



LEADERSHIP

ADVANCEMENT PLAN

2024-2026 GFWC CLUB MANUAL

LEADERSHIP IS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INFLUENCE

This Advancement Plan contains valuable information, including practical ideas and resources to assist States, Districts, and clubs in developing leadership skills in their members. Whatever talent you use, leadership always involves taking risks, being innovative, and promoting new directions. Some may talk about being born leaders, but most of us learn how to be a strong leader, and we should never stop learning and stretching. Just as “management” as a philosophy has evolved through the years into “leadership,” there has also been a growing realization that leadership development involves personal growth and improvement and influencing and fostering others.

Specific leadership areas have been addressed in this plan, and we are pleased to revise and expand the Leadership Toolkit. An index and directions for accessing the Member Portal are available in this plan. Additionally, we will continue to offer leadership development, resources, and opportunities.



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**GENERAL FEDERATION
OF WOMEN'S CLUBS**

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CLUB CONNECTION INITIATIVE:

TRAINING NEW LEADERS



Be proactive and develop a comprehensive plan for training and equipping potential new leaders over time. Adopt a LEADS philosophy and offer leadership education and development-type programs in your local club. Be sure to provide comprehensive orientations for new leaders. Introduce the Federation's culture, mission, and values. Apply and share what you learn at GFWC Annual Conventions as you identify and groom new leaders. Develop a succession plan and arrange succession sharing as new leaders assume responsibilities. Build skills and experience and prepare potential leaders for success. Register new leaders on the GFWC Member Portal and the Legislative Action Center so they have immediate access to GFWC's comprehensive resources and tools.

Download the GFWC Leadership Toolkit and the LEADS Application in the GFWC Digital Library.

FEATURED PROJECTS



CLUB MENTORS AND SUPPORTIVE TRANSITIONS

GFWC Northboro Junior Woman's Club (MA) believes that developing and supporting leaders is important to keep the club vibrant and growing. Therefore, the nominating committee promotes the role of Co-Presidents. Past presidents are encouraged to team with and mentor less experienced members. The hope is that each newer Co-President feels more familiar with the president's responsibilities and confident enough to continue into a second year, taking on the mentoring role to another inexperienced member.



THIS CLUB MAKES LEARNING FUN!

The president of the GFWC History Club of Whitesboro (TX) was a LEADS graduate in 2022. She applied what she learned in her club, District, and State. She knew members learn new skills when presented in a fun manner; thus, she developed skits and games and adapted songs used at various levels. Two games were GFWC Trivia and GFWC Communication Jeopardy, both great ways to teach members about GFWC.

What an entertaining way to teach members about leadership. You can Google "Jeopardy PowerPoint Template" and find different templates to use. These can be tailored to meet the needs of your club and can add that element of fun to training your future leaders.



TRANSITIONING NEW OFFICERS

The Woman's Club of Hammonton (NJ) had a change in leadership, with mostly new officers. As the new board prepared for new roles, they shadowed the outgoing board members for a month. Both boards met after the installation to hand over files and exchange ideas about their roles. The new officers felt more comfortable taking over their new positions through this mentoring process.



MEMBER-AT-LARGE BOARD POSITIONS LEADERSHIP IN ACTION!

The Woman's Club of Newport News (VA) had three Member-At-Large positions on the Board of Directors. These three members were selected based on their desire to explore the possibility of eventually running for an elected office. Although Members-At-Large were non-voting members, they were placed on the agenda and allowed to speak at each board meeting. These At-Large members were also encouraged to submit articles for inclusion in the newsletter.

EVERYONE IS A LEADER EVERY DAY

A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader, a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves." - **Eleanor Roosevelt**, author, politician, and diplomat

From mothers, wives, and sisters, to club presidents, officers, and members, everybody has the opportunity to be a leader in their daily lives. Each day you make decisions on what to wear, the next book you want to read, what project your club will pursue, or how you will fundraise for your local charities. No matter how small a decision may seem, this is leadership. As a leader, you set the example for those around you and take on the responsibility that comes with this role.

