

# The District Governor

The prime responsibility of the district governor is directed toward his or her district. For the Junior Civitan program to succeed, you must take this responsibility to heart and become dedicated to fulfilling your duties. There are seven primary objectives of the governors duties:

1. Lead his or her district to achieve its goals for the year.
2. Preside effectively at district meetings, projects and board meetings.
3. Organize and direct the work of the district's board of directors and committees.
4. Represent the district and Junior Civitan International in the community and to the senior district and organization.
5. Communicate district and international goals and programs to the district membership.
6. Solve leadership and work conflicts within the district.
7. Represent the district in communications with international.

## ***Responsibilities***

The governor shall appoint all committees, preside at all meetings of the district and board of directors and perform such other duties which pertain to the office. The governor shall represent the district at all international meetings and will be an ex-officio member of all standing committees. In the event of a vacancy in the office of governor, the deputy governor shall assume the office unless otherwise provided in the district bylaws and policies.

## ***The Effective District Governor***

1. Effective governors know where their time goes. They manage it rather than vice versa. Analyze where it is going and then organize it to encourage productivity. Here are some suggestions:
  - a. Identify and eliminate irrelevant things, things no one will really miss if they go undone.
  - b. Decide what you can delegate to someone else.
  - c. Spell out "time wasters" such as meaningless meetings and unnecessary communications, and try to eliminate them.
2. Effective governors focus on outward contribution. In other words, you should concentrate on results rather than the tasks themselves. Look up from your work and outward toward your goals. As governor you should live and act in two dimensions: (1) preparing for the future, and (2) building for the results long before they are achieved.
3. Effective governors build on strengths, their own and those of others. You should acknowledge and accept others' abilities and weaknesses. You should be able

to accept the best in others without being threatened. You should help others grow by giving them opportunities and responsibilities. Feed the opportunities and starve the problems.

4. Effective governors concentrate on the few major areas where superior performance will produce outstanding results. Set and stick to priorities.

Here are some suggestions:

- a. Pick up on the future as opposed to the past.
  - b. Focus on opportunities rather than problems.
  - c. Choose your own directions and listen to your own "drummer."
  - d. Aim high for something that makes a difference... be an innovator.
5. Effective governors make good, rational decisions. Here are some suggestions:
    - a. Define the problem
    - b. Analyze the problem
    - c. Develop alternative solutions
    - d. Decide the best solution
    - e. Develop and implement an effective strategy which will convert the best solution into action.

## ***Delegating***

Delegation is one of the most important aspects of a good leader. You are only one person and cannot accomplish a successful year alone. It is always important to discuss delegation with your district Junior Civitan chair for guidance.

In the delegation process, remember these aspects:

1. Define clearly and creatively the responsibilities being delegated to each person, being sure to set limits while allowing flexibility.
2. Choose appropriate people for the assignment by placing people carefully, maximizing strengths and minimizing weaknesses. Seek out skills of your officers.
3. Set goals and time lines as a group. Expectations must be clearly defined.
4. Give accurate and honest feedback. People want to know how they are doing, and they deserve to know. This is both an opportunity for giving satisfaction and encouraging growth. Be sensitive when you deliver your praise or criticism; always be constructive.
5. Support your members by sharing knowledge, information and plans with them. It is incredible how many errors are made simply because of lack of information.

7. Whenever possible, give those who are responsible for completing assignments a voice in the decision-making.
8. Really delegate! When given an assignment, most responsible people do not appreciate someone looking over their shoulder or taking back part of the assignment before they have had a chance to do it. Good leaders foster leadership in others by empowering them to be successful and allowing them to make mistakes. Make sure you guide while offering assistance and let go when appropriate and necessary.

When delegating specific duties and tasks, always emphasize the goals of the district and organization and the assignment's overall impact on the district's success. Be sure to establish times for progress reports. This will ensure that if the assignment is not being handled properly or the member needs assistance, the governor and district chair can resolve the problem before it is too late.

### **Forums for Leadership**

Leadership is exercised in many different ways. One of the most overlooked venues for leadership is in the context of meetings. As the presiding officer of your district, you can exert a great deal of positive leadership. Two types of meetings are the focus of your opportunity to exercise leadership: (1) the district meetings, and (2) the board of directors meetings. Both are important to effective leadership. You should take advantage of these forums to move your district toward the achievement of its goals.

Here are some suggestions about how you can use meetings to exert your leadership:

A. **Adjust your "style" to the group.** Horizontal leadership is preferred for your district meeting, whereas vertical leadership maybe more appropriate for the board meeting. Horizontal leadership generally works better with a larger group. Treat each member as an equal. Use persuasive techniques. Preside in a positive, enthusiastic manner. Try to set the group at ease and make them feel like they are "center stage." Vertical leadership can be very boring and unproductive if the leader doesn't know what is going on or is distracted by efforts of certain members of the group to control the meeting. While a Junior Civitan district is a volunteer organization, even volunteers can appreciate a leader who takes charge, particularly in decision-making situations. You should always build team spirit and keep the members focused on the goals of the district.

B. **Start with Board Meetings.** Here is the most intimate leadership forum which you will have during your year as governor. Here are some helpful suggestions:

- (a) Make sure the meeting place is comfortable for the group size.
- (b) Choose a time when distractions and interruptions can be avoided.
- (c) Have a well constructed agenda with all the items for decision clearly outlined (this should be reviewed with the district chair for guidance well before the meeting).
- (d) Make every attempt to complete business in the time allotted.

