

NCCW Guidance and Resource Manual

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NCCCW

Guidance & Resource Manual

CHAPTER 1 Plan for Success: Evaluate, Set Goals, Create a Plan

THE PROCESS

SET GOALS

CREATE A PLAN

BRAINSTORMING

ANNUAL PLANNING
FORM TEMPLATE

ANNUAL PLANNING
FORM (SAMPLE)

MONTHLY PLANNING
FORM TEMPLATE

MONTHLY PLANNING
FORM (SAMPLE)

PASTOR/SPIRITUAL
ADVISORS:
APPROVAL &
INVOLVEMENT

TIPS FOR IMPROVING
YOUR COUNCILS

ASSESSMENT OF
PROGRAM VARIETY

Always check the NCCW website for new and
timely information: **nccw.org**

The Process

It is said that a leader is someone who has influence. You are leaders who have both the privilege and special responsibility of overseeing the operation of an organization—not just any organization, but one that has been given the distinct mission of serving God’s people.

Planning a trip takes preparation and paying attention to the details to ensure you do not miss out on any interesting destination. Numerous successful councils have carefully planned out their year using the information and resources found in this manual.

Early planning for a dynamic council means starting well before the council year begins. June and July are good months for planning as most councils run their activities during the months of August/September through May. If your council runs activities during other months, adjust your planning accordingly. The important thing is to plan well in advance of the council year. Planning involves three important steps: ***evaluate, plan/set goals and create an action plan.***

Evaluate

Whether you are starting a new affiliation, or your council has been in place for many years, these three steps are important. A new organization should use the evaluation stage to discern the needs of their planning team, future members and the parish. An existing organization should evaluate on an annual basis.

The evaluation should include a review of all aspects of the organization including, but not limited to, meetings, programs, fundraisers, membership (recruitment and retention), etc. Using this information, will improve all the above. The question may be how do you evaluate your organization? That question can be answered by asking targeted questions. Many organizations distribute evaluation forms at major events and invite feedback from the participants. Another evaluation method could be a survey distributed to your membership either by mail or through an online service such as Survey Monkey. For instance, ask your membership to rate the meetings. Were they well run? Were the programs interesting? Are they held at a convenient time? This form of evaluation will gather input from the members on an individual basis. Another form of evaluation is to step back and look at the overall organization. This should be done by the Board and then by the general membership. The more everyone is involved in evaluating the state of your council, the more the members will want to get involved to reinvigorate your council.

The task of evaluating an organization does not have to be a difficult or even dull task. The following tool can be used to determine if your organization needs a “fixer upper” or perhaps just a little bit of “redecorating” in the form of fresh ideas, re-structuring of existing programs, or new ways to communicate your message. This is a great way to start a brainstorming session.

Makeover – Does Your Council Need a Fixer Upper? Is It Time?

We are familiar with the popular shows on television that involve makeovers and renovations. When was the last time your council had a makeover? Is now the time? Only you can be the judge if it is time and what improvements you need and want.

Here are SOME of the many characteristics of a healthy council. Check off how many your council currently possesses. This checklist could be the beginning of a LIST OF IMPROVEMENTS or makeover renovations you may want to start to ensure your council is as healthy as possible!

- Interesting Programs and Speakers – Ask yourself, “Why would someone want to join your affiliation? Do your programs attract new members?”
- Meetings – Evaluate your meetings. Are they well attended? If not, why not? Do your meetings begin and end in prayer? Is the meeting time convenient? Are meetings conducted in a business-like manner? Is an agenda prepared? If you were a new member, would you want to return?
- Image Check – What do others think of your council? Who do they say you are? Are accomplishments and goals of the organization made known to the membership? To the community? To other groups? (See climate survey below.)
- Active Commissions – At the national level, the mission of NCCW is carried out through the work of three commissions and several committees. The commissions are often mirrored at archdiocesan/diocesan, regional, and local parish levels. See Chapter 6 for more information about commissions.

