vision of the committee (to double in size in three years, for example), you can also assess whether your short-term goals help achieve the long-term objectives. Not all goals are the same. When our goals are detailed thoroughly, their chances of coming to reality are increased. Therefore, we encourage you to set SMART goals.



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A **SMART** goal is:

Specific:

What is your goal? A goal should be specific, not open-ended or undefined. For example, if the goal is “do better,” instead, it should be “improve participation by better promoting our workshops.”

Measurable:

Can success be quantified? The only way to define success is to have a yardstick to measure it against. Do not have a goal of “more people showing up at our workshops.” The goal should be “100 members coming to our picnic or 20% more participating than last year.”

Attainable:

Are you setting up your committee for success? Your goal should have a reasonable chance of success. Nothing is more disappointing or frustrating than setting goals that are not met. It is a surefire way to have people walk away from your program.

Relevant:

Does it reflect the values of the committee? Do your leadership and membership support it? Buy-in from everyone creates the extra effort and sense of responsibility that ensures success.

Timed:

Are deadlines clear? The goal should have a start date, an expected pace of work, and a target date of completion.



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Step 5: Create Your Plan

After determining your goals, you need to move to project planning. That means thinking critically about the steps necessary to achieve your goals. Good project planning is specific: Who, what, when, where, and how. Good action plans include who, what, how, when, and where. Some leaders tend to break down the details for a big step. Don't fall into this trap. The same detailed attention is often needed for the many smaller steps that accompany a much larger project. You can use the following planning worksheet for both.

Planning Worksheet

	Before the Event	During the Event	After the Event
What needs to be done?			
How will it get done?			
When is it due?			
What is needed to get it done?			
Who is doing it?			

Expand the worksheet, if necessary, to meet your needs. In addition to completing the worksheet, address the following questions:

- Did you create a budget
- Does your plan cover the necessary materials
- Does it cover how you are going to recruit volunteers
- Is it clear who is assigned to what
- How will you let others know that the event was successful
- How are you going to recognize volunteers
- Did you schedule a debrief of the event



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Step 6: Grow the Committee

One of the most common concerns we hear is that committees do not have enough volunteers or are always staffed with the same people who are exhausted from carrying the entire load. Does that sound familiar?

Your standing committee needs new volunteers. That is true whether you have a full committee or not. Remember, one of the goals of your standing committee should be to serve as an entry point for new members getting active for the first time. Keeping your committee's doors open and welcoming all volunteers is a crucial part of getting that job done. New members bring new energy and new ideas, and that is a good thing. Even if you don't implement their suggestions, discussing why it would or wouldn't work can often make your projects sharper and more successful, as it compels you to think about them.

Recruitment Strategies

Potential committee members/volunteers are all around you. Here are some places you might start:

- Past volunteers: This is where sign-in sheets are handy
- V-CAP donors: During a V-CAP drive, someone says they would like to but can't manage to increase their monthly contribution. Maybe they can be asked to volunteer to solicit others' contributions or on another effort
- Friends or family of active volunteers: We see them at our union picnic or on the picket line. Spouses and children of members are often very willing to share the member's interests and participate in activities. Your local union bylaws may not allow them to be full-fledged members of the committee, as the membership may be restricted to just members in good standing. However, they can still participate and help out during your activities
- Members who organize birthday or retirement celebrations or who are outgoing people. These are the natural organizers at work, and they make great additions to your committee. Same with people who tend to be involved with your local's charitable, community outreach, or recreational activities
- Check out who is following your local or region's social media pages. That shows an interest in our union, which can easily be translated into participation. You just have to ask
- Retirees are a great source of knowledge and energy – plug them in
- Who at your location is wearing red to show solidarity? That would be a good day to go up to folks with a flyer about your standing committee and talk to them

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The following are suggestions to keep in mind when interacting with potential committee members/volunteers:

Build success first – Start by recruiting those most likely to join first

Have a clear, concise message about who you are and what you do - Have a clear, straightforward description of your committee so that everyone is saying the same thing. Having mixed messages will be confusing to potential members/volunteers.

People do things out of self-interest - Know that people are motivated by self-interest. That's not judgment; that's just a fact of human nature. Talk about your committee in terms of how it could meet the interests of your potential recruits.

Make different roles available for various interests – Some want to be upfront, and others want to work in the background. Once you have people willing to volunteer their time, give them something to do.

Show competence – Members are more likely to participate if the task before them is defined and the project is organized.

Action is more important than labels – Don't get hung up on labels. We know that being part of a committee is usually not an application process (though most locals appoint the chairs of the committees). You are usually a committee member because you walk the walk – so actions count more than labels. In addition, if you make the committee sound formal and bureaucratic, you can also intimidate possible volunteers.

