



# Society Strategies

Federation of Genealogical Societies

P.O. Box 200940 Austin TX 78720-0940

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Series Set I Number 2

Revised 2004

## Set I Strategies for Societies

### The Policy and Procedure Manual

by Martha L. Henderson, Betty R. Kaufman, and Paula Stuart Warren, CG

# Supplemental Page

This strategy paper, written some years ago, is an FGS *Classic* that contains ideas and strategies still relevant today in society management.

The Policy and Procedure Manual is the operating manual for your society. This paper offers ideas on arrangement, format and content for your society's P&P Manual.

The information on page 4 which directs the interested person on how to obtain copies of this paper is incorrect.

The FGS office no longer reprints the SSS papers, and has phased out paper copies of the SSS papers altogether.

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The FGS *Society Strategies Series* consists of papers which offer suggestions and instructions for innovative and effective management for genealogical and historical societies. The Federation holds a copyright to this material. A list of sets and ordering information appears at the end.

Set I Strategies for Societies  
**THE POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**  
by **Martha L. Henderson, Betty R. Kaufman**  
and **Paula Stuart Warren, CGRS**

### **Why is it Important?**

A policy and procedure manual contains a society's day-to-day business activities in a concise, consistent, textual format. It is a detailed expansion of the society's operating procedures or bylaws and is often called an operational handbook. All societies, whether large or small, should have a policy and procedure manual because it removes gray areas of assumed or ignored operation. It curtails hazardous management syndromes such as "Herd Mentality," "Reinventing the Wheel," "Let George do it," or "Nobody told me."

A policy and procedure manual is of great value to a society's board of directors, committee chairs and other volunteers because it serves as a communications link, a timesaving aid, and a handy reference guide. It eliminates repetition, improves operational flow and is an immensely useful administrative tool. It is helpful when training new officers and committees, and alleviates management frustration in the event of illness, death, or sudden resignation. It can also be a valuable asset to a nominating committee when assessing the qualifications of potential candidates by matching each to the clearly delineated job description. Additionally,

a potential candidate can view the responsibilities of an offered position before deciding to accept the position. A procedure manual clears the way for more efficient operation of everyday activities and becomes a handy reference guide for society events such as annual meetings or seminars.

While there is value in each officer and committee chair holding a separate section of the manual, it is more important that every officer and chair have a copy of the entire manual. A copy should be available in the society's office, the library and at each meeting for society members to consult. A complete overview of how an organization functions increases a member's insight and awareness of the entire organization and promotes spirit and pride. This awareness improves overall efficiency and communication within an organization.

### **Development**

How does a busy society develop such a tool? It does so by designing a manual that is not more, nor less than your own society needs. The table of contents to the procedure manual, for example, might carry only four sections, such as

# The Policy and Procedure Manual

## Sample Page for Procedure Manual

(NAME OF SOCIETY)

### PROCEDURE MANUAL

Subject: Treasurer

Effective Date: 1 January 2003

Cancels: 1 January 2000

Distribution: All Officers and Committee Chairmen

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### TREASURER

#### POLICIES

- Budget/Finance—Treasurer monitors; Board controls.
- Incidental bills exceeding \$50 must be approved by Board; under \$50 must be approved by President. (Minutes: 15 March 2001)
- May appoint assistant(s).
- Money raised by society must be used for educational purposes. (IRS Code 501(c)(3).)
- Notices for delinquent dues shall be given, and a report of such delinquencies due shall be provided to Membership Chairman and the Board. (Notice may be given via Newsletter.) [Use exact quote from by-laws.]

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Custodian of all funds of the Society:
  - Deposit all funds within two weeks of receipt.
  - Pay all approved bills within one week of receipt.
  - Keep accurate records of receipts and disbursements in society ledger book and checkbook and/or computer accounting program.
  - Prepare Monthly Financial Report for Board and regular meetings.
2. Collect dues and issue membership cards ; receipt provided upon request.
3. Maintain current membership list (IRS rule); deliver copy of monthly list of new and renewed memberships to President, Membership Chairman, and Mailing List Chairman.
4. Serve as a member of Budget/Finance Committee.
5. Retain one (1) key to Post Office Box.
6. Make all financial records available for audit six weeks prior to the Annual meeting.
7. Present a financial report at the Annual Meeting covering the entire previous year.