Affiliations with active commissions are healthier and more productive. Do your Commission Chairs read the articles in *Catholic Woman*, *NCCW Connect* for ideas?

- Do they access the website frequently (www.nccw.org) to remain current with the latest projects and offerings from National?
- Do they participate in NCCW calls? Do they print and use resources posted on the website: www.nccw.org?
- Membership Committee – Notice the word Committee, not just a chairperson. Nurture your established members and welcome and educate your new ones. Welcome new women! Obtain a list of inactive members, call them and invite them back. Get the names of new women in the parish and personally invite them to become a member of your council. Mentoring is vital for this to be successful.
- Create a Realistic Budget – Members want to know what they are working for and have a voice in the distribution of funds.
- Communication – Without effective listening and communication, an affiliation will fail to operate.
- Evaluation – Evaluation of programs, events, and your annual activities is essential for the ongoing growth of your organization. Critique your programs and projects upon completion so it will be fresh in your mind. Share the results with the committee, commission and membership.

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- Technology – Are you using www.nccw.org for information and updates? What about www.usccb.org?
- Celebrate your success stories. Everyone loves a pat on the back. Don't forget to congratulate your membership for working on or supporting a project or event.
- Use this list to begin your council makeover.

What is Your Image?

Now that you have an idea of where your council stands, you should look at one more area prior to setting your plans for the council year – your image. What is your image? Where does a council's image come from and why is this important to us? Our culture tells us that image is everything - it can make or break an organization, a person, a product, or a society. What is your council's image in your community?

Take a Climate Survey.

1. Who is the Council of Catholic Women in the _____ Parish?
2. What do they do?
3. Why are they important to our parish community?

You may be surprised to learn from other climate surveys done in parishes that the community may state the following:

Answers:



Old women who bake cookies and help Father.
Women who play cards, sell raffle tickets, have bake sales.
Others have stated they have no idea.

Of course, it all depends on who you ask. If you ask an active member of council, she may have these answers:

1. Women who care about their faith and issues of the Church, both locally and globally.
2. We make a difference in the world.
3. Our parish community is enriched by their action and spirituality.



If you are not managing your Image, someone else will.

Key components of Image are both Visual and Behavioral.

Visual Examples:

- Press Releases
- Diocesan Newspapers
- Local Newspapers, Radio, TV
- Bulletin Announcements
- Pulpit Announcements
- Newsletters
- Websites & E-Mails, Social Media
- Business Cards
- Printed Materials-Brochures, Flyers, Posters, etc.



Logo A logo for your council creates an easily identifiable symbol. The NCCW logo can be used in its entirety but cannot be modified by replacing the word National with the name of your council. A good way to create the link with NCCW and use the logo is the following example:

Saint Lawrence Council of Catholic Women

An affiliate of the



Behavioral Examples:

- Welcoming
- Spiritual Components
- Hospitality
- Being Organized and Prepared
- Using Leadership skills and qualities to train others to lead



Other Image Elements:

- Consideration of location, and scheduling of dates and times
- Appealing and interesting information – who, what, where, when, how, why
- Clear and concise communication

Set Goals

Once the evaluation is complete, it is time to update and/or set realistic and measurable goals. Goals are important because they give us a target. If we do not have goals, how do we know where we are going? If our planning does not have meaning or direction, we are simply doing. By setting goals such as raising funds for a specific purpose, preparing a certain number of food baskets, increasing membership by a percentage, or providing the funds for all officers to attend workshops, conventions, etc., there is a purpose to every program. Then the membership can work towards achievement. This builds enthusiasm and a desire on the part of the member to participate. Each year, a council must set short-term and long-term goals.