- (e) Prepare before the meeting for any special reports or information which may be needed for the group's work.
- (f) Express appreciation to the individual members, district chair, sponsoring Civitans, and the group as a whole for their contribution to the achievement of the district's goals.

C. **Exercise the courage of leadership.** Sometimes individual members of the group need to have their thoughts and actions redirected in order for the group to function properly. Have the courage to move discussion along even if it means confronting a member whose actions distract from the group. If you have an opinion that has not been expressed, carefully introduce your idea. Count on others in the group to see the merit of your suggestion. Allow the group to "brainstorm" solutions to problems without letting the meeting degenerate into wasted time and effort. A courageous leader molds the group into a vibrant decision-making body.

D. **Follow the agenda while allowing sufficient time and enthusiasm for "brainstorming."** At the beginning of the meeting, ask each person if there are any items to add to the agenda. Assure people that each item will be handled on a consensus basis. Make sure each person is involved in the process. Involve those who may seem "to be somewhere else." Call for decision as soon as you detect a group consensus. Don't belabor points or allow the group to stray off the subject.

E. **Be a good listener.** Leadership is related to followship. You cannot be effective if your contact with the membership is weak. Most leaders fail because they enjoy speaking more than listening. Be able to paraphrase each member's comments and restate the group's consensus when it appears. By listening, you can identify and solve problems within the group and help them move toward completion of tasks.

F. **Be effective in presiding at district meetings.** Here is a major forum for making an impact on your district during your year as governor. Each time your district meets, they look to you for the leadership that will make the meeting meaningful. Take this forum and your responsibilities as the presiding officer seriously. Have an agenda and adhere to it. Remember that the members have given the organization a certain part of their life (time). Be positive and enthusiastic about what is going on. Listen to the responses of the members about the "state of things." Above all, be prepared to take the necessary steps to ensure a good productive meeting.

G. **Don't take yourself too seriously.** You are going to make some mistakes as the presiding officer. If you "goof," recognize it and admit that you're good, but getting better. Work to make sure the members feel good about your leadership, even when things don't go as smoothly as you would like.

H. **Be prepared.** Stay ahead of the game by communicating effectively with all your officers and members. Let them know what you expect from them, and listen to what they expect from you. Anticipate future events and keep your members aware of upcoming activities. Use every appropriate means available to make what you do at meetings effective and productive.

Meetings can be significant forums for your leadership. Don't take them for granted. Use them to help your district achieve its goals during the year. When the year's over, you want your members to make the unavoidable conclusion, "Wow, our governor did an excellent job. We've had a great year."

### **Meetings and Convention**

During your year in office, you also have the important responsibility of planning and executing two district meetings and the district convention. You may request a copy of the *District Convention Manual* from World Headquarters. There are four basic goals which must be reached in these meetings.

A. Provide leadership training sessions; this cannot be overemphasized. You must plan and implement an efficient program of leadership training if Junior Civitan is to have a firm foundation. You, as governor, should be certain that each club has all the necessary materials for executing business (*Club Administrative Manual and District Manual*).

B. Bring all district business to date. It is your responsibility to make sure all clubs are in good standing with International and are financially sound (dues paid). You must also lead all district committees in an ex-officio manner. A roster should be prepared and distributed to clubs and to district officers. This should include all the clubs within the district with officers and advisors addresses and telephone numbers in addition to district officers and the district's Junior Civitan chair.

C. Guide all district and international projects toward successful completion.

D. Hold an orderly and fair election of district officers for the coming year at one of the meetings.

You are also responsible for the necessary field work for the Junior Civitan program in the district. This means, first of all that as governor you must visit clubs in the district and be familiar with their programs, people, and problems. The strength of the district will depend on your ability to deal with the inevitable crisis situations which arise on the club level. Perhaps the leadership of a particular club ceases to be a part of the program or transfers to another school. The future of the club in such a case may depend on your ability as governor to provide the necessary leadership that will help the club recover.

Your field work also includes the establishment and development of new clubs. You must cooperate with the senior district in forming new clubs. The insight of a governor into the needs of a new club can be invaluable to its success. Of course, deputy and lieutenant governors can and should be used to help carry out the field work of the district.

During your year as governor, you should work very closely with the senior district and attend its district-wide meetings and conventions when possible. The Junior Civitan chair is the key link between International and the district. Get to know this person, stay in contact one another, and work closely together to ensure the efficient communication needed for success.

The senior district can provide many services to the governor. First, you should be able to depend on the senior district to help finance a part of the program. Secondly, the senior officers can be resources for information and services.

### **Governing the District**

You must organize the work in the district and divide that work among your deputy and lieutenant governors. Geographic accessibility should be a major criterion in assigning duties within the district. Each lieutenant governor should have a designated area and be responsible for maintaining contact with those clubs. The deputy governor should be assigned to work with the lieutenant governors. The deputy governor should be responsible to the governor for the maintenance and expansion of the area. The lieutenant governors should report to the governor as well.

When divisions of labor are properly assigned, and understood, the district will function at maximum efficiency with minimum trouble for any one person. This type of organization also helps to isolate problem areas and make solutions easier.

### **Lieutenant Governor Visitation**

The lieutenant governor is the liaison between your clubs and district administrative affairs whose most important responsibility is to provide assistance of all types through counsel and guidance. While some of the assistance will be given through correspondence and telephone calls, the lieutenant governor makes the most valuable contribution through personal visits to each club.

Lieutenant governors should report to you and the district chair on the status and stability of clubs. This should be handled on a monthly basis to identify problems and resolve them before it is too late.