

Extensions



Manual

**Minnesota
Women
of Today**

Extensions Manual



Minnesota Women of Today Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The Minnesota Extension Manual is your guide to completing a successful extension. There is also a USWT Extension Manual, which can be found on the USWT website (www.uswt.org). Because the Minnesota and USWT extension programs differ, you will want to follow the Minnesota Extension Manual procedures. Both of these manuals are your “tools of the trade” and should be reviewed often during the entire extension process. It is our intent that the Minnesota and USWT Extension Directors work together in supporting and guiding the extension teams within our state. Please feel free to contact either of these extension directors with any questions you need answered.

What is an Extension?

An extension is the forming of a new chapter within the Minnesota Women of Today (MNWT). To complete an extension in Minnesota, the following requirements must be met:

1. Charter Fee (check current Bylaws for amount of fee) and Intent to Charter Form must be filed (see Book of Forms or sample in Appendix) with the MNWT Extension Director.
2. You must meet the current membership requirements of a chapter as set forth in the MNWT bylaws. Currently, a chapter must have at least seven (7) members under the age of 40.
3. Names of all members along with their address, phone, email and birthdate, must be included on an add/change form and sent to the MNWT Chapter Service Center.
4. Dues for all chapter members must be paid to the MNWT before the chapter can be recognized.

Why do an Extension?

1. It is fun!!!
 - You do an extension because it is fun to share with others what you value and enjoy.
2. Make the world a better place.
 - The lives of the women who join the new chapter will be enriched just as your life has been enriched. Their community will benefit as well from their service to local needs.
3. The process will help you.
 - You will wear many hats in this process as you recruit and orient new members, contact media, lead meetings, arrange for speakers, help things run smoothly, train leaders, and help plan the future for a new chapter.
4. Assure the future of our organization.
 - The state organization's strength comes from strong chapters with enthusiastic members. Consequently, we need to build our chapter base, both by helping existing chapters grow strong and by establishing new, healthy chapters.

Who can do an Extension?

There are a variety of ways in which an extension can be completed.

1. Your chapter may choose to extend to a nearby community.
2. Your district may choose to work together to extend a community in close proximity to the chapters within your district.
3. You may join an extension team. This generally works in a couple of different ways.
 - You may volunteer or be asked to work on an extension as a recruiter or trainer.
 - With the extension team, the charter is filed by the extension team and the charter fee is funded by the Extension Fund.

- The extension director or extension team chair will contact you to assist in the completion of an extension.
- Often a chapter or district will take over the 2-year follow-up once the extension is complete. It is critical that the transition between the extension team and the chapter/district is clear for both parties, as adequate follow-up is critical for the new chapter.

Where can you do an Extension?

1. Choose a community in close proximity to your chapter and/or district.
 - A former chapter member may have moved to a neighboring community.
 - Members of your chapter may have friends, relatives or acquaintances in a nearby community.
 - A neighboring community may not have a service organization available.
2. Your extension director may have a target community in your area.
 - A former MNWT member may have moved to a new community and will need assistance forming a new chapter.
 - Women in a community may have contacted the organization and are interested in starting a chapter.
 - There may be an opportunity to expand into a new area of the state.
 - The names of women interested in Women of Today may have already been gathered from an expo.

Part 1

Pre-Extension: Getting Started

1. Choose a Community

The first thing you will want to do is choose a community into which to extend.

- What is the size of the community you will be working with? The size of a community may help you in making your extension plan.
- Is this community paired in some other way with a neighboring town or neighborhood? Look at the school systems to help you decide which communities to include in your extension work.
- The reverse is true as well. Choose a specific part of a larger community on which to concentrate. Do you want to extend the entire city of Minneapolis or just a certain neighborhood?
- What other community groups are active in the community? What are their target members? Are they similar to Women of Today?

2. Make a Plan

Part of any project involves making a plan.

- You will need to make a plan for
 - finding meeting places (see following for ideas)
 - coordinating your public relations (PR) (see following for ideas)
 - planning and holding a variety of membership events (for ideas check the membership manual, MNWT or USWT websites, membership vice president or extension director)
 - include a mix of community service, growth, and social events
 - identify and find potential members (see following for ideas)
 - create a prospective list
 - contact potential members by phone or email
- Sample timelines are included in the Appendix.
- Keep in mind this is only a guide and you will need to adapt the items and decide how they more specifically relate to your chapter's situation.

a. Finding Meeting Locations

Sometimes finding a place to hold an event can be difficult. Following are some suggestions in finding a meeting location.

- Public meeting rooms: Chamber of Commerce, Public Library, City Hall, etc.
- Coffee Shop or Restaurant: Some coffee shops and/or restaurants have meeting rooms, which you can use free of charge. Being free of charge may mean you will need to meet around a meal time, (everyone can buy their own) or you may want to order beverages (either everyone buys their own, or maybe you will have a budget to buy a few pitchers of soda or iced tea).
- Religious buildings such as churches: Some religious buildings have extra meetings spaces that you may be able to use at a low cost or free of charge.
- Business Meeting Rooms: As members of the community become interested in Women of Today, they may work for a business that has meeting space you can use. You may also know someone in the community who is willing to allow WT the use of their meeting facilities.

What to do if you can't find a meeting place? Be patient, it is probably only a temporary set-back. Usually there are places available, just keep looking.

- Ask the Chamber of Commerce in the community for suggestions.
- Ask the people that are coming to your events (they probably will have ideas).
- Members may be willing to hold meetings or events in their home.

b. Public Relations

Public Relations (PR) is a vital part of the whole extension process. From beginning to completion, good PR can be the difference between a pre-extension process that lasts 6 months or less and one that lasts 2 years. The PR Manual, the PR SPM, and your extension director will be your ultimate PR resources for you. They will have samples of brochures, press releases and ideas for you to determine the best course to advertise a new chapter in the extension community.

What type of PR should you utilize?

- *Press releases*
Press Releases in various media can be a good way to let the community know that you are looking for members to start a new chapter. Newspapers, cable TV, radio and websites (a local community message board) may all be good places to include this information. Also, check for local magazines, but remember magazines have longer lead times to get articles published.
- *Flyers*
Flyers can be used either door-to-door, on bulletin boards, at businesses, daycares...pretty much anywhere you have permission to place the flyers. The flyers should be detailed enough to offer the 'who, what, why, when and where' to your event as well as a contact person. Keep the flyer simple enough for people to read quickly and want to be a part of your event.
- *Brochure*
A brochure can be used with general information about the Minnesota Women of Today, especially in the pre-extension and early extension stages. As the new chapter becomes more well-known or has completed a few projects and/or donations, you can personalize a brochure. Potential members will want to find out a little more about the Women of Today, so give them just enough to ask questions, look at the website and remember the important opportunities Women of Today has to offer. Look on the resources page of mnwt.org for a brochure template.
- *Extension Brochure*
An extension brochure is available from the extension director. It explains a little about the extensions process and working with a team to get the new chapter started. The brochure may also excite prospective members about starting their own new chapter by bringing in their new ideas and energy.
- *Word-of Mouth*
A personal recommendation from potential members in the community, from the head of the Chamber of Commerce, from former WT members living in the community or from others who know the benefits Women of Today has to offer a community will probably be your best PR. Make a good impression. Be prepared with your events. Be professional. Smile!!
- *Informational Letter*

A letter can also be sent to the prospective members and some of the businesses in your target community. Your extensions director has a sample letter and will send it to you upon request. This letter can be used as a first contact with potential members.

- *Facebook*

A chapter Facebook page is a great PR tool. You can promote your events, provide status updates, and connect with local women and organizations. Check mnwt.org for help on setting up a Facebook page and other ideas.

- *Meetup*

Meetup is also a great PR tool. When individuals sign up for free, they list their interest areas. You must pay a fee to sign up for a group, however you can easily target individuals who live in your area and have an interest in community service.

c. **Membership Events and Contacting Prospective Members**

Personal contact whether by phone, email or in person, makes a difference throughout the extension process.

- *Phone Etiquette*

A phone call may be your first contact with a potential new member. Be prepared.

- Introduce yourself and briefly explain why you are calling.
- Ask if this is a convenient time to talk. If so, proceed. If not, ask when would be a more convenient time to call back.
- Briefly explain the WT organization.
- Have a few upcoming events and dates to tell potential members.
- Ask if the potential member has any questions.
- Provide them with the Minnesota Women of Today website and encourage them to explore more about the Women of Today. (www.mnwt.org)
- You will also need to think about:
 - What type of a message you will leave should you get an answering machine?
 - How will you respond if a child or spouse answers and you must leave a message?

- *Email Etiquette*

Email can be a quick, convenient way to send messages and give people information. However, with an extension, as in other areas of communication, email can be overused and misused during the extension process. Email should not be the only form of communication with your prospective community or potential members. Phone calls, mailed invitations and in-person conversations are important to the process as well. You will want to consider setting up an e-mail address for your chapter with a free service such as Gmail. This will make the organization look more official and can be shared among people working on the extension. You can use this e-mail to setup a Facebook account as well.

When to use email?

- Making initial contact with a Chamber of Commerce or other appropriate person in the community to explore the community, asking some basic questions (Call for permission to distribute flyers or other information and/or make an appointment to meet.)

- Contacting prospective names from a list obtained from an expo or other prospective lists, where the interested party has agreed to receive or be contacted by email.
- After permission has been granted by a prospective member or contact as an appropriate way to communicate.
- Email may be used throughout the extension process. However, you will want to confirm that the involved parties are comfortable receiving information in this manner. One way to do this is to request that they reply to the e-mail with a request to be removed from your list. Make sure you follow up on any request to be removed from future communication.

