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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**  
**Old Post Office Courthouse Building**  
**7th Avenue & Grant Street**  
**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219**

**COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT :**  
**A GUIDE TO BUILDING STRONG**  
**RESIDENT COUNCILS**



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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This guidebook originated in the Pittsburgh HUD Office. Jacqueline Molinaro-Thompson, Community Relations and Involvement Specialist for the Pittsburgh Office of Public Housing, is the author.

This guidebook is an organized presentation of the ideas set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and several premiere authorities in a variety of fields.

Many suggestions from the experts and authors outside of HUD can apply to a multitude of situations. In this text, we have chosen to apply their theories to the concept and reality of forming and running resident organizations. These authors, unless otherwise indicated, are neither employees of the Department nor endorsed by the Department.

Bruce Crawford, Director of Pittsburgh's Community Planning and Development Division, created the idea of a guide to assist new and experienced resident organizations in Western Pennsylvania and he provided countless suggestions and candid criticism.

Among the many people who reviewed this document are residents of public housing communities, staff of local public housing authorities, social service agency staff and staff of the HUD Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Headquarters Offices. We would especially like to extend our appreciation to these individuals for their input: Sharon Acosta; Janine Bayer; Margaret Blannon; Linda Brown; Cheryle Campbell; Bernice Crawley; Leonard Clay; Dazzella Garner; Cynthia Jetter; Paul LaMarca; Edward Moses; Nicole Molinaro; David Molinaro-Thompson; and Malinda Roberts.

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**SECTION ONE**

**WHY SHOULD WE FORM A RESIDENT COUNCIL?**

## **I. WHY SHOULD WE FORM A RESIDENT COUNCIL?**

Resident organizations strive to get people who live in public and Indian housing more involved in their communities. Being involved gives people control over their community and lives and a feeling of accomplishment.

An organized resident body can make positive contributions to a community's welfare. Involvement also produces individual successes and self-sufficiency. Through participation in an organized group and its decision making processes, individual residents can develop new skills and strengthen existing skills.

Newly developed skills can qualify council volunteers for a variety of jobs in the workforce. And if your council works with outside agencies, you can build a network of people who may be able to help you find a job if you are in the market for one.

### **WHAT CONTRIBUTIONS CAN A COUNCIL MAKE?**

Once you form a council, you can work cooperatively with the local public housing authority (PHA) staff to improve vital aspects of community life and bring to their attention issues which might be overlooked. Residents who work together can achieve better living conditions and help to stabilize the community.

A resident council can act as a sounding board to help the communication between PHA management and residents about PHA policies. And if you choose, it can be a central channel through which resident requests can be referred to management for resolution.

You can work with outside organizations too. Councils can tap into valuable resources from the outside community to benefit residents. For example, you can work with local city, county or township departments to improve security, lighting or police protection, if needed. You can work with social service agencies to bring training, services and programs to your community.

You might obtain funding and technical help from the PHA and outside agencies to strengthen your council's activities. And when requested, people from outside organizations will speak on different issues to the community residents (i.e., child care, job search skills, drugs, hobbies, self-defense, continuing education, etc.).

## **WHAT IS EVERYONE'S ROLE?**

Knowing the role played by each of the involved parties and how each interacts is important if you are to succeed.

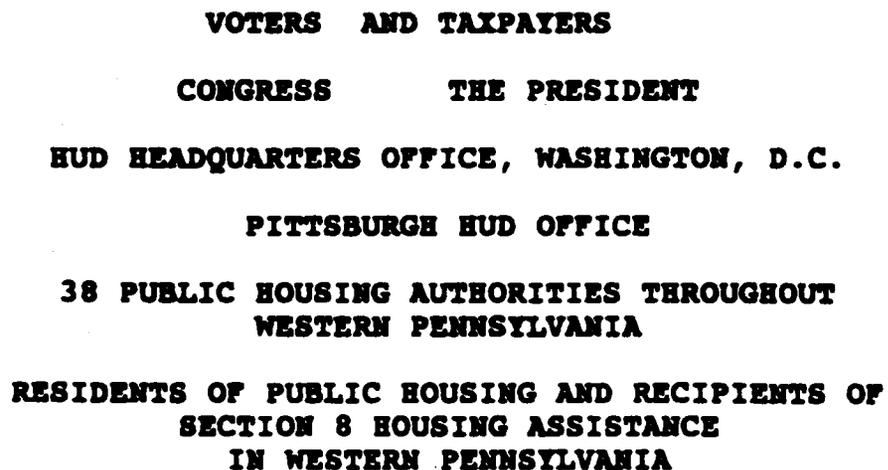
The president of the United States appoints a secretary to head the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD is a federal agency and the secretary is a member of the president's cabinet (like the secretary of education, secretary of defense, etc.).

Our elected senators and representatives - the United States Congress - appropriate money each year to HUD. The HUD Headquarters office in Washington, D.C. divides the funds between all of the HUD offices in the country, according to the law and program policies.

The local HUD offices, such as the Pittsburgh HUD office, then give money to each PHA and Indian Housing Authority (IHA) in their jurisdiction to fund numerous housing programs. Therefore, because we give funds to PHAs, it is HUD's role to generally oversee their operations.

In addition to giving HUD funding, Congress also passes laws which HUD has to follow. HUD writes the regulations (based on these laws passed by Congress) that PHAs/IHAs must follow. Although HUD monitors PHAs/IHAs to make sure they follow the rules, the relationship should be one of mutual cooperation.

As an example, the chart below shows the HUD structure in relation to the local Pittsburgh HUD office:



Some PHAs also receive funding from other sources, primarily state, city or county government entities. So the PHAs must also follow local government laws which apply. The landlord-tenant laws of the state apply to the PHA too.

## WHAT ARE THE LINES OF AUTHORITY?

If your council is to succeed, it is important that lines of authority in the PHA hierarchy be followed at all times. Whether you have a question, suggestion or complaint, always follow this line of authority when discussing something with the PHA:

1) Your community manager - In all circumstances, go to the manager first. ALWAYS BE PROFESSIONAL in your approach. DON'T GO IN YELLING AND SCREAMING or expecting the manager to have all the answers and do everything. You must work TOGETHER. Regular meetings between the manager and council are good. (But remember that managers aren't likely to have the authority to make all decisions without discussions with their supervisors.) Most of your dealings with the community manager should also be in writing. Always keep a copy of your letters and any information the manager gives to you.

Let the community manager know in advance if you want him or her to attend one of your meetings. State the specific reasons for this request so the manager can be prepared. Also, if it's an issue requiring an answer from someone else (i.e., maintenance personnel), the manager can bring this individual to the meeting.

If you are unable to get an answer, response or satisfaction, go to the second step:

2) Supervisor of your community manager - This person is a PHA employee who may have a title such as director of operations, regional supervisor, deputy director or executive director. Again, put your issue in writing. If your issue does not get resolved, you may raise it to the next level:

3) PHA executive director - Hopefully you won't need to go this high in the PHA hierarchy (unless the root of a problem is at this level and you need to go there first). If you do, put it in writing and keep a copy for your files. If you call the director, both of you should take notes of the conversation.