Goal Setting Guide

- 1. Guidelines for Goals**

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- a. Goals must NOT be assumed; spell them out. Be sure that the goal is clear to everyone. Write it out in complete detail and make sure all involved have a copy.
 - b. Be sure that the goal you are working towards is something your council really wants and needs.
 - c. Be sure that the goal is within your council's abilities.
 - d. Be sure the goal does not contradict any other goals in your council.
 - e. Be sure to set up the goal so that it is measurable and has a time frame.
 - f. Be sure that your goal is stated in a positive statement. For example: Keep all current members, not: Don't lose any current members. Any goal should enhance your council and be of benefit to your membership.
2. **Gather information on the nature of the current situation, prospective resources and future requirements.**
 - a. Think ahead. What is likely to happen to the council if the goal is completed?
 - b. List the strengths of your council. What opportunities exist because of each strength?
 - c. What are the weaknesses of your council? What would limit or be a barrier to any new plans?
 3. **Involve as many people as possible.**
 - a. Broaden the base of the council with responsible local members.
 - b. Ensure success by inviting input from a wide variety of persons and coordinate the information.
 - c. Unless all participants have input, they are not as likely to support a new structure.
 4. **Assess the needs of the persons you propose to serve.**
 - a. What is it we are trying to accomplish?
 - b. What are the alternative plans?
 5. **Define responsibility for action and for implementation.**
 - a. Identify, in writing, the duties and responsibilities of those involved.
 - b. Communicate commitments of adequate volunteers needed to implement the plan.
 6. **Gather feedback.**
 - a. Evaluate the feedback and make changes if necessary.
 - b. Report all results to the constituents and leaders.

Create a Plan

Now that your council has evaluated their current state and identified their goals, it is time to start the planning process. Remember a “failure to plan is a plan to fail.”

Before beginning your planning process, always begin and end in PRAYER
“Entrust your works to the Lord, and your plans will succeed.”

Proverbs 16:3

Easy Steps to Start the Planning

1. Make a list of possible meeting dates for the council year. Plug in to the meetings a program that you would like to do every year (Christmas Program, Capitol Days, Annual Membership Tea, etc.) This list/calendar should have dates on it for other levels of council events to prevent possible conflicts as well as noting other parish, deanery, or diocesan-wide events.
2. Evaluate what worked well last year and what needs to be tweaked for better results. Consult the NCCW website for national projects and resources that should be incorporated at the diocesan, deanery, or parish levels of Council. Brainstorm new ideas (Diocesan, Deanery or Regional Meetings can offer new ideas of what other councils have done with success). Assess your community at large and see what the current needs are (feeding and clothing the needy, beautification project, etc.). Remember your membership will grow if you keep in mind women are looking for something to add value to their lives. They want to make a difference and if their expectations are met, they will remain active. Involve your membership in this planning.
3. Begin to “pencil” programs to the calendar.
4. Review where there are “empty” places on the calendar and discuss if additional programs should be added.
5. Once the programs have been chosen, begin to plan each individual program.

The following pages have two forms that may be helpful in planning your council year. One is an *Annual Planning Form* and the other is a *Monthly Planning Form*. These are suggested forms and may be modified to suit your needs. The main objective is to plan early and to have a written plan so that anyone can execute it.

Brainstorming

- Appoint a recorder to write on a white board or flip chart. Two people and two heads make the process faster.
- Write large enough for the entire group to read from a distance.
- Display filled sheets in an area where they are visible to all.
- Begin by stating the topic or area in which you will be brainstorming.
- As they shout out ideas, you may want them to raise their hand and have you call on them so you and everyone else can hear their idea.
- Do not call on them by name as it might give others the idea that you feel that person’s ideas are better than the other participants.
- Use the term “we” as often as possible so you can instill the idea of “team”.
- Record ALL ideas. If an idea is closely related to one already mentioned it can be placed together or marked in some way to show they are related.

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- All ideas don't have to be "original". Encourage "piggybacking" ideas. Springboard on previous ideas that can be extended or enhanced.
- Encourage each person as they share ideas. Thank them.
- Have a funny word or even a bell or bicycle horn that can be used in a light-hearted way when participants are negative about ideas shared.
- If the ideas slow down, highlight the previous ideas so it might spark new ideas to come forth.

