

Troubleshooting Common Problems¹

Difficulty in finding residents willing to hold office.

- Meet with residents face-to-face. Find out about their gifts and interests, and sell the job to their interests.
- Make the term and scope of officer duties manageable.
- Arrange for leadership training.

Residents are hesitant to preside at meetings.

- Initially, the manager, resident leader, or community organizer can chair the meeting while helping residents build their leadership skills.
- Have officers share the duties so that no one feels overwhelmed.

Poor attendance at meetings.

- Hold meetings regularly, at the same time, in the same place.
- Make sure that all residents know when and where meetings take place. Use flyers, announcements on the bulletin board, newsletter, etc.
- Start with simple activities, projects that are exciting and have wide appeal and let everyone know what they will be.
- Start with success. Nothing is as attractive as success.
- Make the meetings fun as well as productive.

Members focus on personal issues instead of group issues during meetings.

- Acknowledge the importance of the issue. Arrange for a private meeting later.
- If there is a grievance committee, the resident may be referred there.

Members are disruptive.

- Overly talkative members should be tactfully interrupted. Acknowledge the person's contribution, then ask others to add their comments.
- Argumentative members – Keep your cool and make sure others keep theirs. Ask for clarification and specific examples of general complaints. Steer discussion away from personal attacks to dealing with the issues raised. After the issues have been discussed, summarize and move on to the next point. If he continues to argue, explain that the issues have been covered, and offer to meet with him privately after the meeting to resolve any remaining personal issues.
- Know-it-all – Acknowledge her expertise. Assure her that she has a valuable contribution to make, and then seek comments from other members. Give her more responsibilities. (“Sue, we will be able to tap your experience in fund-raising. Does anyone have similar experience?”)

Members are passive.

- Shy – Call on him by name and smile at him. Ask him easy questions, especially about his area of knowledge. Give him an assignment.
- Disinterested – Ask her direct questions about her area of special knowledge. Ask her advice. Mention something she said to you at another time. Give her an assignment.

¹ HUD Connecticut Office, *ibid.*