Let us spin the concept of "everyday leadership." Here are seven acts of everyday leaders:

1. **Commit.** Passion is a strong desire that can get you to do amazing things. Passion is an emotion to be acted upon. Without action, passion yields no worthwhile results. Passion is the fuel for the fire of action. When you have passion for something, you love it even when you hate it. What are you passionate about? Gardening, exercising, helping animals, teaching, reading, writing, politicking, volunteering, shopping, organizing, art?
2. **Listen.** It is rare for someone to say, "I am a lousy listener." Almost everyone says, "I am a great listener." The fact of the matter is that we are terrible at listening. Everyday leaders engage their power of listening; listen more than you speak. Listen to experts and fellow enthusiasts, including those you disagree with. Absorb their perspectives, insights, and experiences.
3. **Communicate.** You have feelings, experiences, opinions, and a voice. All have value, so share them often. You become an everyday leader by expressing your thoughts and ideas. Unconventional, way-out-there input from you is better than silence.
4. **Be humble.** We all know so-called leaders who are described as arrogant, entitled, and controlling. Do not be that leader! See yourself as an everyday person whose experiences and voice matter as much as the next person's, no more and no less than others. Think of it as coming from a place of community and in the spirit of making life happier for everyone.
5. **Innovate.** There are formulas for everything, and they are copied and followed. This shows in predictable books and movies, architectural blueprints and housing developments with no originality, meeting agendas that leave little room for innovation, and how about the unspoken rules! You do not have to shock and awe every chance you get but think about offering something fresh to further the conversation or something original to move the ball.
6. **Learn.** If you are human, you have failed. Failure, however, is not an end to the story, it is a beginning. The trick is to "Fail Forward." What did you learn, and what will you change next time? Then, you get back up and keep moving forward. Failure is an everyday leader's protein; it is where the energy comes from.
7. **Smile!** Your smile can change the world. It is a powerful tool. Your smile brings hope, light, acceptance, and gratitude.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO BUILD LEADERSHIP?

It is important for leaders to be aware of the challenges involved in identifying and developing prospective leaders and to create an action plan to ensure strong, competent leadership for the future. Most often, people will be more likely to accept leadership positions with a clearer understanding if they have a good idea of what is expected and know that you, as the leader, will nurture and support them along the journey.

The leader—whether it is the president, director, or chairman—may consider the following strategies for growing new leaders:

- Consider officers and their responsibilities and prepare a detailed handout for each. Hold a team planning meeting for the new officers, share the responsibilities for each office, discuss the status of activities, and develop a preliminary plan for future projects. By engaging these leaders in understanding their duties and in developing plans, you will help build their understanding and skills.
- Pull members together from time to time to reflect on progress and needs and to consider next steps or necessary changes to accomplish the goal.
- Conduct mini-leadership presentations to help members gain a better understanding and develop new skills.
- Step back and allow new leaders to work and grow. While mistakes may be made, if you nurture your new leaders as they find their way, they will grow in skill and confidence. Praise new leaders for the job they are doing.
- Encourage new members to contribute to various activities where their fresh ideas will be helpful.
- Incorporate reports on GFWC activities at club meetings to connect members with the Federation and other GFWC clubs.
- Take advantage of member diversity. Each individual member brings unique skills to the club.
- Mentor new leaders. Support them with suggestions. Encourage participation in all GFWC activities. Travel with them and help with expenses when possible. Provide them with GFWC resource materials. This is an investment that will pay off!
- Share the work. It is easier if members help plan meetings, participate in projects, and write reports.
- Be generous with your appreciation.
- Nurture and prepare successors for their work. Leaders should be supportive.