4) Rarely should a resident council reach this next step - the PHA board of directors. If you do, make sure it's because you've tried every other avenue but can't get a satisfactory resolution. If the board won't resolve an issue, go to HUD and/or the board's appointing body (mayor, commissioners).

Board members ARE NOT responsible for day to day operations of the PHA. They are a policy making body. So use them as a last resort to an important unresolved problem.

Here is a chart of a PHA's structure:

PHA lease, grievance procedure & eviction policy  
Whether or not PHA has a rent repayment plan  
Admission and Continued Occupancy policies  
Complaint resolution process  
Maintenance policies  
Work order procedure  
Pet policy  
Modernization program  
Civil rights act  
Operating budget  
New laws, HUD regulations and PHA policies as they  
are passed or adopted  
Local and state political issues and elected officials

The more you know about the PHA and HUD's public (or Indian) housing regulations, the better equipped you'll be to help other residents, cooperate with and give input to the PHA and succeed in your efforts. You will have more power and credibility if you have as much knowledge as the person with whom you're negotiating. (Operations Guide, Tenant Organization Guide)

We also urge you to purchase HUD's book of regulations, particularly if you're considering resident/property management. It's called: Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Volume 24, Parts 700 to 1699. You can buy it at your local Government Printing Office. Regulations are added and revised each year and the book becomes available in June or July.

**SECTION TWO**

**HOW DO WE ORGANIZE?**

## II. HOW DO WE ORGANIZE?

People who unite and work together develop the power to make positive changes and contributions. This is what organizing is all about.

Organizer: The person(s) developing leadership in the community; person who finds issues to organize around; person who pulls people together on issues or activities.

Community Organizing: Forming a structure to give consideration to community needs, resources and how to use the resources to meet the community's needs.

Organizing: People working together to get things done in a positive manner. Organizing is learning how to speak for ourselves.

Here's an example of how organizing can be effective. Say you're upset at the local grocery store prices. If you threaten to stop shopping there if the prices aren't reduced, the manager might listen but isn't likely to run around the store changing the prices.

BUT, when you organize 200 others to boycott the store or sign petitions, management listens to you and reduces prices. They listen to you because there is strength in numbers, as the saying goes. A group of organized individuals CAN make a difference.

(Kahn, Organizing and Facilitating Skills)

### WHO CAN ORGANIZE?

Anyone can learn how to organize. There's nothing mysterious about it. Just follow a few BASIC principles. Si Kahn, an author, musician and experienced organizer in Appalachia and the South, says that finding others who share your concerns and wish to effect change together can have a tremendous impact on your life. (10)

You don't have to have hundreds of people to make changes. A small group of people who share the same interests or concerns can make a tremendous difference in a community (Kahn). But a resident council is only as strong as the commitment of people in the community.

If you're going to make any kind of difference and you want to set up a resident council, you MUST ORGANIZE yourselves, or you'll be doomed from the start. The first part of organizing is to be able to work together and to agree. A community that is divided will not be able to make positive changes --" get your

if any, aren't being met. How do you do this? By taking a survey. The core of the group (the first couple of people who decide to organize a council) should sit down together and develop some basic questions.

First, you should choose whichever approach is best for you:

- Distribute a questionnaire
- Go door-to-door
- Call people on the phone
- A combination, depending on the size of your community.

Recruit a few residents to help conduct a survey. The survey will help you to find out what concerns people and what activities might interest them. Ask people to put their answers in order of importance because everything can't be done at once. Ask them:

- What's important to them?
- What needs do they have which aren't being met?
- What do they think a resident council should work on?
- What type of activities would they be interested in?
- What do they want from the council?
- How are they willing to help, if at all?
- What are three assets of the community? (This will help your council play off of the positive things happening in the community.)

The goals, role and direction of your resident organization will largely be determined by the survey results.

Second, find out what kind of help, resources and money are available from HUD, your PHA and local agencies. PHAs can give resident councils in-kind help and money from the operating budget (\$3.00 per unit per year, or more if the PHA can afford it, is the rule right now). Put your request and justification for money in writing, addressed to the executive director. The amount granted to your council is based on the PHA's budget. (Kahn, Organizing and Facilitating Skills)

It's also beneficial to talk to presidents of other established resident councils. (You can ask the local HUD office for a list of councils.) Find out:

- how they surveyed their community
- how they organized a council and the residents
- what were some of their stumbling blocks/how did they overcome them
- what they're doing now

help.

- Don't force anyone to say they'll join. If they seem disinterested simply say, "Thanks for your time."

- Don't waste your time. You're not selling a product, you're recruiting interested and willing people.

- When someone seems interested, be assertive and specific. For example, people won't run to sign up if you say "We're hoping you'll join our council. We're trying to make things a little better in our community." This is too general.

- Concrete is effective. For example: "We're organizing to get the gangs off the corners and we want you to join our resident council. It's work but it's exciting. Our next meeting is August 1 at 7:00. Why don't you come?"

The second example conveys confidence, excitement and a clear message that you know what you're doing.

Following is a partial list of ideas, put together by members of a public housing council in North Carolina, to help you in talking and listening to people when you recruit (Kahn 116-117).

- 1) Introduce yourself
- 2) Ask if you can come into their house
- 3) Don't force anyone to listen to you
- 4) Find something in the home to talk about
- 5) Talk to parents and children together
- 6) Meet people on their level
- 7) Be yourself
- 8) Know the subject
- 9) Know when to listen and when to talk
- 10) Get the person involved in the conversation
- 11) Talk about one thing at a time
- 12) Be concrete and clear
- 13) Look at them as you talk
- 14) Let them come up with ideas
- 15) Ask them questions
- 16) Give them praise
- 17) Don't argue
- 18) Don't try to force them to think your way
- 19) Don't curse
- 20) Answer questions as you discuss a subject
- 21) Never cut them off
- 22) Don't insult them
- 23) Don't gossip about other residents
- 24) Don't make promises you can't keep

But if the tactic doesn't work, change it. Tactics should be changed as situations change.

Another example is this: the goal of the Pittsburgh Steelers' (football) offense is to score touchdowns. The Steelers historically have achieved that goal by running the ball (which is a tactic). Under certain circumstances, this tactic doesn't work. Therefore, the Steelers won't think twice about changing their tactic to passing the ball, instead of running it, to achieve the goal of a touchdown.

Remember that all tactics will have a consequence. For instance, if the Steelers want to run the ball to score a touchdown, but knowing that scoring the touchdown will cause serious injury to two of their key players, they won't be as likely to run that play. If this is a regular season game, reaching the goal of a touchdown isn't worth the consequences. **BUT**, on the last play of the Super Bowl, with the game up in the air, getting a touchdown probably would be worth risking injury - their consequences would be worth achieving their goal.

One lesson here is: don't immediately use the tactics which require the most risk. Remember: the goal is to reach the goal with as few negative consequences as possible. Putting yourself and others in the community at risk to reach a goal should only be done when other avenues have failed.

