NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN GUIDELINES

The National Council of Catholic women acts through its affiliated membership to support, empower and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service. NCCW programs respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world.

NCCW BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COMMISSIONS

Since 1995 NCCW’s program and advocacy initiatives have clustered around one or more of its six commissions. In 2009, the commission system was re-organized into three commissions to align more consistently with the mission statement of NCCW. The new commissions “match-up” with current commissions:

Spirituality
Leadership
Service

THE COMMISSIONS AS A TEAM

While each commission has an aim, a truly effective way to accomplish work in any parish is to have them work together around activities – all working toward the accomplishment of the goals set forth in your planning meetings.

The individual aims of each commission do interact and so working together and supporting each other’s projects is important.

It is also important that our CCW’s do not try to meet every need that’s in the world. Limit to only a few and do a good job with carrying out the work to meet these needs.
The change from six commissions to three offers the perfect opportunity to evaluate and “refresh” your organization. Take this opportunity to reinvent a framework that will promote membership participation, develop leaders, and attract others to join you as you continue the mission to support, empower, and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service.

**Spirituality**

The aim of the Spirituality Commission is to create a community that is education and dynamic. Catholic women called to discipleship and holiness respond with personal witness and service to the Church and to the world. It serves as a conduit for helping councils focus on the spiritual aspects of our faith and how we can act on our convictions in the public sphere. This can be done and implemented in parishes in various ways such as:

- Encouraging daily Mass attendance if possible.
- Praying the Liturgy of the Hours (the official prayer of the church that unifies us with women and men throughout the world in giving glory to God)
- Promotion of Eucharistic Adoration
- Promotion of Bible Studies
- Memorial Masses
- Prayer services
- Living Rosaries
- Encourage members to attend legislative days and to sign up for alerts from their state’s Catholic conferences.
- Keeping women informed on stands of our US Bishops on Catholic social justice principals in regard to our legislative actions
- Promotion of various types of devotionals (Stations of the Cross, Praying the Rosary, Mary Devotions) etc.
· Sponsor and participate in Retreats & Days of Reflection
· Recognizing, publicizing, and praying for our individual Shepherds of the Field
· CCW Recognition Sunday

Leadership Commission

The aim of the Leadership Commission is to provide organizational development, leadership training, public relations resources and publications to ensure the successful organization and management of Council and its programs. We must help our members to develop leadership skills so that they can be leaders in our Church and in our local state, national and world communities. We are all called by the virtue of our Baptism to be apostles by the Lord Himself. It is our responsibility to step forward and take a leadership role in the protection of the dignity of life and respect for life of all ages in our world today.

We must continue to take a leadership role in the protection of the dignity of life and respect for life from conception to natural death.

This can be done and implemented in parishes in various ways such as:

· Encourage and help your parish president to hold a meeting for the year for the planning of the CCW activities – setting goals and what can be done to accomplish these goals.
· Encourage the use and sharing of available resources such as: Catholic Woman, NCCW Leadership Resource Manual, Diocesan Newsletters (both the mailed out and the monthly CCW e-newsletters)
· Encourage members to attend regional and diocesan training days, workshops, conventions, etc.
· Make self aware of all current issues and the US Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) teachings on the issues.
· Utilize the resources available on the internet such as: The Diocesan CCW
website, the NVVW website, The United States conference of Catholic Bishops website and The Vatican website.

- Become familiar with all available media resources to publicize your events and activities.
- Handle protocol issues.
- Facilitate hospitality such as: welcome new members brunch, coffee and rolls after mass, etc.
- Implement ways to communicate with members, for example: bulletin announcements, news releases, affiliation newsletter, flyers, etc.

**Service Commission**

The aim of this commission is threefold:

1) Support and enhance the importance of family life within the church and society. Work to assist families in achieving a truly Christian life and to carry out their responsibilities with the Church, the civic community and the world.

2) Engage all of its members and all people in working to address the needs and concerns of their individual communities. It focuses on action that affects the life, growth, productivity and well being of all people, especially women and children and their own communities.

3) Create awareness and educates about the needs of women and children throughout the world. Promoting the conviction that we need to share our wealth and resources with all peoples.

This can be done and implemented in parishes in various ways such as:

- Review current service programs and determine if and how you will continue to facilitate these programs if you deem them necessary in your parish.
- Learn about available resources from NCCW, Diocesan Office, local
organizations and utilize this information to effectively implement service projects in your parish.

- Hosting family awareness programs on wireless technology and stressing family values.
- Encourage couples to strengthen their marital relationships through programs such as natural Family Planning classes, marriage Encounter weekends or hosting a night in your parish entitled “Celebrate Your Marriage & Renew Your Vows”.
- Reach out and help with service to shut ins and residents of Long Term Care Facilities (Nursing Home Birthday celebrations)
- Be informed about the facilities and services for victims of domestic violence in your area and find out how your members can volunteer time and resources to help.
- Expand awareness of global humanitarian needs. (learn about other cultures by inviting an immigrant or someone from another country to speak about their culture such as a foreign exchange student).
- Be familiar with the NCCW partnership programs (Catholic Relief Services Works of Peace and Works of Reconciliation and Cross International Projects) and encourage members to support these efforts.
- Keep informed of all local current issues in your area – where can your members be of help such as:
  - Volunteering to help with local bloodmobiles – encourage members to donate blood if they can
  - Partnering with local civic organizations to meet a current project or need
  - Birthright