Leadership roles often include public speaking and that may include asking a member to step out of the “comfort zone.” Public speaking is often reported as one of the top social fears. Don’t hesitate to encourage someone to assume a leadership position because of a fear of public speaking. Leaving an area of comfort requires a little preparation and practice but does result in success. A great resource to help a new leader plan and deliver presentations can be found in the new Communication and Public Relations Toolkit.

WHERE TO FIND POTENTIAL LEADERS

“The way to achieve your own success is to be willing to help somebody else get it first.” - **Iyanla Vanzant**, inspirational speaker & author

As the leader, it is essential that you equip your officers and committee chairmen to function effectively. Together you will help your club make a real difference in your community. To do that, regular training will be extremely helpful to ensure they handle their duties and are growing in their leadership capacity. Reviewing and discussing the guidelines for the various officers, and brainstorming ways your leadership team can grow beyond expectations, will help to build strong leadership. To encourage leadership succession, look to the following:

CLUB MEMBER

- Accepts responsibility and takes initiative even when not serving as an officer.
- Motivates others by their enthusiasm and may recognize that their interests lie in planning and

- implementing projects.
- Demonstrates creativity and is energetic.
- Grows through being included in projects and club work.

FORMER CLUB OFFICER

- Serves at the District or State level and has served the club in several positions.
- Has experience and knows the members and their skills.
- Offers valuable suggestions.
- Continues her service to the club when encouraged.

CURRENT CLUB OFFICER

- Accepts responsibilities that require attendance at additional meetings and has good organizational skills.
- Demonstrates confidence from other club members who have elected her to the position.
- Asks questions when they are unsure and seeks the advice of respected mentors.

NEW MEMBER

- Wants to become involved while being an enthusiastic new member.
- Accepts responsibilities if asked by a club leader.
- Serves as a breath of fresh air because she is not limited by preconceived ideas of how things are usually done.

DELEGATING AND SHAPING NEW LEADERS

As club members are entrusted with responsibility, they will become invested in the project and more likely to take on a leadership role. One may be hesitant to delegate because of the desire to ensure the task is performed correctly. However, by keeping an open mind, you will find there are a variety of ways that a job can be done.

REASONS TO DELEGATE

When leaders delegate responsibilities, members:

- Become more enthusiastic, involved, and dedicated.
- Share tasks, allowing the club to undertake more projects and activities.
- Complete club projects in a time-efficient manner.
- Develop skills and confidence to gain experience to step into club leadership roles.
- Grow a club that runs smoothly and effectively.

BENEFITS TO LEADERS

- Maintain calm by not spreading themselves too thin and "burning out."
- Gain satisfaction from watching members grow and develop.
- Improve leadership skills in executive and administrative functions.

WAYS TO DELEGATE

After thoroughly explaining the requirements and deadlines:

- Ask for volunteers by a show of hands or sign-up sheet.

- Appoint or suggest someone for the task. This shows confidence in ability and potential.
- Assign the task to a committee to take the pressure off the individual or new leader.

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE DELEGATION

- Know members' talents and abilities in order to set them up for success.
- Support members by sharing resources, information, knowledge, and plans with them. Delegate meaningful segments or portions of tasks.
- Discuss the assigned task and set mutual goals and objectives. Clearly define the responsibilities, expectations, and bounds of authority for each delegated task. Emphasize the end goal, rather than the steps, to encourage creativity and innovation, while retaining focus. Communicate on the progress of the task but avoid micromanaging.
- Give accurate, honest, and tactful feedback to encourage growth.
- Delegate! As a leader, it can be hard to let go because you like being the "doer," but let your appointees have ownership of their assigned jobs.



SETTING THE TONE & CREATING A HEALTHY CLUB CULTURE

Setting the tone for your organization can be difficult at times, as leadership roles inherently come with stress and a glaring spotlight that can be unforgiving if not handled properly.

Be a leader whom you would want to follow.