#### **PERSONAL GOALS VERSUS COMMUNITY GOALS**

A big problem can occur if people are not able to distinguish between their own personal goals and the agreed-upon community goals. For instance, sometimes it becomes more important for a person to keep their position as council president than it does to reach the community's goals. This will have negative consequences. It can be avoided if every elected member of the council views themselves as part of the tactic and not part of the goal, including the president.

Although individual input is key, successful organizations thrive because of the system of organization and the COLLECTIVE efforts of people involved, not because of an individual. In order for goals to be met over a long period of time, input from individuals and collective input is required over time.

Organizations fall apart if they are individual driven instead of GROUP DRIVEN. If a system is working, nobody is irreplaceable. If an organization cannot survive without a particular individual, then the organization has failed its own primary responsibility: to build an ongoing community organization!

To use the Steelers as an example again:

- If you're not involving people and heading in a specific direction, you'll quickly lose people's interest.
  - Use survey results and time at meetings to prioritize different goals.
  - Deal with the goals in order of importance.
  - Set realistic time frames for all of your goals. For example, if drugs are the community's biggest concern, a program will have to be set up over a period of months (or maybe years). Unfortunately, a drug problem can't be resolved within a couple of weeks.
  - If you are planning, it means that the council isn't thriving merely on people's requests or demands. If it does, members will become bored and the council will disintegrate.
  - When people are involved in the planning and decision making processes, they're more likely to stay active and the council will flourish. People will feel OWNERSHIP if they've been involved in the decision making.
- (Kahn)

**SECTION THREE**

**LEADERSHIP AND THE ELECTION PROCESS**

### **III. LEADERSHIP AND THE ELECTION PROCESS**

#### **HOW MANY LEADERS DOES OUR COUNCIL NEED?**

The leaders of an organization make up what's called the executive committee, executive board, or officers. At the minimum, your council must have an executive board composed of four individuals - president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. HUD's Part 964 regulations say you should have five board members/officers.

It's up to you if you wish to have a chaplain, sergeant at arms, parliamentarian or other officers. If you choose to have committees (discussed in more detail in another section), each committee will be headed by a chairperson, who is either appointed by the council president or board, or elected by the general council membership. The committee chairpersons may also sit on the executive board, if you wish. But don't let the executive board become too large.

Generally five to seven board members would be sufficient. Depending on the size of your community, you could have up to 15 if needed. This should be a sufficient number of leaders. You don't want to have a one-person show, yet being top heavy with leaders will bog down the council and decisions will be harder to make.

The executive board should meet once each month, at times in between the general council meetings. This committee evaluates council activities and is a decision making body, although most decisions should be put before the general membership before any real action is taken.

It's also important to make sure the leadership is representative of the community. If possible, a mix of gender, age and race is most desirable (Kahn). Youth (in a family community) should also be included on your council to address issues relevant to them.

Others will judge your resident council by its leaders. The organization will suffer if leaders are unreliable, openly use drugs or abuse alcohol, are openly sexist, racist, ageist, classist, don't respect others or are undisciplined (Kahn).

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE BE?**

Council leaders must be chosen by a democratic process of regular elections. HUD's Part 964 regulations require elections to be held at least once every three years. Your bylaws (which will be discussed later) will outline the election process, the duties of officers/board members and the length of the term each

MEMBERS, then those elected board members will hold their own election of officers; OR (2) hold the election for specific board officers, for example president, vice president, secretary, treasurer. Either way is acceptable to HUD.

Here is a general outline of the steps for running elections. Ask your local HUD Office for a copy of the CRI GUIDE TO DEVELOPING TENANT OPPORTUNITIES, which has model bylaws and steps for planning elections. You must also consult HUD's regulations, Part 964 (or 905 for Indian Housing), which contain all the regulations (requirements) for public housing resident council elections. Part 905 of HUD's regulations apply to Indian housing authority resident councils. The regulations were published in the Federal Register on August 24, 1994.

Any resident council who wishes to receive housing authority or HUD money, and wants to be "recognized" as an official resident council by the PHA and HUD, must follow HUD's requirements. HUD has to make sure that resident councils are run in a democratic fashion, and that all residents have an opportunity to participate in the council.

1) A date and time period for the nomination of officers must be announced to the general community. An announcement must go out to the community that nominations and an election are being held. This has to happen at least 30 days before the election.

2) The council board (or the "core group" if you're just starting out) should ask for volunteers to form a nominating/election committee. Depending on the size of your community and council (if already formed), three to six people will serve. Current council officers are not allowed to serve on the nominating committee.

Get the housing authority to help you organize the election. HUD's regulations require the PHA to monitor the process you use for your elections. So they can be a big help in making sure you do it right. Make sure everyone has a copy of HUD's regulations.

HUD's regulations also require that you find an independent third party to oversee the election. The dictionary defines independent in many ways: "free from bias, free from control, not connected or related to another or to a group, separate from, free from rule of another, relying only on oneself or one's own abilities" --- you get the idea!

HUD suggests that you get someone from the League of Women Voters or your local Board of Elections to help you through the nomination and election process. They KNOW how to conduct elections and will make sure everything's done

Remember - the goal of the election is to offer everyone in the community an opportunity to participate in electing leaders for the council. Try to run it like a real life political election. It's a DEMOCRACY!

Hand out a sheet of paper something like this (EXAMPLE):

**RESIDENT COUNCIL ELECTION BALLOT**

Term of office for each position is 3 years.

VOTE FOR ONE, BY MARKING AN "X." IF YOU VOTE FOR MORE THAN ONE FOR EACH OFFICE/BOARD POSITION, YOUR BALLOT WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.

PRESIDENT (or write in name):

Mary Jones \_\_\_\_\_  
Harry Smith \_\_\_\_\_  
Martha Doe \_\_\_\_\_

VICE PRESIDENT (or write in name):

John Smith \_\_\_\_\_  
Linda Flower \_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Tree \_\_\_\_\_

AND SO ON FOR OTHER OFFICERS BEING SELECTED....

5) Ballots should be counted after the election is done. The independent third party will count the ballots. If you choose, people from the community and the PHA could oversee the ballot counting. This will eliminate the possibility of ANYONE (resident or PHA) accusing the process of being "undemocratic". The independent third party must "certify" that the election was done properly. Your local HUD Office has a certification form.

Any ties should be resolved with a run-off election. All election results should be posted in the community. Also, let your local HUD Office know when you have a new election so they can update their mailing list.

6) Generally, this process takes two to three months, although it can be shorter. A typical schedule might be:

**JUNE** - Residents volunteer for a nominating/election committee; committee gets PHA and independent third party to help; everyone reads the regulations and council bylaws;

- 14) Be honest - don't lie, fool or pretend with people.
  - 15) Be self disciplined - set goals and follow through.
  - 16) Don't work out personal problems at other people's expense. If you're going through a tough emotional time and can't handle leadership, hand it over to someone else.
  - 17) Set limits - don't let people use you, learn how to say no and teach people to do for themselves.
  - 18) Take risks - keep going if the going gets tough.
  - 19) Be open to criticism.
  - 20) Stay abreast of current affairs - read the newspaper or listen to the news EVERY DAY.
  - 21) Have dreams and vision and share it with others.
  - 22) Know when to laugh-don't be serious 100% of the time.
  - 23) ALWAYS put the welfare of the community before your own self interest.
- (Kahn, Organizing and Facilitating Skills)

You don't need to be superhuman. But between all of the leaders in your organization, these skills should be developed over time:

- Be comfortable talking one to one with people
- Be able to choose good and winnable issues
- Know how to run effective meetings
- Know how to raise money on a grassroots level
- Know how to manage the council's finances
- Know where to find the information you need
- Build a system of communication with members and outsiders
- Help other people understand your mission

(Kahn)

Donald H. McGannon once said that "Leadership is action, not position."