Email Courtesy

- When sending an email, remember the person receiving the email cannot hear or see you. Be careful with spelling, tone, capital letters, etc. Re-read your e-mail before sending to ensure it includes all necessary information. You may also want to have another person proof read your e-mail to ensure that the information is all clearly stated.
- Many people have more than one email. Obtain permission before sending email to the recipient at work. Ask to make sure you are sending to a current or a correct email account.
- Do not assume that your email is being ignored. You may need to use another form of communication. An unanswered email can mean one of several things:
 - It was never received.
 - The recipient may not be able to answer right away.
 - They may have forgotten.
 - They do not understand that a response is necessary.
 - They do not check email regularly.
- Excessive email correspondence around any one topic should initiate direct verbal communication to add clarity to the discussion and accelerate a more effective resolution or direction. This may reduce frustration on both ends if parties involved are struggling with the email discussion.

3. File an ‘Intent to Extend’

The next part of the extension process is to file an ‘Intent to Extend’.

- The ‘Intent to Extend’ form can be found in the Book of Forms and a sample in the Appendix.
- This form should be filled out, signed by the appropriate parties, and sent to the extension director as soon as possible.

Success System Note

Part of filing an ‘Intent to Extend’, extending a chapter, and supporting them in the two-year follow-up process is the effect it has for a chapter for the Success System.

- Success System points are awarded for each of these items:
 - Filing an Intent to Extend
 - Completing an Extension
 - Following up with the extended chapter at 6/12/18 and 24 months
- However, (and this is VERY important), you must take an active role in updating and reporting to the extension director on your progress.

- Success points do not automatically appear for you, they are verified by the extensions director. See the extension report form in the Appendix.
- Check current Success guidelines for adequate verification procedures.

4. Seek Funding

During the extension process, you will need funds to help aid the start of the new chapter. Depending upon who files the 'Intent to Extend' (chapter, district or team), your plan for gaining funds may differ.

- *Ask your chapter.*

Whether or not you are involved in a chapter extension, you can ask your chapter for funds. They may also be willing to donate items like copies or refreshments for a meeting.

- *Ask your district.*

Whether you are participating in a chapter or district extension, the district will benefit. Your district may have specific policies regarding extensions and you may be able to receive funding. As with your chapter, you may be able to ask for funding of certain items like copies, postage or refreshments.

- *Other sources.*

Grants are available throughout the extension process. (See funding applications in the Appendix for more information on applying for grants and other funding.) However, both USWT and MNWT grants have requirements to receive funding and often require you to provide receipts for expenses. Keep track of expense receipts for this purpose. Work with your extension director to answer all your funding questions and to find out about new grants or financial opportunities that may be available for starting an extension.

Be Creative

If funding is an issue, be creative with the events that you hold. Ask a local organization to sponsor a volunteer activity that would benefit them, meet in free spaces, ask for donations from local businesses, etc.

Part 2

Completing the Extension

The plan is in place. You researched funding, a prospective list is in the works, and you are working with the local chamber for meeting locations and PR opportunities. Now what?

1. Requirements for a Chapter

As stated earlier, in order for a new chapter to be formed and recognized by the MNWT, you need to meet a list of requirements.

- a. Charter Fee (check current Bylaws for amount of fee) and 'Intent to Charter' form must be filed with the MNWT Extension Director.
- b. You must meet the current chapter membership requirements as set forth in the MNWT bylaws. Currently, a chapter must have at least seven (7) members under the age of 40.
- c. Names of all members along with their address, phone, email and birthdate must be included on an add/change form and sent to the MNWT Chapter Service Center.
- d. Dues for all chapter members must be paid to the MNWT before the chapter will be recognized.

Once these requirements are met, you will officially have a NEW CHAPTER!!!!

2. Follow the Plan

In the "Getting Started" section, you and your extension committee made a plan. You planned events, made meeting arrangements, researched funding, created newspaper articles, etc.

- Follow the plan.
- You will want to review your plan with your extension committee, team and/or co-chair and update the plan as necessary.
- Talk with your extension director. She can help determine if any additions or changes should be considered from the original plan.

3. Create a Timeline

A timeline will help you determine what you need to plan, when to plan it and who will be responsible for what tasks. A timeline is a suggestion of possible activities and events aimed at completing your extension in a timely, realistic manner. A timeline is only a guide and should be adjusted as needed. (See a sample timeline in the Appendix.)

- How many membership events will be held during the first, second and/or third months?
- What is your timeline for completion?
- Who in your chapter can help with each event?
- Do you have a wide variety of informational, social and community service events planned?
- Are your events scheduled on a variety of days and times? Evenings, weekends, or daytime events may all work for different people.

4. Find More Members

The list below provides ideas for where to search for those potential members. You never know when you make that one phone call or find the right contact to find the right mix of members for the new chapter.

- Put articles in the newspaper, company newsletters, news shoppers, and any other resource you can find.

- Create flyers to reproduce and place at the chamber of commerce, local grocery stores, businesses and other areas that have women employees.
- Ask your chapter and district members for people they know in your extension community.
- Ask members that are already committed to the new extension. They already have an interest in the Women of Today organization and may be your best resource in bringing others to events.
- Brainstorm contact names with prospective members at your extension events. Before leaving each extension activity or event, ask for assistance in compiling a list of names and phone numbers for other potential members.
- Use community resources: Chamber of Commerce, local schools, ECFE programs, Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts, etc. Communities may hold local expos, or have booth space available during annual community-sponsored celebrations or events. Can you find a contact to help spread information about a potential Women of Today chapter in their community?

5. Keep your Motivation

- a. The best way to keep you and others motivated is to have the right attitude.**
 - Stay positive no matter how unsure you may feel.
 - Ask other chapter, district and/or state contacts to help.
 - Spread the responsibility to others: Delegate
 - You should expect to attend the extension events; ask others to assist in making phone calls, writing articles, planning events and preparing treats for these events.

- b. Stay informed and on top of your job as extension chair.**
 - Communicate with the extension director. Use the reporting form provided and call or email for topics which need attention between reporting intervals. (See Appendix for sample reporting form.)
 - Discuss with the extension director new ideas and strategies to use and especially if things become stagnant.
 - The extension director will be a source of ideas, motivation, encouragement; in short, your own personal cheerleader. She wants to see you succeed.

- c. Review the plan you developed for completing the new extension.**

A review of your initial extension plan is important to seeing the extension completed. A well-implemented plan equals a successful new chapter for a new community.

 - Have you deviated from the plan?
 - Do you need to make changes?
 - Are there things you have forgotten to do?
 - Are you holding a variety of events on different days of the week?
 - Are you personally inviting members to join? Providing them a membership form may be all they need to go from prospective to member.

EXTENSION MEETING CHECKLIST

- Key to facility (if needed)
- Name tags (you should all wear the same kind)
- Marker for name tags
- Extra paper needed for last minute signs and to write notes
- Tape to post signs to direct people to your meeting room
- Extra paper and pens for prospective members
- Agendas
- Small calendars for prospectives (check for free ones at various places)
- Add/Change Form so you can record your new members' information
- Invitations for next meeting(s) - ready to hand out to prospectives to take home
- Other handouts (depending on the event theme)
 - Informational page about Women of Today
 - Brochures
 - Worksheets for enrichment exercises, if needed
 - New Member Information Sheets (See Appendix for sample)
- List of prospectives - you may get new names tonight!
- Sign in sheet – a simple sheet with name, address, phone, and e-mail will help you easily gather names.
- Treats - keep it simple and not messy to eat
 - Cups, napkins, plates
 - Tray for treats
 - Forks and spoons, knife to cut or serve it
- Beverage
 - Pop needs ice - ice needs cooler
 - Coffee pot, cord, ground coffee or pre-made coffee in airport
- CD player for soft background music if desired
- Camera (don't forget to take pictures at each event!)

Resources

There are many manuals and handbooks available through our organization to use when working with an extension. (Most MNWT manuals are available at the state store. If you need assistance in locating a manual, ask your extension director for assistance.) The following are just a few that may be helpful:

- **State Plan of Action:** This handbook contains state Bylaws and Policies, Executive Council and chapter contact information, membership ceremonies, the history of the Women of Today and more.
- **Membership Manual:** This is loaded with recruitment ideas, orientations and other membership aspects. It will be helpful to use when starting your extension and during the follow-up work with the new chapter.
- **Skits and Stuff:** There are two Skits and Stuff Manuals filled with social activities and recruitment ideas.
- **Book of Forms:** This resource contains forms for certifications, awards and chapter management. Forms are to be copied for use with the original replaced in the manual. It is also available on a CD purchased through the state store.
- **Officer Manuals:** Include job descriptions and duties for all of the local officer positions.
- **Public Relations Resource Book:** Includes guidelines, press releases and information on public relations.
- **Miles to New Beginnings Packet:** These information packets are available to chapters or individuals to distribute flyers and contact information to communities with the intent of creating interest for new chapters. Check with your extension director for more information.
- **Minnesota Women of Today Website:** The MNWT website (www.mnwt.org) contains the most up-to-date Chapter Information Packets (CIPs), event information and resources for our chapters. A special membership tool section can be accessed through the Membership Vice President's web page.
- **Public Relations information:** Ideas for PR for the new extension can be found in a variety of locations. Your extension director has information about PR and may be your best resource in finding the right information for you. The website contains ideas for letters and press releases. Your Public Relations SPM has examples of many types of articles, letters and other PR helpful to a new chapter. (See press release examples in the Appendix.)
- **Other Manuals:** More manuals are available on specific programming areas. The newly extended chapter will receive copies of all manuals. Please use these manuals when training the new board and educate the chapter how to use them. For a complete manual listing, see the State Plan of Action.
- **USWT Manuals:** The USWT also provides the USWT Extension Manual, Media Kit, and a Chapter Guide Manual.
- **Other People:** Other WT members can be asked to provide training or lead enrichment activities. Other community members may help by providing ideas, presentations, or PR. Other non-profits may be willing to partner with your new chapter for service events or presentations.

Answers to Difficult Questions & Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Women of Today?