Set the rules for brainstorming

It is helpful to have these rules displayed on a flip chart or Power Point during sessions. Reinforce these ideas:

- Ideas shared are to inspire possible solutions AND to stimulate ideas in other people.
- Expect and welcome strange and impossible ideas.
- Everyone and every idea is valued.
- Negativity or absolute solutions are not invited to a brainstorming session.

Done isn't Done

Brainstorming is only as good as the follow-up. Gather the suggestions and categorize them. Now the analysis needs to begin. A spreadsheet is helpful in compiling and categorizing. It is easier to sort and share the gathered information. Arrange the information into categories.

- **Terrific:** Will work and be used immediately.
- **Interesting:** Possibly work, look into more.
- **Useless:** Fun and crazy but totally won't work.
- Implement the *terrific* immediately, set a deadline to complete the *interesting* phase.

Choosing a Central Theme

Choosing a theme or focus each council year is a great way to create a cohesive message that can be woven throughout all your programs and activities. It will send a clear message about who you are and what you do, and it will enhance your image in your parish community which will in turn attract members. You may wish to use or adopt a variation of the theme from National for the year.

Once you have chosen a theme, you can add programs or add a "twist" to your existing programs by connecting them to your theme. Take this opportunity to look at new ways to market existing programs and your organization by tying an existing program to a theme. The key is to have a consistent message. This will help nonmembers better understand what you do and how you make a difference in your local, national and world communities. Remember to ask continuously, "What is our image?" as you create your plan.

The following are examples of how to use existing programs with a central theme such as *Building Membership While Serving Others*.

Welcome Back Meeting and Event

Design a Welcome Back Meeting honoring your accomplishments and outlining your goals for the coming council year.

- Welcome new and established members back by having extra greeters at the door (arriving and leaving).
- Set up reserved seats at tables for new members, making sure an established member is sitting with them.
- Use a different colored nametag to identify newcomers so all can welcome them in a special way.
- If your budget permits, have a simple catered lunch. Purchasing subs from your local grocery store with chips and drinks is an easy way to keep costs down. Board members can provide desserts and fruit. Your members will be appreciative that you are having a free luncheon in their honor.

Extending an Invitation to Others

- Spotlight a new member at each meeting. At each subsequent meeting, have a member get up for a 3-minute sharing of their story (where they were born, how long have they lived in this area, hobbies and family). These creative icebreakers build relationships between members.
- Another program could be How to Mentor a New Member. Long time members could be invited to share their own council mentor story. Perhaps have a small battery-operated candle on the prayer table as a visual to honor each of the mentors mentioned.
- If you are doing something for Domestic Violence or Human Trafficking, involve your membership in a way that would be challenging or interesting to them.

The programs do not necessarily change, but a twist is added to tie it to the theme. By looking at a new way to promote a program or to add something different, existing programs will remain fresh and interesting. Get creative and have fun!

You're Invited!

Annual Planning Form - Template

Affiliation: _____

Council Year: _____

This Year's Theme: _____

Programs

September: General Meeting _____

Non-Meeting Program _____

October: General Meeting _____

Non-Meeting Program _____

November: General Meeting _____

Non-Meeting Program _____

December: General Meeting _____

Non-Meeting Program _____

January General Meeting _____

Non-Meeting Program _____

February General Meeting _____

Non-Meeting Program _____

March General Meeting _____

Non-Meeting Program _____

April General Meeting _____

Non-Meeting Program _____

May General Meeting _____

Non-Meeting Program _____

Annual Planning Form – Sample

Affiliation: (name of parish) Council of Catholic Women

Council Year: 20____ - 20____

This Year's Theme: Marriage and Family
Programs: Council as a Family

September: General Meeting _____ Baby Shower _____
Non-Meeting Program _____ Council Sunday _____

October: General Meeting _____ Human Trafficking _____
Non-Meeting Program _____ Farm Workers _____

November: General Meeting _____ NCCW Day of Prayer & Fasting
_____ to End World Hunger _____
Non-Meeting Program _____ Advent Prayer Service _____