#### HOW CAN I LEARN ALL OF THIS?

First, don't panic! Don't try to learn everything all at once. Take a step at a time. The best training you can get is through EXPERIENCE. You will learn gradually and if you already have experience with other organizations, draw

Because people aren't clones, it's important to recognize that everyone in a leadership position has their own style. And everyone's style is different. Style is the way you choose to lead. It's how you interact with others. If you're demanding and abrasive, you'll turn people off. Yelling at people or talking in an accusatory tone of voice will just make people feel defensive. If you are respectful and motivating, you'll get cooperation.

As a leader, watch how people interact with and react to you. This will give you a good idea of whether your "style" is effective or damaging (Golightly).

#### **WHAT ELSE SHOULD I DO AS A LEADER?**

A good leader knows how to delegate duties to group members. This means giving tasks to other people to complete. You can't do everything by yourself. But all council leaders should know the difference between delegating duties and "dumping" on others.

Ask people what they might be interested in doing. Give people reasons why the task needs completed. The reason for doing something gives people an idea of how important the task is, even if it appears mundane. Members should understand that every task is important - from licking envelopes to being in charge of the flow of money.

Give people positive reinforcement for tasks accomplished. If you don't praise and thank people for a job well done, you risk alienating them because they'll feel you've taken their actions for granted.

If everyone has tasks to complete, everyone will have a purpose. People will not remain on the council if they aren't given the chance to contribute and don't have a purpose.

A good leader takes responsibility for other people's mistakes. The board is ultimately responsible for **EVERYTHING** that happens. The president of a company can't blame the employees if the firm falls apart. The president has to face the music and take responsibility.

Never hesitate to admit you've made a mistake. People will respect you a lot more than if you cover up a mistake - or worse - if you blame someone else.

Leaders can't take a bow when things go well but run when something goes wrong. If you do, your demise is near.

- o They won't make trouble within the council
  - o They'll follow through on their commitments
  - o They'll create work to be done - and do it
- (Crosby)

**When you notice someone with leadership potential:**

- Encourage them to get more involved
  - Show them how things are done
  - Ask them to work along with you
  - Teach them about the council and the PHA
  - Teach them how to effectively communicate
  - Teach them how to plan and run meetings
- (Kahn)

It's not always easy to identify ability and potential leadership qualities. But keep an open mind and open eyes. You'll be able to see it. And don't be threatened by others in your community with leadership skills. One of your goals as a leader should be to build an organization which can sustain the test of time - not to have it fall apart because you're gone. If it falls apart when you depart, you haven't done your job.

**WILL WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT?**

Yes, you will have to deal with conflict and disagreements. But conflict isn't always a bad thing. Here are a few points:

- DON'T IGNORE CONFLICT. Real and significant change can't happen without controlled conflict.
- DON'T make the mistake of always thinking that you are right.
- Always LISTEN to the arguments of others.
- And remember: **DON'T LET PERSONALITIES GET IN THE WAY. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO LIKE SOMEONE IN ORDER TO WORK WITH THEM!**

Buy or borrow from the library a book called Getting to Yes, by Roger Fisher and William Ury. It's a terrific book

**SECTION FOUR**

**HOW TO FORM A RESIDENT COUNCIL**

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#### IV. HOW TO FORM A RESIDENT COUNCIL

##### 80 - HOW DID YOU SAY WE GET STARTED?

This section summarizes how to form your council. The complexity of each step depends on the size of your community, its needs, the overall goals of the council and the level of everyone's commitment. Take these steps one at a time:

1. Talk to a handful of others interested in forming a council. Almost immediately, a core of people must be formed who will assume initial leadership and be the most active members. Full participation by this core is the key to success.

2. Devise a questionnaire for residents asking what their concerns and unmet needs are. (Distinguish between what is within the control of the PHA or resident council and what is not.) Also ask residents what they view as three assets of the community.

3. Start forming common ideas about what direction the council should take.

4. Pull together your "key" group (the "organizing committee"). Talk, think, establish goals, make plans and develop a strategy and tactics to achieve the goals.

5. The organizing committee should also answer such questions as:

Who should the start-up leaders be?  
How will we recruit members?  
How should we communicate with each other, the members, the PHA, outside agencies?  
What do we want to accomplish?  
How should our council be structured?  
What committees should we have?  
What should the first meeting agenda include?

6. Widely publicize throughout your community the formation of a resident council. Use flyers, knock on doors, make calls.

7. ORGANIZE THE RESIDENTS (refer to Section III). Get people to join the council.

17. Timely follow-up on all commitments made, however great or small, is very important.

18. Leaders should not take dominant positions in the group. Bring out suggestions from members, listen to them, respond to each one, don't ignore anyone, follow up when you promise.

19. Always give public credit to individuals who are active in the group. People like to be praised.

20. Continually enhance the prestige of the council. Do this by: keeping the group informed of all plans; advising residents of your activities and accomplishments; making all decisions democratically, etc.

21. Consult with residents on matters being considered by the PHA (i.e., modernization, grant applications, new construction). Get ideas and communicate them to the community manager. It's best to write down your opinions and submit the original to the community manager. On big issues, send a copy to the PHA executive director.

22. Solicit ideas from residents who don't come to council meetings. All opinions are worth considering.

23. See if money is available through the PHA (from their operating budget or CGP or CIAP modernization "management improvement" funds) OR other resources (banks, corporations, universities, foundations) for training. If so, get training in such areas as:

- Financial planning
- Communication
- Running meetings
- General PHA operations
- Fundraising
- Record keeping
- Community organizing
- Fundamentals of leadership
- Business writing
- Computers

There are several sources for training: go to a local college; ask non-profit agencies; and find out what's available from the PHA, HUD and the Department of Community Affairs in the state. There is a lot of FREE and low cost training available - you just have to seek it out.

24. Raise funds for your council. This is through

understanding of the relationship between the two parties (through a "Memorandum of Understanding").

- A council can form partnerships with outside organizations. Just don't let those organizations control your council.

- If the PHA has available space, it can give an office to the resident council. The PHA has to try to find space for the council to meet and hold programs and activities.

- Resident councils are allowed and encouraged to participate in the overall policy development and direction of the PHA's operations. In other words, you have the right to know about the PHA's operations and have input into it. PHAs should create joint resident/HA management committees so you are all working toward a COMMON GOAL. This will be to EVERYONE'S benefit, not just the residents'.

- PHAs should train the council and/or help you to find training. The more you know, the better able you'll be to participate meaningfully as a Partner with the PHA.

