

# COMMITTEES

Newly-formed groups are often simply several dedicated people coming together around a common idea, who informally share leadership or let leaders emerge. As the group increases its membership and sets more challenging goals, more formal leadership structure is often necessary. In addition to electing a President, Treasurer, or other central leadership positions, groups are able to involve more members in goal-setting and decision-making by forming committees.

## Interim Committees

Members of your core group should each be responsible for different tasks, such as writing by-laws, planning the first event, or contacting important people. As the core group increases in size, you can assign more than one person to each of these tasks, creating *interim committees*. Interim committees might be formed around the following:

- ✓ Building membership
- ✓ Logistics (finding a regular meeting space, building a mailing list, etc.)
- ✓ Finance (opening a bank account, finding a fiscal sponsor, etc.)
- ✓ Building a website

## Standing Committees

When your group feels stable, has dedicated members who regularly attend meetings, and has decided upon common goals, it may be time to establish permanent committees. These are called *standing committees*, and should be formed around tasks that are central to your group's mission. Standing committees are part of an organization's permanent structure. Each committee should be led by a chairperson. For a typical parks group, standing committees might be formed around some of the following:

- ✓ Beautification (gardening and cleaning)
- ✓ Membership (recruitment and management)
- ✓ Fundraising/Finance
- ✓ Publicity and Public Relations (deals with press, advertises events)
- ✓ Safety (locks the park at night, works with police)
- ✓ Ecology (concerned with restoration and education in natural parks)
- ✓ Newsletter
- ✓ Event Planning

## Ad Hoc Committees

Some projects come and go, so the committees that deal with them should come and go too. These *ad hoc committees* can be formed by the steering committee whenever they're needed, and dissolved when they stop being useful. They are also led by a chairperson. Tasks for ad hoc committees to handle could include:

- ✓ Planning an annual event
- ✓ Leading a membership drive
- ✓ Becoming a 501(c)(3)
- ✓ Producing an end of year report

*Adapted from "Tools & Tactics for Building Neighborhood Organizations," Citizens for NYC, [www.citizensnyc.org](http://www.citizensnyc.org).*