Conclusion

In order to create membership participation, break down the commission into sub-committees. Many members may not be ready to become a chair or be a member of the Board. Most members, however, are willing to take on a small task as part of a commission. The following are some suggested sub-programs or projects for each commission:
Spirituality

- Opening/closing prayers at meetings
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Study of Theology of the Body
- Memorial Mass
- Legislative Updates
- Living Rosaries

Leadership

- Programs
- Publicity
- Protocol
- Hospitality
- Communication

Service

- Family awareness programs on wireless technology and family values
- Community assistance to domestic abuse shelters
- International NCCW Day of Prayer and Fasting to End World Hunger
- CRS Programs (Water for Life, Madonna Plan, etc)
- Sending cards to members who are ill or expressions of sympathy

OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTIONS
The President shall preside at all meetings, appoint the chairs of the Standing and Special Committees and Commissions, and perform such duties as are incumbent upon the office. The President shall be responsible for reporting the activities of the various committees to the Diocese, Region and NCCW as requested. She shall be an ex-officio, a member of all committees.

**Specific Responsibilities and Duties**

The President shall:

- Meet with the pastor at the beginning of the term of office to discuss the role council can play in the parish.
- Serve as a liaison between the pastor and other church organizations.
- Preside at all regular monthly business and board meetings.
- Set the agenda and conduct meetings using parliamentary procedure when appropriate.
- Read and adhere to the organizations bylaws and ensure committees are appointed and/or elected at the appropriate time.
- Report at business meetings on the activities, projects, etc. particular to her responsibilities.
- Act as an ex-officio member of all committees.
- Appoint standing committee chairs and chairs of all committees as per the bylaws.
- Keep records of the activities of her office and pass these on to her successor.
- Disseminate information received from the deanery, diocesan, province, national and regional levels of the council.
- Complete and submit annual reports as requested by the dioceses, region and NCCW.
- Know the focus of the commissions and promote council programs.
- Attend and encourage members, especially the board members to attend
diocesan leadership training days or workshops and any other gatherings that will help members grow in faith and knowledge.

- Consistently seek guidance from members of the Executive Board, who function as the President’s advisors in all policy-making decisions.
- Delegate responsibilities as needed.
- Utilize members and their talents.
- Building a relationship among the board members is key to the board’s success. The board members are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

VICE PRESIDENT

The Vice President shall in the absence of the President, perform the duties of the President. She shall perform such other duties as the President shall designate.

*Specific Responsibilities and Duties*

The Vice President shall:

- Attend all regular monthly business and board meetings.
- Report at business meetings on the activities, projects, etc., particular to her responsibilities.
- Keep records of the activities of her office and pass these on to her successor.
- Know and perform the duties of the president in her absence.
- Serve on any committees or represent the council as assigned by the president.
- Know the focus of the commissions and promote Council programs.
- Attend and encourage members, especially the board members, to attend leadership training or workshops and any other gatherings that will help members
grow in faith and knowledge.

- Attend your annual council planning meeting.

SECRETARY

The secretary shall keep the minutes of all organization meetings. She shall keep a file of all reports.

Specific Responsibilities and Duties

The Secretary shall:

- Attend all regular monthly business and board meetings.
- Report at business meetings on the activities, projects, etc., particular to her responsibilities.
- Keep records of all proceedings of organization meetings and act as custodian of all records and official papers.
- Be prompt in writing and publishing minutes. Place in the minutes what was done (motions, actions), not what was said or what is the opinion of the secretary. Be concise with your notes.
- Take attendance at all meetings.
- At each meeting, have on hand a list of all existing committees and their members, bylaws, rules and other necessary documents.
- Know the bylaws and become familiar with them as they may contain additional duties.
- Keep records of the activities of her office and pass these on to her successor.
- Correspondence as requested by the president.
- In the absence of the president and vice president, call the meeting to order and
preside until a chair pro-tem is elected.

· Serve on committees as delegated by the president.
· Attend leadership training when offered, regional council gatherings and diocesan meetings.
· Attend your annual council planning meeting.

TREASURER

The Treasurer shall receive all dues and other monies of the organization and keep an accurate account of the financial activities of the organization. She shall pay such bills as authorized by the organization. She shall present in writing a monthly report and an annual report.

Specific Responsibilities and Duties

The Treasurer shall:

· Attend your local parish meetings and be prepared to give a report.
· Give the Financial Report at the monthly meetings, including beginning balance, deposits by category, disbursements, and ending balance.
· Be responsible for the collection, custody, and disbursement of all organizational funds.
· Promptly deposit funds into the account in such bank(s) as the Officers have designated.
· Perform a monthly bank reconciliation keeping all receipts/reports and deposit slips attached to the appropriate bank statement.
· Pay dues to the diocesan and regional councils and NCCW.
· Keep a record of all paid members.
· Prepare the annual budget for annual reports.

· Attend leadership training when offered, regional and diocesan council gatherings.

· Attend your annual council planning meeting.