A: Women of Today is a non-profit, community service organization that allows you to use your skills to service the needs of the community. Also review the Key Messaging handout in the appendix.

Q: In what ways can I improve my community?

A: Your chapter serves the community in many ways (explain some of your service projects). We get a lot of ideas from our state organization and other chapters in our district.

Q: Why do you need to have a separate organization? There are enough organizations in this town already.

A: Women of Today can complement those other organizations. We can jointly work on projects and fund raising. At the same time, we are providing opportunities for young women to support and encourage each others' development as leaders.

Q: Why is there a seven (7) under 40 membership requirement for each chapter?

A: This bylaw, which has been endorsed by the general membership of the Minnesota Women of Today, helps ensure that Minnesota Women of Today chapters actively recruit members. While the idea is to recruit members of all ages, we must recruit young members on a regular basis for our organization to continue to exist. There is evidence of other organizations dying out due to the simple fact that as we age, we tend to gravitate to those of our same age. There is also the trend that without a recruitment incentive, it is too easy to just be comfortable with the existing group, and not be as willing to seek out new members. With this bylaw requirement to bring in younger members, we strive to ensure that a chapter constantly has a wide variety of ages within its membership, thus ensuring that new members of all ages will be recruited as new members.

The bylaw is a chapter requirement only; it has nothing to do with the individual member. Minnesota Women of Today fully promotes members of all ages to hold any position, run any project and to fully participate in the entire organization.

Note that some communities, especially those that used to have WT chapters, may remember when the organization only allowed women up to a certain age to be members. Ensure all your materials clearly state that membership is open to anyone over 18.

Q: What is the time commitment?

A: On average, our members invest approximately six hours a month through meeting attendance, project participation and social opportunities. Stress to prospective that all events are optional. WT fits into your life, not the other way around.

Q: What benefits/rewards do I get from being a member?

A: There are opportunities to work on projects that make your community a better place to live. There are also opportunities to work with other women for one common good. Other rewards include: lifelong friendships, networking opportunities, personal growth, and a sense of accomplishment when you serve the community that you live in. The many benefits of being involved in the Women of Today are up to you.

Q: How large is the Women of Today organization?

A: Start with your local chapter membership. Mention that Women of Today is affiliated with a state and national organization. You may want to explain the Women of Today structure: local chapter, district, state, and national. Be cautious when explaining these- you don't want to overwhelm them.

Q: Why should I pay dues to be a volunteer?

A: Like any organization, we rely on dues to cover operational expenses. All members have a voice in how expenditures are budgeted and used.

Q: What if I don't have the money right now?

A: We cannot cash your check until we have all seven (7) members under the age of 40. The cost of joining is comparable to a magazine subscription or one self-help class.

Q: How come it costs so much money to join?

A: If you compare us to other service organizations, we have the best value. Dues provide training materials, programming ideas, project materials, educational material, public relations information and much more.

Q: How can I find time? I'm a very busy person.

A: We are all given the same amount of time. What we find is that people trade time for things that are valuable to them. Our creed states, "may we leave the world a better place," we believe the Women of Today opportunity offers the possibility to make a difference.

Q: How could I possibly fit this in? I'm involved in too many things as it is.

A: Then you are already an active volunteer. One important aspect of Women of Today is that families can volunteer together. Besides offering families time to be together, it also offers a great teaching opportunity for children. They can learn to serve other people and make a difference in their community.

What other groups are you involved with?

- *Family Related:* Each chapter's activities vary depending upon their members. Several chapters hold family picnics, events during Kids' Week and Family Weeks, and also encourage their families to join them while they are volunteering.
- *Personal Activities:* Women of Today offers you a unique place to spend time just for yourself with other women who care about each other and their communities. Social events are held, such as pamper yourself nights, movies night (name other socials your chapter holds) where we laugh, relax and have fun together. Women of Today also provides unique programming and leadership training opportunities. We are also a special group of women dedicated to making our community a better place to live.
- *Work Related:* Many individuals have joined Women of Today because it offers the chance to network with a large and diverse group of people. There are many who have found variety within the Women of Today in friendships and contact beyond work or office friendships.

Q: Why should we raise money for people in other communities?

A: We help people all around us because we believe in a global community. Also, raising money for organizations such as the March of Dimes may one day benefit our neighbor or even our own family. When you help raise money, you help decide where it is distributed.

Part 3

The New Chapter

Congratulations! You have extended a new chapter to the Minnesota Women of Today. This is an exciting time for everyone. Energy will be running high. Now is the time to take advantage of the enthusiasm and complete important tasks and plans. What follows includes plans for the first 6 weeks of the newly formed chapter.

The USWT and the Minnesota Women of Today's goal, along with your goal for the newly extended chapter, is that they will be independent and healthy at the end of two years. That means:

1. Good Retention
2. Team Spirit
3. Membership of at least 15-20 and still growing
4. Well rounded in projects and programming

Please remember we cannot tell you exactly what to do and how to work with the new chapter. Your own chapter's experience may not apply either. This chapter will be as different as yours is from other chapters in the district and state. Each chapter is unique. We trust you will use good judgment and adjust the ideas you will read about in the manuals to fit the members in the new chapter.

1. **Forms and Legalities**

The first thing you will want to do is make sure all proper forms and fees have been submitted and paid. It is important to determine the chapter's legal name prior to submitting any forms to avoid any need to change the name later. (Will the chapter be named for one community such as Brainerd Women of Today or the Brainerd Lakes Area Women of Today to encompass a larger area.) The extension chair, extension director, or CSC can assist with completing these forms. See below for additional details on the necessary forms.

- **Mandatory Forms:**
 - Intent to Charter Form (send to Extensions Director)
 - Complete Add/Change Form with complete member information (send to CSC)
 - Complete a Chapter Officer Sheet (send to CSC – can use book of forms online)
 - Articles of Incorporation (see below)
 - Tax ID# (both federal and state) (see below)
 - Pay for Liability Insurance (chapter will receive bill from CSC or treasurer)
 - Fill out a Progress Report Form (sent monthly to Extensions Director)
- **Funding Applications (work with the Extensions Director on these forms)**
 - MNWT Foundation Grant for Extending Chapter
 - MNWT Foundation Grant for the Newly Extended Chapter
 - MNWT Foundation Loan for the Newly Extended Chapter
 - USWT Grant

a. Intent to Charter

The 'Intent to Charter' form can be found in the Appendix. This form will need to be completed, signed and sent to the extension director as quickly as possible.

b. Federal and Minnesota Legal Forms

A new chapter has several legal forms which need to be filed with the State of Minnesota or with the IRS. Because the process can be somewhat intimidating, it is important that you speak directly with your extension director for a complete list of forms. She will also assist you in completing the correct forms and guide you to the correct websites and phone numbers.

An important piece of information needed for filing legal papers is to determine if a chapter previously existed in the newly extended community. If a chapter previously existed, the process of filing paperwork is different and the expense may be reduced.

Before you fill out any legal paperwork, you will need a PO Box. This can be done at your local post office. You may need to have multiple forms of identification when you order your PO Box.

Next you will need an EIN from the IRS. This can be done online – go to IRS.gov and search for EIN. On the form, choose Community or Volunteer Group (you may need to click on see additional types from the first selection screen). You will enter the name, SSN, and home address of the “responsible party”. Then check that you want mail sent to a different address to enter your chapter PO Box address. Answer the remaining forms and then you can get a PDF with the EIN number on it. Save this for your chapter records.

Articles of Incorporation are required from the office of the MN Secretary of State. If a chapter existed in this community in the past, then you can re-instate the old articles. This will be cheaper than filing new papers. You will need to include a contact name and physical address (not a PO Box) as well as the old and new legal names of the organization. The form can be filed in person in St. Paul or by mail.

With the EIN and Articles of Incorporation, you can now open a bank account. Note that you will need the social security number and identification for any signers on the account. Check around for banks with low or no monthly fee and with a low minimum balance.

You will also need a MN Tax ID number prior to filing taxes. Search for business registration on the MN Department of Revenue website. The number will be e-mailed to you.

The cost in filing paperwork varies. For the most accurate costs, please contact your extension director.

c. Liability Insurance

The Minnesota Women of Today organization carries a liability insurance policy that covers all chapters throughout the state. The policy covers such things as medical expenses for food poisoning or someone's sprained ankle at a chapter dance.

Coverage is not optional and payment of premiums is mandatory. Premium amounts vary from year to year. (Contact your extension director or executive director for current payment rates.) A bill will be sent shortly after your chapter has chartered and payment is due within 90 days after forming the chapter. An Insurance Policy payment will need to be made again each January.

Special (Dram Shop) insurance is required for selling alcoholic beverages. Serving such beverages at a chapter event, such as a wine and cheese tasting social, is covered under a concept called host liquor liability. (For more information contact the Chapter Service Center.)

d. Grants and Loans

The Minnesota Women of Today Foundation and the USWT offer opportunities for you to apply for funding for both the newly extended chapter and the extending chapter or team. All the necessary forms are included in the Appendix.

It is important that you save receipts that you have accumulated in the pre-charter process. It is also important that the new chapter begin a fundraising or Ways and Means project so they can apply for matching funds through the MNWT Foundation.

2. Chartering Celebration

The completion of a new chapter is a HUGE accomplishment. It has been fun, exciting, thrilling, yet hard work on everyone's part too. There are two parts to consider as part of the chartering celebration.

a. Chapter Celebration

- The chapter celebration can be held any time after the new chapter is officially formed (charter filed, fees paid, members' information and dues sent in, etc.), but is most ideal following chapter elections.
- This is a celebration for your chapter, district and the newly extended chapter.
- You may want to have a banquet, a picnic or a reception to celebrate.
- However you choose to celebrate is up to you, but DO celebrate.
- Be sure to invite
 - new chapter members
 - members of your extension committee
 - your district director
 - the extension director
 - the state president (immediate past president too if your extension spans more than one WT year)
- Consider including
 - members of your chapter
 - chapters involved in completing the extension
 - other chapters in your district
- You may also consider inviting
 - state staff
 - executive council members
- What happens at the celebration?

