

The Planning Council Chair

Miami-Dade HIV/AIDS Partnership

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Miami–Dade HIV/AIDS Partnership

3.3 Responsibilities of the Chair

“Chair” (or Chairperson or Chairman or Chairwoman) = The most important and the most misunderstood role in an organization and the one most vital to the successful operation of a board and/or a formal or informal decision making body, such as a committee.

Responsibilities

1. Abide by the Miami–Dade HIV/AIDS Partnership Bylaws.
2. Preside at all meetings of the Partnership (“Partnership” in this section refers to the full Partnership, committees and subcommittees, unless otherwise noted). This role includes making sure discussion follows the agenda, that members speak one at a time and in the order of the queue, that speakers limit comments to the time allotted, and that the meeting follows Robert’s Rules of Order.
3. Sign instruments and correspondence which the Partnership has authorized to be executed.
4. Perform duties as authorized and prescribed by the Partnership from time to time.
5. Assign Partnership members to committees (full Partnership chair only).
6. Upon recommendation of the organization, appoint committees, fill vacancies, change the membership or discharge any such committee (full Partnership chair only).
7. Represent the Partnership at public or official functions.

The chair elect serves in the capacity of chair in the absence of the chair or upon request of the chair.

These duties are all standard of such officers. In reality, the roles and responsibilities of a chair are far greater, though often more limited than the common view. It is just as important to know these roles and limitations as the official duties of the chair.

The position of chair does not place the chair's opinion above those of others or give the chair an audience for his/her views.

Characteristics of an Effective Chair

1. **Leadership** The chair is a facilitator, not an order-giver but a master of eliciting participation, cooperation and respect from all members of the Partnership.
2. **Ability** to act as an unbiased umpire, just judge and friendly disciplinarian.
3. **Demonstrable Skills** in conducting a meeting.
4. **Sharing** information and knowledge relevant to the work at hand of the Partnership.
5. **Encouragement** by rewarding participation, civility and self control.
6. **Empowerment** of others to do the right thing and sets an example by her/his own behavior.
7. **Aloofness** The chair delegates responsibilities effectively.
8. **Accountability** to the group he/she leads.
9. **Collaboration** by stressing teamwork and competition only in the service of attaining Partnership goals.
10. **Generosity** in complimenting others and sharing the glory with all.
11. **Non participation** The chair does not participate in debate or discussion unless (and only in rare instances) relinquishing the gavel.
12. **Equanimity** in evaluating the performance of individual team members and achievement of group goals.
13. **Mutuality** The chair builds mutual respect through generous use of praise and caring.

The Chair is a facilitator, a master of eliciting participation, cooperation and respect.

A Chair Should NOT

1. Dominate the conversation.
2. Make motions.
3. Disrespect opposing views.
4. Put his/her pet peeve or priority in the spotlight.
5. Be insensitive to others or use an abrasive, bullying or intimidating style.

The position of Chair does not place the Chair's opinion above those of others or give the Chair an audience

To Run an Effective Meeting, the Chair:

1. Demonstrates understanding of Robert's Rules of Order and the Partnership Bylaws.
2. Defines and states the purpose and goals of the meeting as defined by the agenda.
3. Invites participation by all members of the organization throughout the meeting.
4. Listens to team or group members.
5. Defines and clearly illustrates steps to a rational problem solving sequence for arriving at decisions, choices, recommendations or actions.
6. Manages contention and rude behavior, uses humor and positive affect to diffuse heated arguments or conflicts and encourages civil disagreement.
7. Stresses the need for consensus and compromise.
8. Begins and ends the meeting on time (except in rare extenuating circumstances).

An effective Chair assures that all speakers are treated with equal respect and given equal time to state their views.