- Residents can be appointed to the PHA board of directors as full voting members.

Both parties should strive to develop a cooperative relationship instead of working against each other. You can get more done as PARTNERS than as ENEMIES. And the more that gets done, the better off BOTH of you are.

Refer to HUD's Part 964 regulations for more information.

#### **WHAT MAKES RESIDENT COUNCILS SUCCESSFUL?**

- o A "vision" of what can make the community better
- o Specific goals to make your vision a reality
- o Effective communication and organizing skills
- o Cooperative relationships
- o Strong and democratic leadership
- o After your council becomes experienced, establish ties with local businesses, universities, agencies, religious organizations
- o Good training

**SECTION V.**

**HOW DO WE RUN SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS?**

## V. HOW DO WE RUN SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS?

When we have an idea, we call a meeting. When we have a problem to solve, we call a meeting. When we're not sure if we need an idea or have a problem, we still call a meeting! It's how we get things done.

Some meetings are unnecessary or boring. But if conducted properly, meetings are productive and positive. This section will focus on how to run a good meeting.

It's important to realize that meetings don't run themselves. Meetings are managed. The meeting leader keeps things moving in the right direction. And the leader must encourage people to participate. Otherwise, you might as well have a meeting with yourself.  
(Donahue)

Consult Robert's Rules of Order if you wish to conduct meetings according to parliamentary procedure. Since this is a very formal way in which to conduct business, you may wish to extract ideas which can be adapted to your council's needs. The book is available at any library or can be purchased from any bookstore.

### **WHAT'S THE FIRST STEP IN RUNNING A MEETING?**

The key to running a successful meeting is **PLANNING**. You can't just walk into the room and "wing it." Without planning, you'll lose the interest of the members. A smoothly run meeting, although it looks like a breeze to participants, means the leader has taken time to prepare.

A few meeting planning guidelines are:

- Always have a reason to meet.
- Establish clear objectives. Figure out exactly what you want to accomplish at the meeting.
- Decide when to meet.
- When choosing a date, make sure it's not a holiday or the day of a big event. You want people to attend.
- Arrange babysitting for members with children. Perhaps a couple of teenagers would volunteerr.

- I. Introduction of new members
  - II. Discuss Election of Treasurer
  - III. Committee Reports
    - a) Finance committee
    - b) Fundraising committee
    - c) Social committee
  - IV. Drug elimination program
    - a) ideas for on-site youth sports
    - b) speaker for teenagers
    - c) HUD drug elimination grant
  - V. Other Business
- 

YOU should decide what your agenda looks like. The main point is to plan in advance what you'll discuss at the meeting. Knowing what you will do before you walk into the room gives the meeting purpose, direction and will result in **GETTING THINGS DONE.**

#### **LET'S RUN A MEETING!**

The resident council president should conduct meetings. This means that she or he will be the meeting chairperson, sit/stand at the head of the room and direct the members through the agenda items.

Here are a few tips for running a successful meeting:

- The president should arrive at the meeting place before anyone else. Take this chance to glance around the room to make sure it's set up properly (enough chairs, comfortable room temperature, etc.).
- Start meetings ON TIME or members will get the idea that they don't have to be punctual.
- Ask people to print their name and phone number (or apartment number) on a sign-in sheet as they enter the room.
- To gain order at the beginning of the meeting, stand up in front of the room and calmly announce, "We're ready to start now." Then stand quietly.

- The president must have complete knowledge of all council business. He or she should know what's happening in each committee, the status of all group projects and any problems the group or its members may be experiencing.

- Don't ask someone to give an impromptu report. Many people get nervous being put on the spot.

- Always let people know in advance what type of presentation they'll be doing. Otherwise, this scenario can happen:

The president says, "Hey, why doesn't someone give us a report on the upcoming Good Neighbors Fair?" Since no one volunteers, the chair calls on Jackie. A surprised Jackie stumbles through a disorganized report (if she even knows about the event).

Jackie says, "Well, it'll be fun. We hope everyone comes. We'll have a few booths."

Someone asks the date. Someone asks the price. Someone asks the location. Someone asks what food will be served. And what you have is a disorganized report by a nervous member which puts a damper on your meeting AND the event.

- If someone is very negative or creating a disturbance, speak directly to the individual, telling them to stop their actions. Don't try to keep one person happy at the expense of all the others.

- Scan the room to look for inattention, puzzled faces, raised hands, etc. These are signs of boredom or not understanding the discussion.

- If someone doesn't understand the issue being discussed, take time out to explain.

- If one person is speaking and it appears that others can't hear, politely interrupt the speaker and ask him or her to speak louder.

- If people are holding a conversation separate from the proceedings of the meeting, politely say "Excuse me. Thelma's giving a report" or "please, may we have one conversation at a time," and remain silent until the disruptive conversation stops.

- Debate of issues during a meeting is good. But if the group won't come to a decision or if someone monopol-

down some ideas. Anything goes. Then we'll go around the room and ask you to share your ideas."

This way, everyone gets to participate and you'll get some good ideas.

- Talk with ease; don't be too formal; don't be forceful.

- As the leader, let your eyes wander around the room; look directly at everyone. This makes people feel involved and important.

- In a democracy, it's OK to make a decision without the consent of each and every member. But Si Kahn warns that although true democracy means that the majority rules, we must always remember to respect the opinions of the minority. (148)

(Carnes, Donahue, Dunsing, Kahn)

- You could make decisions by "consensus," which means that everyone in the room agrees on the decision, and everyone will support the decision.

#### HOW DO WE KNOW OUR PLANNING WORKED?

An important step in the planning process is evaluating your meetings. The results of your evaluation will help you to plan your next meeting. Here are a few tips for evaluating your success (see Appendix Three):

- Look at what went right
- Look at what went wrong and the reasons why
- Ask the group at the end of the meeting, "What did you think of our meeting? Was it productive?"
- Ask the executive committee members to give their candid opinions (but not in front of the group)
- Was each agenda item discussed?
- Were goals accomplished?
- Were decisions made?
- Did everyone participate?
- Was anyone left out?
- Was it interesting or boring?
- What tasks require follow-up?

Be honest with yourselves. Si Kahn says that self criticism helps us to make needed changes (150).

(Conrad and Glenn, Kahn)

attempt at brainstorming will flop.

Steps to conducting a good brainstorming session are:

1. Don't cover too many issues in one session.
2. Introduce the problem(s) or subject of the session at the beginning of the meeting.
3. Write all ideas on a flip chart or chalk board so that everyone can see them.
4. Encourage new ideas - draw people out.
5. Don't criticize or let anyone else criticize ideas.
6. Redirect the conversation when people get too far off track - KEEP FOCUSED.
7. When the leader thinks the group has enough solutions, stop getting ideas and start making decisions based on the ideas presented. You can usually go through your list and eliminate ideas that may not work for one reason or another.

(Cohen)

#### **ARE OUTSIDE SPEAKERS APPROPRIATE?**

Yes. Occasionally it's nice to bring in a speaker for a meeting. Choose a topic interesting and relevant to your members.