- Mixer activity- make it lots of fun!
- A few words from the new chapter president.
- Installation of the new officers by state president or district director.
- A few words from the state president and perhaps other Executive Council members.
- Gifts given to the new chapter from the extending chapter and other chapters in the district.

b. State Convention Celebration

- The MNWT are proud of your accomplishments and we celebrate the beginning of a new chapter through a chartering ceremony at a state convention.
- The chartering ceremony ideally will take place at one of the two conventions immediately following the completion of the extension.
- It is important that you discuss the timing of a chartering ceremony with your extension director. She will need to coordinate this event with other guests as well as the Chapter Service Center to ensure adequate time in the convention schedule.
- Who should attend?
 - Members of the new chapter, especially the new president
 - Members of the extending chapter or team, especially the chair and/or co-chair(s)
- What happens at the convention?
 - A ceremony will take place during the luncheon or banquet
 - Collect photos for a visual presentation during that time. A prearranged deadline should be made with the extension director, so that photos are sent to the proper individuals in a timely manner.
 - You may choose to have a reception for the new chapter where others can stop in and offer congratulations

3. Create a 6-Week Plan

When creating your new chapter plan, there are several topics you should include which will help decide upon a workable chapter plan.

a. *Projects*

This is a good time to survey the new chapter members to decide what types of projects interest them in all categories; community service, fundraising and social. (See Appendix for a project interest survey, which serves as a good reference for the new chapter.)

b. *Membership*

Membership should remain an integral part of the overall chapter plan in the next two years. Yet in this 6 week period, concentrate on planning future membership events, not only with the intent of new membership growth, but also in activating and engaging the new chapter members you already have. Remember that projects and meetings can be membership events too.

c. *Meeting Details*

Discuss meeting dates and times, locations and other formalities of the chapter meeting. Eventually, the new chapter will be holding regular board meetings too, so a board meeting will probably not fit into the first six weeks, but should be planned after officer elections.

d. *Officer Elections*

Elections may be planned during this time. Discuss the new chapter officer and local program manager positions that the new chapter will need to and/or attempt to fill. Many

existing chapters nominate a board one month and do elections the next month, this may not be necessary when forming a new chapter's board. (See sections on Programming for the New Chapter and Officers and Elections.)

e. *Training*

Training or orientating the new officers of an organization is vital to their success and comfort level. Following the election of officers at the second meeting, they need to be properly trained. Other training and orientations should be offered as the chapter grows. You might survey the members to see which parts of the organization most interest them. The results can help you plan beyond the first 6 weeks.

4. Additional Extension Chair Responsibilities

In addition to the previously mentioned responsibilities, your job as extension chair, committee or team includes other details. As the extension chair, you will be responsible to:

- lead the first two chapter meetings
- fill out the initial Growth Plan
- run the STEP program
- put out the first two newsletters
 - * The newsletter can be a simple one page information sheet.
 - * Be careful not to make them so good that the new members will be too intimidated to do their own!
 - * If there is a new member who wants to work on any of these areas, of course include her.

a. **First Chapter Meeting**

Those members who have come to several extension meetings will have a basic understanding of programming and the MNWT structure. Tonight will be a more formal orientation as well as the time for the new chapter to pick a few areas on which to focus. Both of these goals should be accomplished in a fun atmosphere. Take the time to make sure everyone is delighted that she decided to join.

- Pick a theme, plan a teambuilding activity or plan a fun activity for the meeting.
- Choose an orientation topic for the meeting. It need not be lengthy, but more importantly informative. (In fact a quick 5-10 minute orientation or training is probably all that's necessary. See Training a New Chapter section.)
- Discuss the importance of programming areas that are necessary: Public Relations, Newsletter, Ways & Means.
- Choose optional programming areas to support. It might be best to choose one internal and one external area.
- Discuss chapter officers and Local Program Managers.
- Take pictures. This is important. It may seem insignificant at the moment, but you will be happy to have many photos to remember the early days. (Plus, as an added bonus, you will have plenty of pictures to use for PR opportunities.)
- Decide and begin working on a Ways & Means project. There are many costs to starting a new chapter. Despite the fact there is grant money and other funding available, some of the grants will allow funds only as a matching grant.
- Introduce generic Bylaws and Policies that should be approved at the second meeting. You can start with the by-laws of an existing chapter.
- Follow Parliamentary Procedure.

b. **Officers and Elections**

The chapter will NEED to have a president, secretary and treasurer. The election will probably be held at the second membership meeting to give the members a chance to get to know each other better.

Officer Positions

- *President*
The president will lead your chapter meetings and help you guide the newly extended chapter to success. She will eventually be responsible for setting the agenda, and at that time, do so with your help. She supervises the other officer positions and attends as many district and state functions as she is able.
- *Secretary*
The secretary keeps the official record of your chapter meetings. She may produce your chapter newsletter too.
- *Treasurer*
The treasurer keeps track of the chapter finances, manages the checkbook and reports the financial status of the chapter at each meeting. At the beginning, the Treasurer will help the chapter obtain a checking account.

Other Important Officer Positions

- *State Delegate*

State delegate is an important position with tremendous opportunities for learning about our whole organization. While the meeting schedule may look intimidating, the State Delegate need not attend every meeting. The district director can provide the information her chapter needs. If your extension team or their chapter president acts as state delegate, the other members may feel these activities are separate from their involvement in the chapter.

- *Vice Presidents*

Vice Presidents, set up with specific responsibilities, can help prevent presidential burnout. Here are a few possible structures.

1. *One Programming Vice President and a Membership Vice President*

- Programming Vice President
Supervises all local program managers
- Membership Vice President
Serves as or supervises the social coordinator as well as any extras such as secret pals or sunshine that the chapter may choose to include.

Or you may choose

2. *Two Programming Vice Presidents and a Membership Vice President*

- Membership Vice President
Supervises social coordinator and STEP, as well as any extras, such as secret pals or sunshine, the chapter may choose to include.
- Programming Vice President (two)
One internal PVP and one external PVP that supervise their respective remaining programming areas

Sometimes we hear the worry: "But we will all be on the Board!" Not for long -- remember the chapter should be growing. More positions mean that more members will have an important reason for being active. They will know they are needed.

- c. **Programming for the New Chapter**

Programming is an important part of the MNWT. A new chapter should be introduced and guided to use programming choices from the beginning. While the following recommendations for programming may not fit every chapter, it is highly recommended that you try them and/or discuss deviations with your extension director. The "required" programming areas are suggested because they are extremely important to a new chapter's success.

At first, the extension chairs, team or committee, may continue to help with programming, but it is a good idea to allow the members to assist with the process and teach them about PR, Ways and Means, Newslet, etc.

"Required" Programming Areas

1. *Public Relations*

A strong start requires that the community becomes aware of the group very quickly. This helps the new members feel "real", and it helps smooth their way when they begin to run projects. Making connections with news publications, making a chapter website, wearing chapter shirts and nametags are all a part of good initial PR. You will also want to continue the use of Facebook and/or Meetup after the chapter has been formed.

2. *Newsletter (Newslet)*

Communication within the group is very important and written communication will keep all the new information clear. A newsletter can be one page. It is helpful if it contains meeting minutes, announcements, important upcoming dates, reports and whatever members feel they want to share. (You may have the option to email newsletters to chapter members. This could be an excellent way to save money. However, do not assume this is what all members want and allow members a choice on how they would like to receive their newsletter. Also make sure that emailed newsletters are not the only forms of communication.)

3. *Ways and Means*

There are many expenses for a new chapter. The new chapter must focus energy on raising money for operating funds.

4. *Community Connections*

(Formerly reported through the Youth & Community Involvement Area) Most members join, at least in part, to contribute something to their local community. This programming area is an excellent introduction to programming and a good way to begin making a difference in their own community.

d. **Membership**

While membership is not part of MNWT programming, it may initially be helpful to use membership in a programming-like way. The USWT STEP certification area falls under the membership area and should be used to guide members of the extended chapter to become activated.

1. *STEP*

This program is especially useful in a new chapter to activate members and promote well-rounded participation. Continue to use this program at least throughout the first two years and continually as a new member activation tool.

2. *Social Coordinator*

While not a real programming area, at the beginning you may want to have chapter 'fun' planned by a coordinator or committee within the chapter. Someone should make sure the group is having fun. If the group isn't ready for a separate event, this can be combined with a general membership meeting. This is also a good opportunity to invite prospective members and show the new chapter how to greet, talk and ask guests to join our organization.

3. *Sunshine Club*

Many chapters find a Sunshine Club a great addition to their chapter. A Sunshine Club coordinator would be responsible for mailing cards of congratulations, sympathy, happy birthday, or simply, "We're thinking of you."

e. **More Programming?**

This may be a difficult question to answer for any chapter. You and your extension team will need to make a judgment call to determine if the new chapter is ready for more programming. If the chapter is very enthused about additional programming, then it is suggested that they choose no more than two additional areas; one internal and one external.

5. Second Chapter Meeting

Depending on when the first chapter meeting was held, you may or may not be holding the second chapter meeting within the first 6 weeks. The second meeting will differ from the first in a few ways. As extension chair, you will still want to ensure all of the same responsibilities are handled by the extending chapter, district or team, such as, leading the meeting, preparing an agenda, offering an orientation, etc. The newly extended chapter will still need your guidance on these things. (Review list from First Chapter Meeting section.)

However, there are some additional housekeeping items you will want to ensure take place during this meeting too.

