



## What Makes FFTA Chapters Successful?

Below are some tips, provided by successful FFTA chapter chairs, on how to enhance the value of your chapter and involve members in chapter activities.

### General Ideas

- Create a mission statement for the chapter and consider the development of a strategic plan.
- Promote relationship building between the state and TFC providers.
- Consider having your chapter write a “white paper” on an important issue that could impact TFC. Distribute to key stakeholders.
- Address the macro issues of the state that agencies cannot easily address individually (e.g.: general and community education; advocacy--how TFC fits into the continuum of care).
- Create a chapter leadership succession plan. Chapters should have a Vice Chairperson who will be “groomed” to succeed the current Chapter Chairperson.
- To recruit new members, and create the potential for increasing the size and “voice” of your chapter, invite non-members to participate in one chapter meeting during the year.
- Hold a full day training for TFC agency personnel on topics of interest. Charge a nominal fee to cover expenses, or use it as a fund raising opportunity to support future chapter activities.
- Sponsor an annual weekend training program for foster parents to assist them with obtaining their in-service training hours.
- Maintain ongoing communication between chapter leadership and members via e-mail/or listservs. Be sure that you have a current list of all FFTA members and the names of the primary contact persons.
- Mobilize members to be involved in a chapter-sponsor event to honor National Foster Care Month (May).

### Making Your Meetings Successful

- In the beginning of the year, create a meeting schedule for the whole year.
- Make meetings valuable and provide learning opportunities. For example, invite state officials to speak at chapter meetings on “hot topics” such as audits or funding issues.

- Schedule meetings at the lunchtime hour and provide lunch, if possible. Consider having member agencies take turns providing meeting space, and/or lunch. Alternatively, have a “brown bag” lunch meeting.
- Schedule meetings at a central location. In cases where members are spread throughout the state, try rotating meetings to ensure that every agency can participate in at least one or two meetings a year.
- Provide time during the chapter meeting for valuable networking. For example, ask each member to provide a brief update on the work of their agency. Allow time for members to talk about a particular challenge they are having or resources they are seeking so that others can help.
- Assign individuals in the chapter to participate in outside workgroups, steering committees, etc. that focus on family-based services. Have them bring information back to the chapter.

### **Taking advantage of resources available from FFTA & linking local and national initiatives**

- Ask FFTA to create a chapter listserv for members in your state to enhance communication between meetings.
- Encourage individuals to participate in FFTA committees, such as Research or Public Policy. Ask them to share information gained with the chapter.
- Take advantage of FFTA’s Rapid Response Initiative to gain national support of local policy issues.
- Ask FFTA to post chapter meeting dates/locations on the chapter’s website page.
- Let other’s know what your chapter is doing, by sending updates on the chapter’s activities for inclusion in FFTA’s E-newsletter.
- Network with other chapter chairs by using the FFTA Chapter Chairs’ listserv.
- Nominate an FFTA member agency representative to the FFTA Board of Directors. Chapters can benefit from having a local member agency represented on the Board of Directors.
- Use FFTA staff as a resource for your chapter.

### **Successful strategies to work in conjunction with your state child caring association**

- In cases where there is a lot of overlap in FFTA members with state association members...pick one particular topic with which to focus efforts (e.g.: best practices in TFC or funding TFC).
- Consider co-hosting a training with the state association, which includes workshops on TFC.
- Schedule chapter meetings either immediately before or after a state association meeting (assuming meeting space is available).

- Identify policy issues of mutual interest with the state association and seek ways in which to collaborate. Chapters can complement the work of the state association, especially if the state association doesn't have a TFC sub-committee or special interest group.
- Invite state child caring association representatives to chapter meetings and involve them in the chapter's work. Encourage state associations to become "Affiliate Members" of FFTA so that they are connected to resources provided by FFTA National.

*Send other ideas to the FFTA office*