When setting the tone for your organization always remember to put yourself in your team's shoes first. If you know that members look forward to coming to club meetings, you have taken a great first step in establishing a culture of success. If the opposite is true, your club's cultural climate could be headed in the wrong direction. Assess your club's activities and how club members interact with each other. Do they respect others' ideas and opinions and work together as a team? Are they invested in the club's projects? Or should a new format or ideas be introduced at meetings to increase interest and engagement? Recognize challenges and do not be afraid to propose changes when needed.

Always be accessible.

In setting the tone for your club, it is always a good policy to make yourself as accessible as possible to your club members. A collaborative atmosphere where people feel at ease with providing their input on any given topic fosters trust within the club, which contributes greatly to a culture of success.

Always maintain your composure.

Maintaining composure at all times is a key component to setting a positive tone for any organization. If the leader of a club regularly succumbs to the pressures around her and often loses her composure, the team around her will likely follow suit. A cool and levelheaded leader helps to foster a calm, steady culture within the organization.

Stay positive when adversity hits.

It is a given that every club is going to be hit with adversity. However, maintaining an eye on the future, keeping a positive outlook, and realizing that every setback is only temporary has a direct impact on how the members around you react. Showing confidence that brighter days lie ahead, which they always do, imbues that confidence in the members around you and goes a long way towards building a positive culture for your club.

Make the mission bigger than yourself or the club.

As the leader of any club, you have the power to inspire. One of the most effective ways to do this is to clearly articulate the mission you have undertaken and what it contributes to the world around you. Whether serving in the club, District, or State Federation, when members fully understand the lasting impact their efforts will have, there's a buy-in and a passion for fulfilling the mission that goes a long way towards creating a sustainable culture of success. In leadership roles, it is impossible not to contribute to the culture within the organizations we serve. Setting the right tone and staying focused on maintaining it over time can, and should, ensure that leadership efforts have a lasting impact.

DEVELOPING A LEADERSHIP ACTION PLAN FOR YOUR CLUB

A Leadership Action Plan helps leaders understand the club's strengths and weaknesses. The plan assists clubs in setting goals and taking actions to become stronger clubs. Consider making a Leadership Action Plan that will encourage self-examination and evaluation, develop action steps to achieve the goals in the plan, and set a timeline for accomplishing goals. Tools located in the GFWC Member Portal in the Leadership Toolkit can be helpful in creating the plan.

Steps to include in a Leadership Plan:

1. Determine the strengths of club volunteers using surveys and small group meetings to determine interests.
2. Provide training:
 - a. Develop procedure books for Community Service Program (CSP) chairmen or large project chairmen.
 - b. Develop a comprehensive list of responsibilities for officers and chairmen.
 - c. Hold group training meetings:
 - i. Provide resources (i.e., GFWC and state websites).
 - ii. Share club reporting information (the "how to," recording, and tracking data for projects, activities, and forms, etc.).
 - d. Establish important dates for club calendar, including deadlines for newsletters.
 - e. Determine financial needs either from the club or through donations.
3. Assign mentors to provide guidance for new leaders.
4. Hold a yearly planning meeting to establish goals and set timelines for the year.
5. Hold routine CSP or Advancement Plan committee meetings to plan projects and activities.
6. Evaluate your club projects at the completion of the work.
 - a. Were they successful/did they achieve the goal established?
 - b. If not, why? What could you have done differently?
 - c. Should they be done again?

A Leadership Action Plan is an important tool to ensure that the goals of your club stay at the forefront of all decisions and serve as a guide throughout the year. Revising the Leadership Action Plan periodically will keep the club energized and focused on manageable goals.

CREATING A PLAN OF SUCCESSION

An orderly transition of officers is the glue that holds an organization together. It implies stability, confidence, and continuity of operation. We must also be prepared for unexpected vacancies with a written succession plan in place. This can help the club handle the inevitable challenges of leadership transition.