It's also good to bring in people from local agencies or colleges to speak to the whole community. For example, a talk could be scheduled on elderly issues, gender or race related issues, drugs, international affairs, starting small businesses, etc. Doing this would not only give something to your community, but would provide effective publicity for your council within the larger community.

Don't forget to thank the speaker verbally and in writing after the speech.

(Donahue)

#### **HOW DOES IT END?**

Meetings should be ended gracefully. Always end on a good note. If you conclude with argument or something negative, your members will walk out of the meeting with a bad, frustrated attitude. And they may never walk back in.

act:

- Being praised in recognition of achievement
- Getting things accomplished - if people are always spinning their wheels, they'll lose motivation
- Feeling they belong
- Self development - learning, feeling better about oneself
- Reaching goals - this is why goals must be realistic
- Enjoying the council work
- Seeing a possibility of moving up in the council
- Having a chance to speak out

As the leader, you must help people succeed so they will stay motivated. For example, when you assign a task to someone, make sure you:

- 1) Define the task so they know exactly what's expected; and
- 2) Tell them what help is available if needed.

Keep in mind that when individuals succeed, the group succeeds.

(Quick, Cohen)

#### SHOULD WE FORM COMMITTEES?

To become strengthened, a council needs to form committees to carry out different activities. Committees are effective because they're more flexible and informal than the larger group. And they are results oriented. Most of the nitty-gritty work gets done in committees.

There are two types of committees: temporary and permanent committees. A temporary (or "ad hoc," short term) is formed to work on one specific project. A permanent committee is long standing. Examples of permanent committees are listed below:

- Finance
- Social/Entertainment
- Athletic
- Education

**SECTION VI.**

**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

## **VI. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

Keeping the lines of communication open is one of the most important things you can do to make your council successful. Keep all of your members updated. And to the extent possible, keep the PHA management informed.

It's also important to develop two way communication. Establish a way for council members, other residents, the PHA, HUD and other agencies to come to you with issues, questions and problems (See Appendix Two). (Conrad and Glenn)

The different ways of communicating are:

- Face to face
- Telephone
- Written

A newsletter to the membership (and the larger community if you desire) is the best way to communicate on a regular basis.

Your written communication can be anything from a one page handwritten flyer to a several page, nicely laid out and typed newsletter. Ask the community manager (or PHA if there's not an on-site management office) when you can use their typewriter/computer, if you don't have one.

As long as you KEEP PEOPLE INFORMED, you are on the right track. Also, consider creating letterhead stationery with the name of your council at the top. This will enhance your professional image and contribute to the identity of the council.

You should set up communication with the PHA community manager. This will help in maintaining a cooperative relationship. Keep them informed of your activities and projects. For example, either send the manager a copy of your newsletter or write a letter (once a month or quarterly) listing your activities. Invite the manager to your meetings when it's appropriate. Involve the manager in on-site programs such as training, anti-drug, etc.

Follow these basic rules when communicating in writing:

- o Use short sentences
- o Don't crowd the pages with too much information
- o Use lots of white space - it makes reading easier
- o Write the way you talk

**SECTION VII.**

**FUNDRAISING FOR THE LONG HAUL - AND KEEPING TRACK OF IT**

## VII. FUNDRAISING FOR THE LONG HAUL - AND KEEPING TRACK OF IT

Although a resident council may be able to get in-kind or monetary assistance from the PHA, it's also in your best interest to raise your own money.

The money raised by the council is yours, managed by you and spent by you in whatever (legal) fashion you desire.

Resident councils can do a variety of things with the money. You can:

- Buy supplies and office equipment
- Print a newsletter regularly
- Buy office furniture
- Buy books for a community library
- Buy musical instruments (i.e., a piano for the community room)
- Open a food bank
- Set up a fund to help families with emergencies
- Sponsor special events (i.e., a band, a disc jockey for a dance, a speaker who charges a fee, a carnival, etc.)
- Provide training or education
- Buy computer equipment, a telephone system, etc.
- Sponsor hot lunches for children
- Buy playground equipment
- Set up a clothing exchange for residents, especially children
- Pay for tutors (if you can't find volunteers)
- Buy sporting equipment and games

The list is **ENDLESS**. It's up to you to determine how much money you want the council to work with and the best way in which to spend it. (See Appendix One for a list of some other ideas for council activities and purchases.)

### **HOW DO WE HANDLE OUR CASH?**

The minute you get one penny is the time you must set up some type of financial record keeping system. Don't let this scare you. It doesn't have to be complicated. But it does have to be accurate and safe from petty theft. Whether or not you know it, you **ALREADY** have financial management experience: of your own personal finances. The same skills are used for your council's treasury as for your **OWN** treasury!

Immediately open a checking account at a local bank in

**- THE PEOPLE WHO SIGN CHECKS SHOULD NEVER TOUCH THE MONEY OR HANDLE THE BOOKKEEPING**

**- THE PERSON WHO HANDLES THE BOOKS SHOULD NEVER TOUCH THE MONEY OR MAKE OUT OR SIGN CHECKS** - It is the treasurer's responsibility to maintain the financial records but NOT to have access to the money through having check signing authority.

**- THE PERSON WHO PREPARES THE CHECKS SHOULD NOT HANDLE THE BOOKS OR SIGN THE CHECKS**

#### **WHAT ABOUT FUNDS FROM THE PHA?**

The following applies if your council requests money from the PHA:

- Submit a budget with your written request for assistance (see Appendix Eight for a sample)

- The budget should show, within a time frame, what services or how much money you want and how you intend to spend it

- Your written request for money should explain how you plan to keep track of your money (your bookkeeping system)

- Your written request should also include the names of persons authorized to spend council money and any limits you have set

- The PHA and HUD have the right to see your books, so maintain good and accurate records

- PHA independent auditors and HUD can review the books of a resident management corporation

- If your council has IRS status as a "non-profit corporation," the books are subject to public disclosure and audit

#### **WHAT SHOULD BE IN THE BOOKKEEPING RECORDS?**

The council will be safe if you keep track of:

- The exact amount of money coming in

- Where the money is from (earned through an activity, a foundation grant, etc.)

You are encouraged to supplement money from the PBA with money you raise on your own. There are countless ways you can raise money. A very small sampling follows:

- o Sponsor such fundraising events as
  - dinners
  - luncheons
  - speakers
  - fairs
  - craft shows
  - talent shows
  - dances (get a local DJ to donate time)
  - fashion shows
- o Sell items:
  - recipe books (collect special recipes from residents)
  - crafts and artwork
  - raffle tickets (give away money or ask a store or organization to donate an item)
- o Network and use your resources!
  - o Many foundations and corporations give grants for worthwhile projects. Some foundations have grants for which you can apply and others give money for specific items or reasons.
    - o Find out what foundations and corporations in your area offer funding and for what purposes. This information is available to the public at the library. For instance, The Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh has a comprehensive listing of all foundations and corporations with gift programs.
    - o After your research, write to find out what types of organizations they fund. If your council meets the requirements, ask the representative when their next funding round is and how to apply.
    - o Some foundations/corporations may require that your council have non-profit status (501[c][3] status) in order to be funded. If so, you may ask the PBA to be a co-sponsor, using their tax identification number until you can apply for your own. An attorney can help you with the paperwork and you'll have to pay a filing fee to the IRS.
  - o Call other resident councils to get fundraising ideas.
  - o Call local churches, synagogues and organizations to get ideas by asking about their fundraising.