December: General Meeting _____ Christmas Bake/Craft Sale _____
Non-Meeting Program _____ Children's Choir _____

January: General Meeting _____ Santa's Mistakes _____
Non-Meeting Program _____ Chastity Days _____

February: General Meeting _____ Heart Smart Family _____
Non-Meeting Program _____ MADD = Mothers Against _____
_____ Drunk Driving _____

March: General Meeting _____ St. Joseph's Table _____
Non-Meeting Program _____ Lenten Day of Reflection _____

April: General Meeting _____ Capitol Days _____
Non-Meeting Program _____ Merry Mary Day _____

May: General Meeting _____ Mother's Day Contest _____
Non-Meeting Program _____ Living Rosary _____

Monthly Planning Form – Template

For _____ (Month)

Affiliation: _____ Council Year: _____

This Year's Theme: _____

General Meeting Program: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Bulletin Announcement: _____

Bulletin Approved by: _____

Dates for Announcement: _____

Committee Chair for this Event: _____

Social Media Announcement: _____

Approved by: _____

Date for publication: _____

Dates for Announcement: _____

Email Reminder to Members: _____

Approved by: _____

Date for publication: _____

Suggested Activities: _____

Opening Prayer: _____

Closing Prayer: _____

Monthly Planning Form – Sample

For September

Affiliation: (name of parish) Council of Catholic Women

Council Year: 20____ - 20____

This Year’s Theme: Marriage and Family

Programs: Council as a Family

General Meeting Program: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Bulletin Announcement:

Calling all women of the parish to join us for our annual Council of Catholic Women Family Reunion. Come and meet the rest of your “family” as we start a new council year. All women of the parish are invited. If you have never been to a meeting, come and see what we are all about. Learn and grow with us as we empower each other in Spirituality, Leadership and Service.

Dates for Announcement: _____

Non-Meeting Program: _____

Committee Chair for this Event: _____

NOTE: One of the Committees – Service or Leadership Commission could also be responsible for this program.

Pastor/Spiritual Advisors: Approval and Involvement

Once you have established your goals, theme and calendar for the year, make an appointment with your pastor and/or spiritual advisor.

As you may know, there are numerous ministries in each parish, all wanting a meeting space, or special date to hold their events. It is also a well-known fact that councils flourish in parishes where their pastors/spiritual advisors understand the mission of NCCW and value the service of their membership.

Communication is key in establishing a good relationship with your pastor. After you have a preliminary plan, make an appointment with your pastor. Introduce yourself if he does not know you. Share your vision with him for council and ask him what he would like to see your affiliation do. Communicate programs that NCCW is endorsing and how your council would like to aid and assist in this endeavor.

Let him know that his council members are praying for him and make sure they do so at each meeting. Remember his birthday and ordination anniversary (and any other priest in your parish) with a card and/or gift.

Many parishes have facility and date reservation forms you must fill out to hold a meeting or event in the parish. **DO NOT ASSUME YOU WILL HAVE YOUR MEETINGS THE SAME TIME AND DAY OF THE WEEK AS LAST YEAR.** Although this is likely to happen, it may not, so be prepared to ask permission for your meetings and events on the master parish calendar.

When you meet with your pastor give him:

- Two copies of your meetings- dates, time, location
- Two copies of a list of your events, and what facilities you will need for these events. Times for set-up and clean ups should be considered as well.
- A copy of your budget.

Get his approval on this by having him initial or sign off on your list. Let him keep a copy and you keep a copy for your records. Get his signed permission for everything you will want to do in the upcoming council year. This should also include your budget. He may want you to meet with the “scheduling secretary” of the parish before you have the meeting with him.