Just ask! - Many people who don't volunteer say the biggest reason is that they are never asked.

Always consult your local union leadership and bylaws for any membership processes that should be adhered to when adding members to a standing committee.



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Step 7: Train, Train, Train!

Once a member volunteers, it is essential to have something for them to do. The surest way to drive away volunteers is to have nothing for them to do. Just think about yourself – how frustrating is it to volunteer for something and never get to do anything? That means that even if you don't have a project about to start, you should still keep the structure of your committee intact. Suppose your Community Services Committee only does a toy drive during the holidays. That does not mean you should suspend your committee during for rest of the year. Use that time to train, expand to other holidays, start a toy-building workshop, etc. Use meetings during the rest of the year to brainstorm and consider input from committee members.

What is there to train on?

- Orientation to the committee: history, accomplishments structure, goals
- Develop interests/skills as it relates to the work of the committee
- How to communicate with co-workers about the committee
- Help to plan the next event/action/project

Step 8: Support the Volunteers

Supporting members/volunteers is an important step we too often forget – volunteers and members represent a spectrum of experience and skill. Not all are capable of doing the same thing. Make sure you have a sense of what each person is qualified or comfortable doing. A best practice is that you want everyone to feel successful, so don't set someone up to fail.

How we make people feel successful:

- Start with straightforward assignments and build up to more challenging ones
- If the project is long-term, check in on them to see how they are doing – make sure they are getting their questions answered
- Mentors can be influential in this situation – pair a new volunteer up with a trained one – have them exchange emails/cells, and keep in touch
- If an assignment isn't a good fit, find another task



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Step 9: Act and Organize

It is worth reminding ourselves of the purpose of standing committees: to grow and strengthen our union. This means that we cannot look at our projects as simple tasks to be completed. Instead, they are tools for a greater purpose - building our great union.

Begin to look at your committee's activities from two perspectives:

- 1) Completing the task at hand
- 2) Using your accomplishments as an organizing tool to grow

Documenting the work of your committee is a critical way to achieve these goals. Pictures and videos can be used on social media, in local union publications, and as part of recruitment documents for future use. Always think about growing your committee to the next level, and don't be afraid to brag about your committee!

Step 10: Debrief and Improve

Strategic planning requires a clear vision of our goals and plans and constantly assessing and tracking our results. Assessing a success may prove to be just as important as assessing a failure. If the committee's goal was to register twenty people to vote on Tuesday, but only ten got registered, ask why and how that can be adjusted going forward. Post-event is the perfect time to bring the entire committee together to share ideas. Feedback is a critical part of debriefing an event. Track your results. What worked? What didn't work? As a committee, try and come to a consensus on what can be done to improve.

The following worksheet will help your committee debrief and track the results of an activity/project.



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Debrief Worksheet

PROJECT ASSESSMENT	
Describe project	
Date of project	
Who was involved	
How many participated	
How many attended	
Outcome (money raised, # coats collected, etc.)	
Debrief discussion ideas	
Report out (Article? Photos for Facebook? Report at next union meeting?)	



Conclusion

You are well on your way to creating and sustaining a successful committee! To ensure your success, we offer some final tips.

Communicate - not only among members of the committee, but also with your local union leadership, other committees, and the general membership of your local. Many projects and activities overlap between committees; talking and offering support to those committees will ensure success for all of us. You communicate with the membership through local union meetings, leadership, and communication channels. This is critical. How can you expect your initiatives to further the local's goals if members don't know what you're doing?

Ask questions - learn as much as possible about the objectives and purpose of the standing committees in your local. Find out what needs to be done and what the priorities are for your committee. Encourage others to voice their opinions and ask questions to understand the issues from the leadership and rank-and-file perspectives.

Listen - not merely to hear what is said, but to understand the attitudes and opinions, increase your awareness, and allow others to have a voice in committee decisions.

Take on challenges - ask for help when needed. Be prepared to look for solutions and alternatives when faced with a problem. Do not reject an idea only because "it's never been done before." Seek avenues for gathering information.

Most importantly, keep going! - build on small successes and activities that give your committee credibility and pride. Encourage each other and remember that working together can accomplish more than working alone.

Resources



uaw.org



[instagram.com/uaw.union](https://www.instagram.com/uaw.union)



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EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

8000 East Jefferson Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48214
(313) 926-5474
education@uaw.net

AR:JS:lhk
opeiu494afl-cio

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UAW Purchasing Department
uawsupply@uaw.net
(313) 926-5221