**SECTION VIII.**

**PREPARING COUNCIL BYLAWS**

## VIII. PREPARING COUNCIL BYLAWS

Every council must have a set of bylaws. These are the "rules" that your organization lives by. They should be simple and can be amended as new requirements are added. Bylaws should contain the following general information. Ask your local HUD Office for a copy of HUD's Model Bylaws.

- 1) Name of the council
- 2) Purpose of the council/Mission statement
- 3) If there is to be a board of directors, how many people will be on the board and how elections will be run
- 4) How often the board will meet
- 5) How many officers will serve on the council (president, etc.), term of office, and how elections will be run
- 6) How unexpected vacancies on the board and council (caused by death, illness, resignation, removal, etc.) will be filled
- 7) An outline of the duties of all officers
- 8) How funds will be handled and which positions (i.e., president, vice president) will sign checks, handle money and keep the books
- 9) Who sits on the executive committee (the council officers) and how often it will meet. State that the executive committee shall report its actions to the general membership
- 10) A statement that membership in the council shall be open to all residents of your public housing community
- 11) An outline of which committees will be formed (and that they will be headed by chairpersons either appointed or elected) and statement that new and ad-hoc committees can be formed when deemed necessary. Ad-hoc committees are temporary and set up for a special purpose or task
- 12) How many votes are needed for elections, policy and procedure decisions, and what constitutes a quorum. For example, state: "A quorum for meetings of the

## Appendix One

### IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES AND FUNDRAISING

Here is a list of ideas for resident councils at all levels. But remember - the sky's the limit. It's up to you to be creative and plan the activities and the role of your council according to your community's needs and wants. Many of these activities can be fundraising activities and many can be paid for out of your council fund.

Voter registration

Free talks from professionals on such topics as:

- Money and budgets
- Job searching
- Job interviews
- Resume writing
- Child care
- Prenatal care
- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Mental Health
- Drug and alcohol dependency
- Housekeeping
- Basic home repair
- International issues
- Domestic issues
- Fire prevention
- Religion
- Literacy
- Education and higher education
- College grants and financial aid
- PHA rules
- PHA lease and eviction process
- PHA grievance procedure

Form support groups and self help groups

Set up an Alcoholics Anonymous group

Set up a Narcotics Anonymous group

Arts and Crafts

Exercise classes

Midnight basketball league

Little league sports teams: softball, basketball, football

performing arts  
carnival  
arts and other festivals  
baseball game  
historical points of interest

Athletic weekend (get local college athletes - males and females - to speak to and work with the children)

Talent contest

Fashion show

Bake sale

Holiday parties

Pumpkin carve

Easter egg hunt

Senior citizen card clubs

Bingo - Please note that although your non profit group can use money in bingo, you must first apply for a license. Any elderly community can apply and receive a license immediately. There's a state requirement that says organizations in other than elderly communities have to be in existence for two years before a license will be issued. FOR LICENSING INFORMATION, CALL THE COUNTY TREASURER'S OFFICE.

Tureen dinners

"Senior" (citizen) prom

Bible study/prayer group

Christmas tree trimming

Hat party

Floor (or building) dinners

"Buddy system" - elderly people who live alone pair up and help each other OR a younger person helps an older person

Strawberry Festival

Ice cream and cake festival

Birthday parties

Beauty makeovers

Summer meal program for kids

Book review club

Weight loss group

Fishing trips

Meet the candidates: local elected officials speak

Kite flying workshop and contest

On-site children's immunization clinic (tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella)

City Parks and Recreation playground events - on-site events for kids

"Project Learn" - in conjunction with local school district, offer on-site tutoring, testing and GED classes for adults

Cooperate with outside social service agency to put together ongoing workshops (i.e., program on successful parenting skills for young parents)

Community day - organized games, picnic, prizes, food booths, arts and crafts, music, picnic

Outside agency sponsor clubs for boys and girls

Work with PHA to give a standard orientation to all new families (PHA lease agreement, maintenance, police and security, available social services and programs, etc.)

Halloween "Haunted House"

"Love Outreach" program - arranges counseling, maternity clothes, baby clothing and furniture for new parents

"Cooperative" (co-op) - people from the public housing community and community at large donate items (portable TV, garden tools, kids furniture, grills, games, etc.) and residents pay a nominal fee to rent the items for a certain period of time

Food bank

Clothing exchange

Rummage sale

## Appendix Two

### 17 POINTS ON COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION

1. Always be on time.
2. Do not negotiate with people who have no say on your issues.
3. Request meetings with management in writing.
4. Always let management know in advance the reason you want to meet and the items you'll be discussing.
5. Always be prepared.
6. Verify all of your information - know the FACTS.
7. Have questions prepared.
8. Don't approach management with hostility.
9. Always be professional in your approach and the language you use.
10. Never curse during the course of a discussion.
11. Present a couple of solutions for EVERY PROBLEM. DO NOT bring up a problem unless and until you have solutions. This gives you more credibility.
12. Be SURE of what you are negotiating. Be consistent.
13. During a meeting, both management and council should stick to the issues agreed upon in advance. New issues can be introduced at another time.
14. Follow up on decisions made at meetings.
15. Confirm agreements made with management IN WRITING.
16. Have only one or two individuals speaking for the group. Anyone else should only speak when spoken to.
17. REMEMBER: At all times you represent the entire council and resident population. Don't act on self-interest. And act and dress professionally at all times.

(Source: Urban League, Public Housing Improvement Training Guide, Pittsburgh, 1989.)

Appendix Three

MEETING EVALUATION

DIRECTIONS: Evaluate your general and committee meetings regularly. At first, do this evaluation after every meeting. Once you've worked out some of the problems and feel comfortable running the meetings, evaluate your progress periodically (i.e., every few months). DISCUSS the results of your evaluation with the executive committee.

CHECK ONE:   \_\_\_ General Meeting       \_\_\_ Committee Meeting

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER. IF YOU CHECK "NEEDS IMPROVEMENT," DISCUSS SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT.

**GOOD   NEEDS IM-  
          PROVEMENT.**

- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       The meeting was results oriented.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       We acted like a team - we didn't fight.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       We discussed issues.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       The meeting wasn't dominated by one person.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       We stuck to the agenda items.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       We didn't just discuss problems.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       Everyone at the meeting participated.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       The president guided the meeting well.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       The meeting was well organized.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       The meeting space was comfortable.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       Committee and special project reports were well prepared and informative.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       The meeting began and ended on time.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       All members were on time.
- \_\_\_       \_\_\_       The president (or chairperson) delegated tasks to members.

**REMEMBER: PEOPLE WILL STOP COMING TO YOUR MEETINGS IF THEY'RE NOT EFFECTIVE AND NOTHING EVER GETS DONE!**

Appendix Four

SELF INVENTORY OF SKILLS

Directions: Read each statement and check the response which best describes your own personal experience in relation to each skill. Check ONE answer per question.