You may think, why can't our council sell tickets for our raffle outside of Mass on a certain date? Try to see the bigger picture. “Raffle?” your pastor says. Maybe the parish is planning a raffle or the KOC, or the Youth Group. We can't have everyone asking for money each week after Mass. Or perhaps you want the social hall for a membership tea only to find out that the social hall is reserved on that specific date for another ministry. ASK and inquire what are the parish rules and policies for reserving space and getting permission to hold specific events. This will also include having outside speakers at your meetings. Some dioceses require that any speaker for a program or retreat be “vetted” by the diocese first. This means that the diocese will require certain criteria to “approve” a guest speaker. They may require a letter of good standing from the speakers' pastor or bishop. Your diocese will be happy to let

you know what the vetting requirements are for a guest speaker or presenter. Many times, all you must do is let them know the speakers' name, parish, address and date and they will do the rest for you.

Let your pastor know that you and your membership are there to aid and assist him. Ask him what his image of the council is. This may be a huge eye opener to you.

After he has approved your meeting programs and dates, ask him what program date(s) he thinks he could attend. Some Spiritual Advisors try to attend every meeting while others cannot attend any. If he feels he can attend one or more, make sure you contact him or his secretary two weeks prior to the meeting to gently remind him and let him know how everyone is looking forward to his coming.

Try to obtain a list of events for the upcoming year in the parish. Why? Knowing what other ministries are planning is a wonderful opportunity for you to collaborate with them on a project. Working together on a program or project gives each ministry insight into the other. By doing so, you may see your membership increase as well as enjoy a very successful year of working together and accomplishing greater results.

Building a strong relationship with your pastor/spiritual advisor is vital for your council. If, for some reason, there has been tension or stress in past years, let him know you want to work with him and be successful in accomplishing all your goals for council and the parish. Make any changes suggested by your Pastor/Spiritual Advisor. Let him know that you would like to meet on a regular basis and ask him what is best for him (monthly, quarterly).



“Christian charity is meaningless without concrete and exterior acts of love.”—Thomas Merton

Tips for Improving Your Councils

It is necessary to translate the Church's new understanding of the role women play in today's world into action. To achieve this:

1. Evaluate past programs and procedures; eliminate what is no longer relevant; streamline for action.
2. Focus on those activities found meaningful; expand work in areas already undertaken; initiate new activities/new projects if needed.
3. Cooperate with other community groups and other parishes on civic projects; support ecumenical projects/programs.
4. Respond to the need for volunteers in other institutions: collaborate with associations and agencies formed to respond to human needs, alleviate human suffering, develop better understanding between people, and deal with other social problems in ways consistent with Catholic teaching and tradition.

5. No one group can be active in all areas of the apostolate. Each can, and should, set up a priority of needs to address and work to inform members capable and willing to meet them.

One benefit of these actions may be younger women seeking you out.

Assessment of (Ideas For) Program Variety

Council encourages the formation of members, and their growth in Christian maturity in numerous ways. Here are a few examples for your council to consider:

1. Providing knowledgeable speakers who discuss topics of vital importance. Ensure that these speakers have been vetted by the Bishop's Office at the Chancery, if required.
2. Encouraging member participation through proven adult education and enrichment techniques: interactive presentations, small group discussions, question and answer periods, and similar techniques.
3. Using up-to-date audio-visual materials—videos, webinars, CDs—at general and special interest meetings.
4. Providing books and periodicals to encourage reading. Starting a book club.
5. Establishing and strengthening discussion clubs on commission areas. Providing them with reference materials and the services of consultants as resource persons.
6. Urging attendance at all council meetings. Ensuring your meetings are well publicized. Do you make attendance possible for more women by providing childcare and car pools?
7. Providing a day of recollection or weekend retreat for members. Promoting attendance at these and other spiritual activities. Actively build relationships between members.
8. Encouraging commission/committee chairs to attend all meetings provided for them. Making sure commission chairs meet frequently with their members or with members of other commissions.
9. Using all available means to promote general membership in NCCW and active involvement in the arch/diocesan and parish councils. Do you have an informative newsletter, a useful website with a link to the NCCW website, and an email mailing list that is kept up to date? It is wise to use the parish bulletins and website for optimum communication.
10. It is important to keep current with technology and to access the nccw.org and usccb.org websites.