- *Elections*: This is a good time to elect the chapter officers. As stated earlier, the new chapter will need to have a president, secretary and treasurer. The number of vice presidents, and if they choose--a state delegate, will need to be decided at this time as well. (Send a chapter officer sheet to the CSC.)
- *Bylaws and Policies*: The extended chapter will need to adopt a generic set of bylaws and policies at this meeting. In the next 6-9 months, the chapter will review the bylaws and policies and personalize them to fit their chapter. (See Appendix for sample.)
- *Board Meetings*: After elections have been completed, a board meeting should be held. Another meeting may be a tough sell for the new chapter, but explain that board meetings help the general meeting run more smoothly and will help the chapter to bond properly. Ideally the board meeting should be set for a separate night from the general meeting. However, to start, and especially if the board meeting is a hard sell, they could hold a board meeting one-half to one hour before the general meeting.
- *Chapter Dues Discussion*: Because funding is an issue at the beginning of a new chapter, the new chapter may decide to charge chapter dues. (Chapter dues are fees charged to each member to help cover operating expenses. This is NOT a mandatory fee.) The amount ranges, but you could charge to cover the cost of member insurance or to cover a set cost for postage. If chapter dues will be charged, even if this is only done initially, the checks should be made out to the chapter and given to the new treasurer.
- *Fundraising/Ways and Means*: If fundraising has not already been discussed with some plans in place, you will want to find a way for the chapter to make money to cover costs. This may be a bake sale, chapter lucky buck, food stand, magazine sales, participation in state Ways & Means promotional, etc. See additional ideas at www.mnwt.org.
- *Project Status Reports*: The chapter may already be in the planning phases of some projects. Make sure to include them on the agenda and ask for a progress report at this and subsequent meetings.
- *Chapter Planning Session (Calendar Planning/Year at a Glance)*: By now, you should have an idea about the project interest of the new chapter members. It is now time to begin putting 'would like to do' into 'let's do it' and more importantly, 'when to do it'. This session should illicit fairly generic topics and timeframes. For example: Let's hold a family picnic in July, let's hold a membership event each month, let's plan one WM project each trimester, etc. This may be a good time to form a committee to meet at a separate time and discuss the plan in more detail, assigning specific dates and topics.

In addition to above topics, you will want to keep this meeting also fun and upbeat. Remember to:

- Adjourn
- Ask any guest to join the group
- Have "Good & Welfare" time - present this as a friendly way to end the night. Keep it VERY short if the hour is late
- Have everyone stand and hold hands (one big circle) and recite the creed

Part 4

Recommendations for Building a New Chapter

This section covers roughly the first 12 months of the new chapter. Throughout this time, as an extension chair, team or committee, you should gradually be turning over more and more responsibilities to the extended chapter. Remember, as part of the chartering commitment, your chapter, district or team has committed to helping this chapter for the first two years. So, while your responsibility becomes less and less, there is still plenty for you to do.

- For roughly the first 6 months, you will want to attend each chapter function.
- From 6-12 months, you will want to attend at least one function per month, varying between meetings and projects.
- From 12-24 months, you will want to attend 2-3 events per trimester. Discuss this schedule with your extension director. You will still want to check in with this new chapter in between events to offer support and encouragement.

In all cases, the number of meetings and chapter events you will be attending is dependent on the independence level of the chapter and will be dictated by the needs of the chapter. Discuss a visitation/support schedule with the extension director. Remember, you can always call upon other resources (extension committee members, chapter members, district director, state officers, etc.) to attend events in your place.

1. Make a Timeline

Once the initial 6 weeks is complete, you will want to make a more definite timeline with the extended chapter. At your second membership meeting you may have arranged for a chapter planning session. The extended chapter will be excited to plan and think about projects and activities, so it is important to include those ideas on a new calendar. As an extension chair, you are also aware of events that should be considered and planned to maintain a healthy chapter. So take an active role to guide them in this process.

Ideas to include in a timeline

- Information collected on the project interest survey
- Chapter interest in different areas of the organization
- Individual chapter needs: personal development activities
- Membership activities: membership drives, chapter celebration events, social events
- Programming projects
- Fundraising projects

a. Your own timeline

It may be helpful to put your own thoughts about events for the new chapter on paper before the planning session takes place. You will be arranging orientations, trainings, some membership events and projects. Ask for help and ideas from your extension committee or discuss possibilities with your extension director.

In your own mind you know what milestones the new chapter will need to meet before they are ready to fly solo. Make your own timeline.

- On which topics does the extended chapter need to be trained?
- When do they need to start planning an m-event on their own?

- How and when will the MNWT structure and other programming areas be discussed?
- A sample timeline for the extension committee/chair/team is included for your reference in the Appendix.

b. How much is too much?

While the extended chapter is excited, you will want to supervise the number and type of projects that the new chapter can handle. You don't want to come across as telling them what to do, but you do want to make helpful suggestions that will ensure chapter growth. (Remember our goals of retention, membership, team spirit, and well rounded in projects and programming.)

Unfortunately, there is no magic formula for the number or type of projects that will bring success to every chapter. However, if a chapter wants to keep growing in membership and personal growth, they should continue to hold different projects year round.

- *Membership event*
Events aimed at specifically inviting prospective members should be done at least each trimester.
- *Other membership events*
Other events that are more social in nature and allow members to learn about each other in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. One per month is not unreasonable to think about in the planning process. A social event, may be something as simple as a potluck held prior to a meeting, getting together for lunch, planning a movie night or getting together at a state convention.
- *Community Service projects*
These will vary according to interest, time of year and time available from the membership. However 2-3 projects per trimester are probably enough to begin.
- *Fundraising events*
These events are critical in this time period. Planning a fundraiser each trimester or using a fundraising goal amount may help to determine the number of fundraising projects which may need to be held.
- *Other programming projects*
Other projects will also vary according to chapter members' interest. This may be a good time to invite a State Program Manager to a meeting to speak about Women's Wellness, People w/Developmental Challenges, or Living & Learning. Members may become energized about programming if the SPM shares information about Camp Friendship, March of Dimes Walk America or a state competition.

c. Project Variety

If variety of chapter projects seems to be a challenge, you may want to incorporate more than one type of project into a planned activity.

- For example, community service is very important. Those projects may best guide the chapter.
- Maybe you can help them plan a bake sale at the kid's carnival which also can help the chapter with Ways & Means.
- Incorporate a PR booth or membership interest booth at each project.
- Ask members for project ideas to help activate them as new members of your chapter. Ask for ideas as an ice breaker topic or brainstorming session since not everyone will be willing to openly share ideas until they better understand the organization.

2. Create a Plan of Action

Once the officers are elected and the timeline is complete, it is time for you to help the new chapter president with a Plan of Action (POA). You may use your current chapter's POA as a guide, ask your extension director for a sample, or use your own materials if you have completed a POA.

Certain things should be included in a POA to make it useful for the entire chapter.

- Letter from the new chapter president
- Letter from the state president
- Letter from the district director
- President/chapter goals
- Current chapter roster
- List of chapter officers
- Local program managers
- Extension contact information
- State officers/exec council
- District information including other chapters and district officers
- Chapter calendar of events
- Bylaws and Policies

Additional information to include

- Project report form
- Certification form(s)
- STEP form
- Orientation sheets
- New Member orientation sheet
- WT acronyms
- WT definitions

There are certainly additional items that can be included in this POA. The important thing is to include the things that the new chapter will use and find helpful.

3. Hold a Chapter Board Meeting

After elections, chapter board meetings should become a regular part of the extended chapter's routine. Until the chapter president becomes comfortable, you will probably need to run the first couple of meetings, giving the chapter president more responsibilities for the meeting until she is ready to take over completely.

a. What should happen at the board meeting?

A board meeting is meant to be held prior to the general meeting, with the intent to:

- Work out plans and details, which will help the general meeting run more smoothly
- Provide training opportunities
- Provide opportunities for teambuilding
- Sometimes discuss more sensitive topics or to problem-solve difficulties which may have arisen within the chapter

b. **Your responsibilities during the board meeting.**

While you are running the meetings, remember to:

- Set and bring printed copies of the agenda
- Discuss items to be included in the newsletter
- Set up a training topic

At future board meetings when the president is running the meeting, you are an excellent resource. Try to let the board work through discussions and problems, but interject when discussion is off-track or there is a question which you can clarify.

4. **Training a New Chapter: What do they need to know?**

Training is a very important part of a new chapter. There is no one training schedule that will fit every chapter. However, there are many topics to choose from which will ensure each chapter receives the necessary training and information to remain healthy and active.

While not a complete list, consider some of the following topics and ideas.

- **Mandatory Training**
 - New Member Orientations
 - Board Training
 - Programming Introduction
 - Women of Today Structure
- **Suggested Training**
 - Available Resources
 - Communication
 - Navigating the MNWT Website
 - State Committees
 - USWT
 - Women of Today Meetings and Trainings (Conventions, LOTS, Pres/SD Retreat)
 - How to complete a PEP course
 - How to complete a project report form
 - How to use a CIP
- **Other Training Ideas**
 - SPMs promoting their area
 - State officers speaking about their responsibilities
 - WT publications (Newslet, Chapter Mailing)
 - Recruitment
 - Success Program
- **Remember**
 - The important part is to provide continual training.
 - Use a variety of training methods: newsletter articles, short presentations, guest speakers, handouts, board training. Not all topics need a guest speaker or presentation.
 - Repeat topics as new members join the chapter.
 - Recruit others to help. No one said you are in this alone.
 - There is assistance available, just ask. The State Staff are resources to assist you. If they are not available to train on a topic, they likely could recommend someone who would be a good trainer on that topic.

a. **Available Resources**

The MNWT has a countless supply of resources available to the membership. New chapters are no exception. The more quickly a new chapter becomes familiar with the resources available and how to use them, the more quickly they will feel comfortable with the organization.

Hopefully the new chapter already feels comfortable coming to you and your team/committee with questions and for guidance. In addition to this core group of people, there are other individuals and additional resources you can help them use.