TIPS FOR LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

- Identify present and future challenges and the qualifications necessary for a leader to meet them. Prepare a job description to provide a complete depiction of the role and responsibilities.
- Have an established timeline for leadership succession.
- Establish an Emergency Plan, similar to a lesson plan, to include delegation of duties and authority during an unexpected transition.
- Provide leadership development for all members so they will have a broader knowledge of the club, state, and international activities.
- Be sure to get the support of all members for newly placed officers.
- Help new officers feel confident enough to find their own voice.
- Avoid micromanaging new officers. Give them the opportunity to do their job but assist when asked to do so.

Careful planning is the most important part of a successful transition. Plus, a strong transition plan helps members feel confident and secure. Create a structured process to ensure leadership continuity and to retain and develop knowledge and relationships in the future. A powerful succession plan focuses on ensuring the flow of information is open and concise for the new leadership.

Transition planning also helps the current leaders “let go” through sharing of information. There’s no “easy” button for leaders, but those who have served long-term positions can face especially tough transitions. They are proud of their achievements and are attached to the projects they leave behind.

No matter how long or well a leader has served, it is best for all clubwomen to have a plan for transferring knowledge and authority and letting go of role “ownership.” Somehow, all the information that is stored only in the leader’s head must be accessed and captured. But how? Consider creating a Transition Plan Checklist or use the one that can be found in the Leadership Toolkit.

LEADERSHIP & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

BOOKS

Turn Around, Lisa Gable

The Power of Presence, Kristi Hedges

Tribes, Seth Godwin

Take Action Fighting for Women and Girls,
Stephanie Foster

Eat That Frog, Brian Tracy

Dare to Lead, Brene Brown

Developing the Leader Within You 2.0, John
Maxwell

Find Your Why, Simon Sinek

Getting Things Done, David Allen

How Women Rise, Sally Helgesen & Marshall
Goldsmith

Never Split the Difference, Chris Voss

Start with Why, Simon Sinek

Ted Talks Guide to Public Speaking, Chris
Anderson

The Infinite Game, Simon Sinek

The Motive, Patrick Lencioni

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,
 Steven Covey
The Speed of Trust, Steven Covey
Think Again, Adam Grant
Tiny Leaps, Big Changes, Gregg Clunis
Who Moved My Cheese? Spencer Johnson, MD

WEBSITES

LivingAsALeader.com: Good blog articles and book summaries
ctb.ku.edu/en/building-leadership: Community Tool Box, Building Leadership resources
Readitfor.Me: Paid subscription service 200+ book summaries
JamesClear.com: Building systems and habits
Trello.com: Free project management
Genhq.com: Leader in generational studies

TED TALKS

Amy Cuddy: *Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are* (power posing, the book is *Presence*)

Simon Sinek: *How Great Leaders Inspire Action* (the book is *Start with Why*)

Brene Brown: *The Power of Vulnerability* (books are *Dare to Lead*, *Doing Greatly*, *Rising Strong*)

Dan Pink: *The Puzzle of Motivation* (the book is *Drive*)

Natalie Fratto: *3 Ways to Measure Your Adaptability, and How to Improve It*

Stanley McChrystal: *Listen, Learn, then Lead*

Drew Dudley: *Lollipop Moments*

PODCASTS

Craig Groeschel Leadership

Next Level Leaders with Nichole Harrop

Tiny Leaps, Big Changes

Women Taking the Lead with Jodi Flynn

APPS

GLOSE

Libby, by OverDrive

Hoopla

Cloud Library

THE GFWC LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT

This well-received resource contains a variety of topics available in the GFWC Member Portal and is updated frequently.

To access the toolkit, you must first have a GFWC Member Portal account.

- To create an account, or login, go to GFWC.org and click on Member Login at the top right corner of the page. Or directly login from memberportal.gfwc.org
- Click on the Digital Library Page
- The Leadership Toolkit can be found under "Toolkits." The entire toolkit will download as a .zip file. To open the folder, just double-click.

Topics are recommended by GFWC leaders and include the following resources, some of which are also available in this plan:

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Access personal development resources.
- Discover your unique personality and strengths.
- Explore the principles of empowered well-being.
- Learn effective time management.

