12 steps to retain planning council members

- Hold a **new member orientation** or special gathering at certain times of the year to recognize new members. Include a date for the function on a yearly calendar of events.
- Distribute **a questionnaire** to new members to gather information and ask for their bio and a photo. Recognize members in the monthly newsletter or website, or establish a small exhibit area at each meeting and feature one of the members.
- **Survey new members** after a designated period (3-6 months) to determine their level of satisfaction, any concerns, and additional support they might need.
- **Maintain a database** or directory of all members (an email directory is ideal) to contact members quickly and efficiently and keep them abreast of new developments.
- Send a **thank-you letter** to each member's organization acknowledging them for allowing their employee to be involved and highlighting the employee's activities and the benefits of the planning body to the community.
- Conduct **an exit interview** survey for memberships that lapse.
- **Place a call** to members who've missed several meetings, let them know they are missed, and bring them up-to-date.
- **Issue a yearly calendar** including meeting dates, trainings and other special events.
- **Create an unsung heroes award** to honor those who make valuable contributions to the council but are not usually recognized for their efforts.
- Ask for **member input and feedback** and respond to members' expressed needs and interests.
- **Honor longtime members** on the anniversary of their membership.
- **Assign a new member** to be greeter or introduce a guest speaker or program.

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