- *District*
Your district should be a good resource for the extended chapter. The district director, district board and other chapters in the district can be contacted for ideas on projects and activities. Members of all three parties might be available for training if asked. The extended chapter should be encouraged to attend district meetings and the meetings of other chapters.
- *State Staff and Executive Council*
The officers of our organization want to see new chapters grow strong. While sometimes limited by travel distance, the executive council can be an excellent resource by providing materials or doing some over-the-phone training with members of the extended chapter.
- *Chapter Service Center (CSC)*
The CSC is an excellent resource for the new chapter. Many formalities of starting a new chapter need to happen through communication with the CSC and the Executive Director. Eventually, as the chapter has renewals, they will need to be sent through the CSC. Ask questions. Allow and suggest that the new chapter call the CSC to find information needed at times. (Even if you know the answer or could ask yourself, it is good for the new chapter to have this experience.)
- *Chapter Mailing*
The Chapter Mailing is published three times per trimester and provides to chapters information for the board and general membership. Registration forms and other highlights are included in the Chapter Mailing.
- *Chapter Information Packets*
Chapter Information Packets (CIPs) contain valuable information about officer positions and programming information. Chapter members can use these resources to find deadlines, project ideas, problem-solving techniques, etc.
- *Minnesota Women of Today Website*
The MNWT website is ever-changing. Like CIPs, the website contains resources for problem-solving, project ideas, forms, a calendar, etc.
- *Other resources*
Check out the listing of other resources included earlier in this manual.

b. **Motivation**

Earlier extension chair motivation was addressed. Just as an extending team can lack motivation, there are some times when the new chapter seems to lack motivation as well. At the time it may seem like a crisis, but if handled in a positive, understanding and patient manner, it can be overcome.

- *First: Think About the Chapter Situation*
Why is there suddenly a lack of motivation? Is the chapter ready for a break? Are they running too many projects? Are they lacking in a certain type of project? Does

everyone have enough to do? Can you redistribute some of the workload among chapter members? Has all the training been done by the same trainers? Need more variety? Do chapter members have enough training? Did a chapter project flop? Are members receiving recognition or validation for a job well done?

- *Second: Listen, Just Listen*

Ask members about why they are lacking motivation. Have life situations changed? Are there personality conflicts? Are they disappointed? Did members have different expectations?

- *Third: Diagnose the Problem*

This will probably require a little help. Ask your extension director for ideas. Consult other state officers for ideas too. The solution will be different if the entire chapter feels overwhelmed or if it is just certain individuals. Focus on the future.

- *Last: Decide on a Game Plan*

What needs to be done? It may be nothing on your part. It may be simple observation and support. You may need to bring in some guest speakers or plan a team building activity to remind the chapter why they are working so hard and why they joined the Women of Today. They may need outside help which you can help arrange.

c. **What to do if a Board Member Quits**

While not a direct part of motivation, if someone quits or steps down from a position on the board, it may affect the overall motivation of the chapter.

- The first thing to do is remain calm. Even though this may be the furthest feeling from your mind, keeping your cool, is the first step in helping the chapter work through a difficult situation.
- Next, talk about the situation with as much of a positive spin as you can. Concentrate on the good things that the member contributed to the chapter. Use the ‘not-so-good’ or the reason she left as a learning experience to avoid or work through in the future.
- Again, talk with your extension director or other mentor to ensure the chapter can work through the situation and move toward a positive future.

d. **District/State Meetings and Trainings**

Sometime during the first year, the chapter should be introduced to LOTS (local officer training session), district meetings and state conventions. While attendance is not required, it is strongly recommended.

- *LOTS (Local Officer Training Session)*

Because LOTS is held each year in May, the extended chapter may be in the beginning or the middle of the officers’ term. However, LOTS is still important for officers to attend, no matter the timing. LOTS will often present new information, answer additional questions and reinforce what you have already taught the new chapter. The Board session is also an important way to get the board to connect or reconnect and work together toward common goals.

- *District Meetings*

District meetings are a great place to share ideas and learn new things. The district meeting and the chapters in the district will provide support for the new chapter and make them feel important. If the new chapter does not have a state delegate, encourage someone, (other than the president) to act as state delegate for the meeting.

- *State Conventions*
Encourage members to attend state conventions and help them understand the convention events. Going to the first-timers meeting, attending the business meeting, going to president and state delegate roundtables, attending forums and all of the other convention events are important to the overall convention experience. In short, “show them the ropes”.
- *President/State Delegate Retreat*
Another important training opportunity is the president/state delegate retreat. A lot of small group and one-on-one time is provided for those that attend. This would be an excellent way for new chapters to meet other presidents, state delegates, and state staff and to discuss ideas.

Part 5

The Second Year

1. Role of the Extending Chapter/Extension Team

Your role in the life of this new chapter is ever-changing, yet always important. During the second year this has never been more apparent. One of the biggest changes you will see is the transfer of ownership to the new chapter.

By approximately the beginning of the second year, the chapter should be almost completely independent. You have trained officers, orientated members, assisted with projects, run meetings and given them guidance. You can still help with some of these items, but for the most part the members of the new chapter should take the responsibilities upon themselves.

- What should the new chapter be doing?
 - Setting the agenda
 - Running the meetings (both general and board)
 - Holding regular new member orientations
 - Hold regular community, social and fundraising activities
 - Attend district and state conventions (maybe not every one, but should regularly attend)
 - Preparing to elect a slate of new officers
 - Preparing to learn about additional programming areas

- What should you (the extending chair, team or chapter) be doing?
 - Have regular communication with the extended chapter (no less than once per month)
 - Attend at least 1 or 2 events per trimester
 - Offer to train on new topics if interested
 - Be a resource for ideas and questions
 - Continue to submit a progress report to the extension director (after 12 months, this should be done at 12, 18 and 24 months. More frequent communication should occur should you determine any problems)
 - Check in to make sure paperwork has been completed by the new chapter
 - Renewals in and paid on time
 - New Chapter Officer Sheet submitted
 - New POA completed
 - Monthly reports completed by the president
 - Reports completed each trimester by the state delegate and LPMs
 - Annual Registration
 - Insurance paid

2. Elections: The Second Time Around

Elections will probably happen at some point during the second year. Since there is no Chairman of the Board as yet, you can serve in this capacity for the election process.

- Begin to solicit nominations through the newsletter and at chapter meetings about 2 months ahead of the election meeting
- You may need to call members and encourage them to commit to different officer positions

- Place the completed ballot in the newsletter and announce at the chapter meeting
- Plan to attend and run the election portion of the meeting
- Work with the new chairman of the board to complete the new Chapter Officer Sheet

3. **Introduce Their Network**

New chapter members should be gently encouraged to visit nearby chapters, especially any of a similar size, providing they are healthy chapters!

If the new chapter gets awards from the district or state, extension team members could pitch in to help make their presentation at the chapter meeting more exciting. Play it up a little. Be sure it is fun!

Consider attending a district board meeting, other chapter board meetings and projects, or other state committee meetings to introduce the new chapter to additional functions of the district or state organization.

a. **Working with People**

Working with people presents many challenges to all of our chapters. There are many different kinds of people and sometimes they do not all get along well. You will find more specific guidance in the Personality Personal Enrichment manual. The extension team must focus on this area for two reasons:

- You will need to give a lot of positive feedback to the new chapter members, even those whose personalities grate on yours. You will also need to encourage less confident people to try positions of authority and that means you may be biting your tongue a lot while they learn how to lead. Tell them collectively and individually how well they are doing -- be specific. "Fantastic! Your report was full of information and you kept it short and humorous," means more than "What a great report ~ Good Job!"
- You will need to guide the new chapter members as they learn to negotiate and cooperate with each other. These new members may not be accustomed to having their ideas voted down or aware of other people's varying levels of commitment to the group. Gently remind them that we are all volunteers. Everyone's ideas and input count.

Extension team members should not correct people during the meetings unless they are specifically asked. Certainly you may write down thoughts to share at a later time. The chapter needs to know that they really are in charge. Compare the situation to having a past president interrupt the meeting to let the new board know where improvements could be made.

b. **Using the Success System**

A new chapter can also benefit from the use of the Success System. Success can be used as:

- an excellent chapter management tool
- a guide to plan what they would like to do monthly
- a guide to what they should be doing to create a healthy chapter

Consider introducing the Success System whenever you feel the chapter is interested and ready. Around 12 months is an excellent time to do this if it has not already been introduced. Success can be a good responsibility for the outgoing chapter president.

4. Graduation Time!!

Just as exciting as a charter celebration, graduation time is an equally important time to celebrate.

- *Chapter Graduation Celebration*

You may want to have a local celebration with your chapter, extension team, district, etc. Cake and other refreshments may be appropriate as well as a small gift given to the graduating chapter.

- *Convention Graduation Celebration*

A graduation celebration will also take place at convention. Like the charter ceremony outlined earlier, you will want to have as many graduating chapter members and extension team/committee members attend as possible. Coordinate this ceremony with the extensions director. You will also need to supply pictures of their chapter and events to the current extension director from their chartering date throughout their first two years until graduation. The pictures will be used in a presentation in honor of the chapter's graduation.

We hope you have enjoyed using the MNWT Extensions Manual. We also hope you found it informative and helpful in the pre-extension and beginning phases of a new chapter.

If you have any comments or questions regarding the Extensions Manual, please contact the current extension director and the Chapter Service Center.

Extensions Director: extensions@mnwt.org

Chapter Service Center: csc@mnwt.org

APPENDIX

MINNESOTA WOMEN OF TODAY INTENT TO EXTEND

Date _____

The chapter of _____ (or Extension Team) has the intent to extend the town of _____ and is willing to make a commitment to assist and support the new chapter for a minimum of two years.