- Set achievable goals and cast a compelling vision.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERS

- Build leadership and encourage new leaders.
- Create a plan of succession and checklist for leadership transition.
- Provide and receive constructive feedback.
- Refine leadership development strategies to be more relevant.
- Set the tone and create a healthy club culture.
- Strengthen conflict resolution skills.

CLUB, DISTRICT, AND STATE FEDERATION LEADER RESOURCES

- Accept your fiduciary responsibility.
- Adhere to principles of protocol.
- Celebrate GFWC history and highlights.
- Conduct business utilizing an agenda.
- Develop an effective club budget.
- Enjoy the benefits of belonging to GFWC.
- Follow parliamentary procedure.
- Identify all GFWC Deadlines/Awards/Contests.
- Investigate applying for 501(c)(3) status.
- Know GFWC governance and organizational structure.
- Plan State, District, and Region Meetings.
- Review officer duties & responsibilities.
- Start with sample GFWC club bylaws.
- Survey your members to understand their needs.
- Teach parliamentary procedure in a workshop.
- Understand nonprofit financial statements.

GFWC LEADS

The GFWC Leadership, Education, and Development Seminar (LEADS) identifies GFWC members at the local level who have the potential and desire to assume leadership positions in their State Federations and/or GFWC on the national level. Participation in GFWC LEADS can help up-and-coming leaders gain the capabilities, confidence, and commitment necessary to pursue and achieve higher leadership roles or offices and serve with distinction.

GFWC LEADS is held annually on the day prior to the official opening of the GFWC Annual Convention. The program may include the following:

- Overview of public speaking, time management, vision casting, and conflict resolution.
- Explanation of GFWC resources, materials, and assistance.

- Outline of GFWC policies, parliamentary procedure, and protocol.
- Discussion of tips and techniques for pursuing personal growth and developing leadership opportunities.

One attendee from each State Federation and International Affiliate Club is eligible to participate in the annual GFWC LEADS program. GFWC demonstrates its commitment to training leaders by funding a portion of the expenses of candidates who are members of per capita dues paying clubs. State Federations may also offer to fund a portion of expenses. LEADS candidates are asked to be responsible for a portion of expenses as an affirmation of their personal commitment to their leadership development and training. Contact your state leadership chairman for an application and deadline information. Chosen candidates are due from state leadership to GFWC Second Vice President and GFWC Leadership Chairman by March 15, annually.

STATE AND DISTRICT LEADS PROGRAMS

States and Districts are encouraged to hold a LEADS program to identify and develop strong potential leaders prepared to assume club, District, and State leadership positions. By implementing a well-designed LEADS event, the leadership experience gap will be addressed, and the talent and enthusiasm of a trained, confident group of volunteers will be more effectively used. The individual members, as well as our organization and communities, will benefit. State leadership can determine when the state or District LEADS program is best conducted. A new resource section has been added to the Leadership Toolkit for use in creating half- and full-day LEADS events using materials available in the toolkit.

Members of the 2024-2026 GFWC Leadership Committee are experienced and have diverse and comprehensive backgrounds. We are dedicated to GFWC and look forward to developing strong leaders through our partnership. The vision we cast as leaders while engaging our members will ensure an even greater impact by our GFWC clubs. Each GFWC Region has a representative on the Leadership Committee. Please reach out to these talented leaders for their assistance and guidance.

AWARDS

GFWC recognizes State Federations for outstanding projects and clubs for creative projects in implementing effective Leadership projects, as follows:

- Certificate to one State Federation in each membership category
- \$50 award to one club in the nation for project creativity

Award winners will be determined by entries into the Award Program. Each State Federation may submit one State Award Entry and one Club Creativity Award Entry for the Leadership Advancement Plan. Entries should be submitted to the State Leadership Chairman.

Note: Clubs do not submit entries directly to GFWC or GFWC Chairmen. Club submissions go to state leadership first.