# The Policy and Procedure Manual

Officers, Committees, Special Committee(s), and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The basis for all segments of this suggested procedure manual, except the SOP, comes from the society bylaws.

The job of each officer and committee chair is treated individually in a procedure manual. Therefore, the first step in preparing the manual is to request each current officer and chair to set forth—in writing—a detailed job description. Involving the current and available past officers, board members and committee chairs in a brainstorming session(s) offers the opportunity to tap into the collective knowledge of the society. The object is to provide the exact information another individual would need to suddenly take over a society position. Job descriptions also serve as reminders to current job holders of their duties.

First, list all past policy decisions that pertain to that job (include the date of the pertinent minutes for future reference). Next, list the exact bylaw quotation for that job. Finally, list in numerical order the principle responsibilities explicitly detailed in a job description or list specific duties and procedures. Include how the officer or chair reports to the board and at the annual meeting. This report should also define authority and clarify the working relationship with other elected or appointed position(s) to prevent infringement upon others or the overstepping of boundary lines. Include any standard forms used by this individual in this position though another officer/chair may also use part or all of the forms. Subcommittees of that officer/chair are developed on a separate page.

Keep in mind that the major goal in preparing a description of each society position is to outline everything about one specific job, such as policies, governing rules from the bylaws, job description, forms used and subcommittee information.

## Arrangement and Format

A coordinator (usually the person in charge of society operation) analyzes each job description and cross-checks them for any duplication of effort or for ways to streamline operation. Development should be in accordance with the society bylaws and *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

The manual should be arranged in a three ring, loose-leaf notebook, for easy updating. A separate page for each officer or chair should contain standardized headings. The overall arrangement of the officer and committee sections is the same order as listed in the bylaws. Each officer's job description is compiled in the "Officers" section. Committee descriptions appear in alphabetical order under the Committee section. Subcommittees should follow the appropriate committee description. The Committee section should conclude with an alphabetical listing and description of special committees. Forms that pertain to committee assignments should be placed within the appropriate description.

The Standard Operating Procedures section contains copies of the following documents:

- The articles of incorporation and any amendments
- IRS 501(c)(3) designation
- Authorization for a bulk permit; trade name registration; state sales tax exemption form or any other operational document
- Current bylaws
- ISBN and/or ISSN number
- Organizational charts
- Budget
- Board policies such as who has keys to the post office box, safety deposit box etc.
- Bad weather notification policy
- Board and Annual reports (number of copies and to whom)
- Publication schedules for newsletter and quarterly

## The Policy and Procedure Manual

Depending on its size, the SOP section of the manual could have its own brief table of contents. Another handy referral sheet for this section is an index to the forms found throughout the procedure manual.

### Changes and Updates

Board action is required to change policies. Changes in job descriptions, however, require less formal action because they are primarily functional duties. When a change is made in any phase of the operation, procedure manual updates are made by revising and distributing only the page or pages that pertain to the change. The revision must be dated to avoid later confusion. For example, the updated page(s) would state "Effective Date: 1 January 2002. Voids: 1 January 1999.

### Calendar

A one-page calendar, compiled annually and inserted in the front of the procedure manual, is recommended. It shows all board and regular meetings, legal holidays, special events and activities of the society. Also noted are deadlines, such as publication dates for the newsletter/quarterly, and the dates when the nominating committee report and reports for the annual meeting are due. A separate calendar for the treasurer would benefit others as well. It would show reports and payments of a less than monthly occurrence such as sales tax, bulk mailing fees and deposits, budget and finance

meetings, and annual dues to other organizations.

Volunteers comprise the administrative body of a society. These individuals are busy people who respect and admire efficient organization. Handing a new volunteer an organized job description showing how the position fits into the operation of the society is very professional, as opposed to a folder or notebook of confusing, outdated, handwritten notes that take untold time to decipher and learn. To save money and time, subcommittee chairs are usually given only a photocopy of the page from the procedure manual that pertains to their particular job function. However, as an assurance that each volunteer knows his or her job and the jobs of others in the organization, it is recommended that the complete procedure manual be available at the society's office or library and at all meetings, and that each committee chair or board member bring the manual to all meetings, classes, etc.

A policy and procedure manual that is simple but thorough will keep a board of directors informed on society procedure and keep individuals informed on specific duties and deadlines. Each officer and director of even the smallest society should have his or her own copy.

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