Date approved by chapter or Extension team _____

Who have you been approached by? _____

Have you set a meeting date (s)? _____ When? _____

Who will be organizing the first Information meeting? _____

Who will be assisting with this Extension? _____

President's Name (please print) _____
(or Extension Team Member)

Address _____ Phone (____) _____

Email _____

President's Signature _____

State Delegate's Name (please print) _____
(or Extension Team Member)

Address _____ Phone (____) _____

Email _____

State Delegate's Signature _____

Extension Chairman _____
(or Extension Team Member)

Address _____ Phone (____) _____

Email _____

Extension Chair's Signature _____

Any other pertinent information _____

Send a copy of this form to your Extensions Director.

EXTENSION PROGRESS REPORT

Please fill out this report and send to your Extension Director at the end of each month. Fill in as much information as possible.

Chapter/Extension Team _____ Date _____
Chairman _____ Phone _____

1. Describe all activities, events and meetings held this past month concerning your extension, including any PR.
2. How many prospective members are you currently working with to join?
3. List all informational activities, events and meetings that are planned for the upcoming month including any PR.
4. What kind of assistance do you need for any upcoming events or trainings? (Information, guests, trainers, etc.)
5. Other Comments

Minnesota Women of Today

MINNESOTA WOMEN OF TODAY **INTENT TO CHARTER**

The newly formed _____ Women of Today do hereby express their intent to be recognized as a member chapter of the Minnesota Women of Today, with all the responsibilities and privileges which accompany membership in this organization.

Dated _____ Signed _____
Charter Member

Charter Member

INTENT TO FOLLOW UP

The _____ Women of Today or Extension Team, as the extending chapter or party of the _____ Women of Today into district _____, commits to help this new extension become a strong member of the Minnesota Women of Today through orientations, guidance, support and encouragement.

Dated _____ Signed _____
Chapter President or Extension Team Member

State Delegate or Extension Chairperson or Extension Team Member

Complete this form and send to the Chapter Service Center with the \$20.00 charter fee. This form must be received to be recognized as a chapter of the Minnesota Women of Today.

Extension Check-List

IMMEDIATE:

Intent to Extend Form --

- Send copy to State Extension Director (she will send one to the State President, District Director and the USWT)
- Keep copy for extension file

DURING EXTENSION PROCESS:

Extensions Progress Report Form--

- Send a copy of the Extensions Progress Report to the Extensions Director at least monthly.

CHARTERING PROCESS:

New Member Add/Change Form --

- Complete New Member Add/Change Form, be sure to include full birthday, including year.
- Send copy to Chapter Service Center
- Send copy to State Extension Director (she will send one to USWT)
- Keep copy for extension file
- Keep copy for new chapter file

Intent to Charter Form --

Found in the appendix of this Manual.

- Send copy to Chapter Service Center, with check for \$20.00
- Send copy to State Extension Director (she will send one to USWT)
- Keep copy for extension file
- Keep copy for new chapter file

Request for USWT Extension Funding --

- Send request for **USWT Application for Extension Funding** to USWT. This request is a budget of what expense you will have, includes: postage, telephone charges, charter fee (\$20.00). Up to \$30.00 is reimbursable, save receipts to submit at chartering.
- Send copy to State Extension Director
- Keep copy for extension file

Request for MNWT Foundation Extension Funding --

- Send a request for MNWT Foundation Extension Funding. This request is made by the extending chapter and reimbursed to the extending chapter for up to \$100 of expenses incurred during the extension process. Complete the form, attach receipts, and send the request to the Extension Director.
- Send a copy of the Newly Extended Chapter Grant to the Extension Director with a copy of the meeting minutes or the treasurer's report showing \$100 in fundraising to be matched by the Foundation grant.
- Send a copy of the Newly Extended Chapter Loan Application along with the minutes from the meeting where the officers were voted into office to request an interest-free loan of up to \$100 from the foundation.

Project Development

This form is meant to help your chapter to develop ideas for holding an event. There may be additional questions you need to ask above and beyond the ones on this form.

1. What time of year do you want to hold the project? Spring, end of school?
2. How much lead time do you have to work on the project? 1 month, 8 weeks?
3. What are the special talents or interests of your chapter? Scrapbook consultant? Enrichment Speaker? Cake decorator?
4. What group would you like to benefit from a project? Kids, women, families?
5. How much start-up funding do you need for the project? Will you need to charge for the project? How much will you need to charge?
6. Do you want to hold this event with another organization or to support another organization? March of Dimes? Operation Minnesota Nice?
7. How many people do you anticipate needing to work on the project (set-up, clean-up, serving, prepping materials)?
8. How many people do you anticipate participating in or coming to your event? Will you need an RSVP, pre-registration, or other way to count participants before the event?

Fundraiser Development

This form is meant to help guide your new chapter in creating a fundraising project. These projects can either be for your own chapter needs or to help your chapter to make a donation to another group or foundation. There may be additional questions you need to answer above and beyond the ones in this form.

1. What time of year do you want to do the fundraiser? Spring, end of school?
2. How much lead time do you have to work on the fundraiser? 1 month, 8 weeks?
3. What are some of the other events already held in your community? Are you going to be fundraising at the same time of year as another group in town?
4. What are the special talents or interests of you chapter? Scrapbook consultant? DJ? Cake decorator?
5. Who do you want to aim your project toward? Kids, women, families?
6. How much money do you want to raise?
7. Do you need the money for your chapter or do you want to raise it for another organization? March of Dimes? Operation Minnesota Nice?

**THE MINNESOTA WOMEN OF TODAY FOUNDATION
APPLICATION FOR
EXTENSION FUNDING**

(To be completed by and reimbursed to the extending chapter)

The Minnesota Women of Today Foundation has funds available to assist chapters/districts with an extension. Up to \$100.00 per extension can be applied for. The following guidelines must be met in order to qualify:

1. An Intent to Extend Form must be on file with the Minnesota Extensions Director.
2. The extension must be completed, new member names sent in, and dues paid.
3. You may not apply for funding if you have received funding from another source (district, national)
4. The application must be complete and must be filed within 60 days of completion of the extension.
5. Original receipts must accompany this application.
6. Applications will be approved at the discretion of the state president, extensions director and the Board of Directors of the Minnesota Women of Today Foundation.

CHAPTER/DISTRICT _____ EXTENSION _____
 CHARTER DATE _____ EXTENSION CHAIR _____

BUDGET

INCOME

Chapter appropriation	\$ _____
Other Donation/sources	\$ _____
Personal Donations	\$ _____
TOTAL INCOME	\$ _____

EXPENSES

Phone calls	\$ _____
Postage	\$ _____
Copies	\$ _____
Room Rent	\$ _____
Publicity	\$ _____
Other Expenses (list)	\$ _____
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ _____

SEND APPLICATION IMMEDIATELY UPON COMPLETION OF EXTENSION TO THE EXTENSION DIRECTOR.

Send to Extensions Director
Minnesota Women of Today

**MINNESOTA WOMEN OF TODAY FOUNDATION
APPLICATION FOR GRANT FOR NEWLY EXTENDED CHAPTERS**

CHAPTER _____ DATE OF APPLICATION _____

AMOUNT REQUESTED \$ _____ DISTRICT NO. _____ CHARTER DATE _____

CHAPTER PRESIDENT _____ TELEPHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

The Minnesota Women of Today Foundation may issue a grant to match up to One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) of a new chapter's funds earned from a chapter fund-raiser (s). All grants are subject to the approval of the Foundation's Board of Directors and must have the recommendation of the Extensions Director of the Minnesota Women of Today. The grant application must be received within 6 months of a chapter's charter date.

1. Explain why you need the grant and what you plan to do with the funds. Be specific, i.e., to offset the cost of legal paperwork, to copy and mail chapter newsletter, etc.

2. List ways and means projects already held, including details of income and expense (use additional paper if necessary).

3. List dates and descriptions of scheduled ways and means projects.

4. Have you received any monetary donations? How much and from whom? How were the funds used?

5. Does your district have a provision in its by-laws to provide a grant to new chapters?

6. Attach a financial statement of income and expenses since the chapter's charter date.

APPLICATION BY:

Chapter President
Dated _____

RECOMMENDED BY:

Extensions Director, Minnesota Women of Today
Dated _____

Send to Extensions Director
Minnesota Women of Today

Pre-Extension – Phase 1

Do not hesitate to move forward or take additional time for extension process—timelines will vary by community

		Completed		Completed
MONTH 1	<i>Chapter/District identifies community</i>		MONTH 4	<i>Committee meets to evaluate status and plan – make adjustments to plan if needed.</i>
	<i>Chapter/District decision to move forward</i>			<i>Promote Extension with flyers in town and heavy newspaper articles.</i>
	<i>Chapter/District makes and passes motion to extend</i>			<i>Schedule and hold extension social activities. You may have established a weeknight that works best for higher attendance.</i>
	<i>Extension chair appointed and committee formed</i>			<i>Complete new member paperwork and collect dues if you have not already done so. Hold these until you have your required number of members.</i>
	<i>Intent to Extend form completed and sent to appropriate state and national staff</i>			<i>Send report of extension status to state extensions director</i>
	<i>Committee meets to form plan</i>			<i>Extension team and interested new members meet to identify interests and put chapter plan in motion</i>
	<i>Establish funding possibilities for extension expenses (chapter, district, grants)</i>			<i>Extension team and interested members hold fundraising event</i>
	<i>Find a meeting place</i>			<i>Introduce WT organization structure and discuss board positions</i>
	<i>Prepare flyers and newspaper articles</i>			<i>Hold membership social specific to interested members – they will want to start working together.</i>
MONTH 2	<i>Promote Extension with flyers in town and heavy newspaper articles</i>		MONTH 5	<i>Schedule with local grocery store to be onsite – hand out information on chapter—something fun</i>
	<i>Send personal invites to names if you already have some contacts or referrals</i>			<i>Continue PR in papers and in town</i>
	<i>Collect additional names from other prospectives or through referrals from other members or in the phone book.</i>			<i>File charter form and send in your 7 plus members under 40</i>
	<i>Schedule and hold extension meetings. These should be held on different nights of the week and should be scheduled no longer than 2 weeks apart.</i>			<i>Committee meets to identify next steps to go forward as a new chapter.</i>
	<i>Continue PR in papers and in town</i>			
	<i>Work with Chamber or local businesses to identify opportunities for visibility in community</i>			
MONTH 3	<i>Send report of extension status to state extensions director.</i>			
	<i>Schedule and hold extension meetings and social activities. These should be held on different nights of the week and should be scheduled no longer than 2 weeks apart. They should be informational.</i>			
	<i>Target specific neighborhoods with flyers or door knocking</i>			
	<i>Make phone or personal contact with all prospectives and attendees to date.</i>			