	I Have Experience	I Need Practice	I Don't Have Experience
Ability to motivate others to get involved and stay active. (Area is MOTIVATION)	_____	_____	_____
Exhibit clarity in expressing my thoughts. (Area - ORAL COMMUNICATION)	_____	_____	_____
Ability to listen in an alert and understanding way. (Area - LISTENING)	_____	_____	_____
Ability to handle and resolve conflicts in a group. (Area - MEDIATOR and LEADERSHIP SKILLS)	_____	_____	_____
Ability to arrange work into logical sequence and handle details. (Area - ORGANIZE)	_____	_____	_____
Willingness to assign jobs to group members and supervise their work. (Areas - DELEGATION and ADMINISTRATION)	_____	_____	_____
Ability to diagnose group progress, problems and my ability as a leader. (Area - EVALUATION)	_____	_____	_____

SUGGESTION: In the areas in which you need practice or have no experience, we suggest that you either: (1) go to the library and read information on your "weak" areas; (2) ask the resident coordinator at HUD for some guidance in these areas; or (3) arrange training in these areas, i.e., from an outside agency. (Source: American Red Cross.)

Appendix Five

SELF INVENTORY OF QUALITIES

Directions: Read each statement and check YES or NO, depending on the qualities that apply to you. Please evaluate yourself honestly. The executive committee may wish to do the inventory as a group. The quality which applies to the situation is indicated in parenthesis.

	YES	NO
I am able to change plans when better ideas evolve or an emergency occurs. (This means you're FLEXIBLE.)	___	___
I have an awareness of the feelings of others. (SENSITIVE)	___	___
I am frank and open with group members. (HONESTY)	___	___
I handle group members sensitively and with tact. (DIPLOMATIC)	___	___
I am modest about achievements and conscious of my faults. (HUMBLE)	___	___
I think creatively in groups. (CREATIVE)	___	___
I am realistic about feasibility of plans. (PRACTICAL)	___	___
I have the ability to make decisions carefully, quickly and follow through with them. (DECISIVE)	___	___
I am reliable in carrying out duties and promises. (RESPONSIBLE)	___	___
I act without deceit or pretense. (SINCERE)	___	___

Summary: Go back to the "NO" column and circle one or two qualities you would like to develop further. Then either read information in this area or identify relevant training to strengthen these very important qualities.

(Source: American Red Cross.)

Appendix Six

CHECKLIST ON EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Check yourself for identification of some of your "communication practices." Concentrate on the areas in which you need to improve.

In my own communication I find myself:	Most of the time	Some of the time	Need to improve
1. Saying what I really think rather than what is "acceptable."	_____	_____	_____
2. Checking what the other person has said before evaluating.	_____	_____	_____
3. Listening for the other person's point of view before replying.	_____	_____	_____
4. Making it possible for others to tell me different ideas.	_____	_____	_____
5. Assuming that what is clear to me may not be clear to the receiver.	_____	_____	_____
6. Being influenced by a persuasive speaker because of appearance, manner or voice.	_____	_____	_____
7. Thinking in stereotypes.	_____	_____	_____
8. Making up my mind on the basis of the first impression.	_____	_____	_____
9. Getting annoyed with others because they do not seem to understand what I am saying.	_____	_____	_____

(Source: American Red Cross.)

Appendix Eight

Sample Letter, Budget and Agreement

SAMPLE LETTER

Date

Dear Executive Director:

On behalf of the residents of ABC Community, the Resident Council is requesting an operating subsidy in the amount of \$600.00

This amount is based upon HUD's regulations, at 24 CFR Part 964.145, which permit our housing authority to provide \$3.00 per unit per year to the duly democratically elected resident council in each development. (NOTE: These regulations state \$15.00/unit per year, "subject to appropriation from Congress." We understand that there is NO additional appropriation to HUD from Congress; therefore, the current guideline of \$3.00 per unit per year stands.) The ABC Community has 200 units (200 X \$3.00/unit = \$600.00).

Attached is a projected budget for our Resident Council. We understand that an agreement must be signed between our council and your agency prior to the funding being released.

If our request is denied, or if a modification must be made, please notify us in writing of the reason at your earliest convenience.

Enclosed is the election certification, that the officers of this organization were duly elected at a democratic, community wide election in accordance with our bylaws and HUD regulations. We understand that if you review our most recent election and find that it does not comply with HUD's regulations, we will not be funded until we hold a democratic election in accordance with HUD's regulations. We understand that you will assist us in meeting HUD's requirements.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. We look forward to continuing our partnership with you and your staff.

Sincerely yours,

President, ABC Community RC

## Appendix Seven

### EFFECTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

Effective communication requires the ability to LISTEN to other people. This listening process focuses on the other person (the speaker) and puts the listener in an attentive role (paying attention to what the speaker is saying). For the listener, this process involves:

- A. Hearing accurately what the other is communicating.
- B. Understanding what the other is feeling.
- C. Accepting the other's feelings.

GOOD LISTENING SKILLS INVOLVE THREE PRIMARY AREAS. THE EFFECTIVE LISTENER MUST:

1. Set a climate of understanding and support.
  - pay careful attention to the speaker.
  - establish good eye contact with the speaker.
  - allow time for the speaker to talk; no interruption
  - use "door openers" - i.e., "Tell me about it..."
  - use "I hear you" responses such as: head nods, "uh-huh," "I see," "really?"
2. Avoid premature judgment
  - become aware of your "earlids" - don't block the person out because you've already made a judgment.
  - try to see the meaning in the speaker's message.
  - put yourself in the speaker's shoes; try to see it from the speaker's point of view.
3. Test for accurate comprehension of what was said.
  - restate the message given.
  - check all levels of feedback, including body language . (Source: American Red Cross.)

**SAMPLE FUNDING AGREEMENT BETWEEN RC AND HA**

This agreement, made on \_\_\_\_\_, is between the ABC Community Resident Council (RC) and the ABC Public Housing Authority (HA). This agreement is for funding from the HA to the RC, based on HUD regulations, Part 964.150.

HA has agreed to provide \$600 in operating funds to the RC, based on the HA's fiscal year January 1, 1995 to December 31, 1995. This agreement incorporates the projected budget submitted by RC on \_\_\_\_\_, and approved by HA on \_\_\_\_\_.

The RC agrees to account to the HA for the use of these funds and agrees to permit the HA, through its staff and/or auditor (and HUD if necessary) to inspect and audit the resident council's financial records related to this agreement. HA agrees that funds obtained through RC fundraising efforts or other sources, with the exception of HUD funds, are not subject to HA inspection or audit unless requested.

The RC agrees to maintain a sound financial management system to account for funds. The RC agrees that expenditures will not contravene provisions of law and will promote serviceability, efficiency, economy and stability in the operation of our development.

(NOTE: You may also want to make a statement that "HA agrees to provide accounting/bookkeeping training and technical assistance to RC to ensure financial accountability.)

_____	_____
RC President	Date
_____	_____
RC Treasurer	Date
_____	_____
HA Executive Director	Date

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