Extension – Year 1		
		Completed
MONTH 1	<i>Hold a major orientation (send copy of agenda)</i>	
	<i>Extension team send Visitation Report or extension activities update to State Extensions Director</i>	
	<i>Refer to Extensions Manual for specific information, processes and forms</i>	
MONTH 2	<i>Do calendar "Year at a Glance" planning</i>	
	<i>Hold Elections (send copy of Chapter Officer Sheet)</i>	
	<i>Begin Articles of Incorporation filing</i>	
	<i>Orientation of President (Orientation agenda or note)</i>	
	<i>Orientation of Treasurer (Orientation agenda or note)</i>	
	<i>Send Visitation Report or extension activities update to State Extensions Director</i>	
MONTH 3	<i>Hold Board member training</i>	
	<i>Fill LPM positions of chosen programming areas</i>	
	<i>Help with first projects (write note on progress and plans)</i>	
	<i>Send State Extensions Director a copy of the chapter's minutes</i>	
	<i>Send Visitation Report or extension activities update to State Extensions Director</i>	
	<i>Help to publish a newsletter and send to State President, Extensions Director and District Director</i>	
MONTH 4	<i>Send copy of any publicity generated by or for the new chapter</i>	
	<i>Send Visitation Report or extension activities update to State Extensions Director</i>	
MONTH 5	<i>Set date for Bylaw Study meeting</i>	
MONTH 6	<i>Send Visitation Report or extension activities update to State Extensions Director</i>	
Extension – Year 2		
Month 12 to 18	<i>Bylaws & Policies have been revised and approved</i>	
	<i>Ensure all new members have been orientated</i>	
	<i>Chapter is encouraging and participating in more state and district/regional/area activities</i>	
	<i>A new board has been elected and orientated</i>	
Month 19 to 24	<i>Membership socials and recruitment is ongoing</i>	
	<i>Chapter members are working as a group</i>	
	<i>Chapter is finding a balance to support all members' needs and interests</i>	
	<i>Visitation Reports or activity updates to State Extensions Director</i>	

Timeline/Extensions Team Involvement for the first 2 years.

Because each chapter is unique, it is difficult to give precise instructions to help the new chapter become independent, What follows is a plan for the first two years. Use it, change it or rearrange it. Make it work for what the new chapter needs.

First Meeting

- Run by Extension Team
- Mixer activity
- New member orientations
- Choose programming areas (Community Connections, Public Relations, Newsletter, Socials (Membership), and 1 External and 1 Internal
- Choose one Ways and Means project: select chairman - Explain options for a charter celebration: ask for a chairman
- Distribute sample Bylaws and Policies, explain vote in next month (NOTE: To help people chair a project, encourage them to co-chair or to work with one person from the extension team. Also, you may know particular strengths of new members by now and can ask specific people if they would do a task. Ask in general, then ask specific people.)
- Help whenever possible

Second Meeting

- Run by Extension Team
- Mixer activity
- Report on projects
- Vote on Bylaws and Policies with any needed revisions. Keep it simple - Chapter planning session - brainstorm and tentatively schedule events
- Set amount of Chapter dues, including National and State dues
- Elections of officers (NOTE: Motivate at least 2 members to attend a district, area or state function in the first 6 months)
- Introduce the STEP program

Chapter President, Treasurer, Orientations & Preliminary Budget Meeting

- Help President plan agenda for the third meeting
- Help President plan any awards or speeches for the Charter Celebration
- President may assist the Extension Team in completing Articles of Incorporation and other filing papers. This should be the responsibility of the Extension Team or committee.
- Help President and Treasurer prepare a simple budget
- Help Treasurer begin learning her duties - Provide written directives

Charter Celebration

- This should be a special celebration social. Have them invite guests. You may have to incorporate with third meeting but try and keep it separate.
- Invite State President to attend, speak and install members
- Invite State Extension Director and any other Executive Council members.
- Mixer activity
- Share any special recognitions
- Give overview of plans for year

Third Meeting

- Run by new Chapter President
- One half hour before meeting
- Conduct training for any remaining board positions not previously trained.

- Mixer activity
- Brief business meeting, with chairperson(s) reporting
- Vote on budget
- Solicit volunteers for the Local Program Manager positions
- Have a special program: a local community leader, or speaker from one of the Foundations, or give a 20-30 minute Personal Enrichment session. Extension committee may introduce Chapter Information Packet (CIP) or cover important highlights for each area

Fourth Meeting

- A separate social/membership activity may need to be planned. (Membership goal at this point is 10 members or 2 additional from base)
- Mixer activity (every meeting)
- Local Program Manager orientation given by extension team
- Business meeting (NOTE: If chapter members are not bringing in friends and neighbors, a membership night should be held this next month and every 2-3 months thereafter. Two or three of the original members signed may not return for one reason or another. This is consistent with our over-all organization. We need to continually recruit new members so the chapter remains strong.)

Fifth Meeting

- Special 10 minute program, preferably a skit, on a helpful topic such as giving reports, writing for their newsletter, making motions, etc.
- Business meeting, plan date for Bylaw Study meeting

Sixth Meeting

- (Membership goal is 12 members or 4 additional from base)
- Special 20 minute program, preferably a skit, as described above
- Business meeting
- Consider giving a specific orientation on the programming areas that the chapter has chosen

Third Trimester

- Fun event every month. These can be any mix of chapter socials, membership nights, couples events or family events. These can be parties, picnics, egg hunts, sing-a-longs, etc.
- Orientations for new members joining should be done by the new chapter members, preferably with an extension team member present. They can be done before board or general membership meetings to avoid being an extra night out.
- Extension team members should be attending at least one meeting a month this trimester. Choose board or membership meetings based on the needs of the new chapter.
- Bylaw Study Committee meeting and vote on final version of Bylaws
- tStart encouraging more State, District or Area activity. Chapter members should be ready to move out and meet other Women of Today members. Help them enjoy these events. Extension team members should continue to attend at least one meeting a month this trimester. Choose board or membership meetings based on the needs of the new chapter.

The Second Twelve Months

- Continued involvement and support to this chapter. Let them know that you are there to help but will be stepping back a bit. You may attend fewer meetings and events but be sure to check in with the chapter president to see how things are going and get updates from events.

Key Messaging: How to Talk about Women of Today

The good news is Women of Today supports a broad base of programming to offer something for everyone. The bad news is that can make it difficult to summarize when someone poses the question at an m-event or during a phone call. So, how do you talk about Women of Today? “Key Messaging” can help serve as a framework to communicate the mission of the Women of Today.

Step 1: Consider the following questions and come up with 3-5 answers for each one.

What makes your chapter different from other community organizations?

If you are unsure, consider Women of Today programming. Chances are you have not been a member of another organization that promotes the combination of community service, professional and personal growth in addition to fellowship. List your favorite chapter projects or programming areas. Like most members, there will probably be great variety. Could you get that anywhere else?

Who are your community partners?

Does your chapter do a project in conjunction with another volunteer group? Does your chapter support the local school district with fundraising? Does your chapter adopt a family from a homeless shelter or social service agency? Does your chapter adopt a highway or park? Does your chapter do an annual project every year as part of the city calendar?

What do you like best about your chapter?

The answers should be personal and reflect your own experiences within your chapter.

Step 2: Review your lists under each question. Select your #1 under each area. If you have just jotted down a word or two, put them in a sentence that includes the question.

Example: “Women of Today is a civic organization promoting community service, personal enrichment and leadership development skills.”

Example: “Women of Today partners with area non-profits like the March of Dimes, American Cancer Society and Friendship Ventures.

Example: “What I like best about Women of Today are the friendships I have made throughout the state.”

Step 3: After you have formulated your sentences, review with a neutral party. Do they understand your message? If so, you are on the right track!

Step 4: Stick with your original messages on a consistent basis but be able to embellish on your original messages (dollars raised from a specific fundraiser, # of people served from a local project, etc) for lengthier conversations.

GOOD

Example: “Women of Today is a civic organization promoting community service, personal enrichment and leadership development skills.”

Example: “Women of Today partners with area non-profits like the March of Dimes, American Cancer Society and Friendship Ventures.

Example: “What I like best about Women of Today are the friendships I have made throughout the state.”

BETTER

Example: “Women of Today is a unique civic organization promoting community service, personal enrichment and leadership development skills without religious or political affiliations.”

Example: “Women of Today partners with area non-profits like the March of Dimes, American Cancer Society and Friendship Ventures to raise funds and provide volunteers for events.”

Example: “What I like best about Women of Today are the friendships I have made throughout the state—there are over 1500 members statewide.”

BEST

Example: “Women of Today is a unique civic organization promoting community service, personal enrichment and leadership development skills without religious or political affiliations. The roots of our organization can be traced back to 1950 and the Mrs. Jaycees.”

Example: “Women of Today partners with area non-profits like the March of Dimes, American Cancer Society and Friendship Ventures to raise funds and provide volunteers for events. Last year my chapter raised \$1500 for Walk-America, \$5500 for the local Relay for Life and helped re-paint the boathouse at Camp Friendship near Annandale.”

Example: “What I like best about Women of Today are the friendships I have made throughout the state—there are over 1500 members statewide. Trimester district and state meetings are optional but provide many opportunities for networking, fellowship, enrichment, training and award recognition.”