

Meeting Agenda

An effective meeting agenda, which states what activities will take place during the meeting, serves various important functions:

- It forces the meeting leader or group to think out what needs to be accomplished
- Provided ahead of time (as it should be), the agenda lets people know what to expect and allows them to prepare as necessary
- It provides a blueprint or path for the meeting to follow
- It reminds people of what there is left to cover if time gets to be an issue

Public agendas are typically binding – meaning the meeting participants cannot stray from the items they said they would cover. However, agendas for private organizations are often flexible (depending on your stated bylaws)

Here is a meeting agenda template with explanations regarding key sections:

The **header** is particularly useful if participants belong to various groups/organizations, or if the agenda will be made public record:

- Organization Name
- Group Meeting Agenda
- Location
- Date
- Starting and Ending Time

The **body** of the agenda lists the actual items to be covered during the meeting. When possible, use actionable words such as *approve*, *discuss*, *adopt*, *announce* to let participants know what is expected of them. At the end of each item is a suggested time allotted (adding up to an hour and a half long meeting), but in reality time allotted will depend on your group's particular circumstances.

- **Welcome/Introductions/Warm-Up Activity** – Doing one of these is particularly helpful for groups that don't get together often. It is also a good

way of getting the meeting started while not making late-comers miss anything substantive. (10 min)

- Approve/adopt previous meeting minutes – Obviously, only necessary if minutes are kept. (5 min)
- Discuss the topics at hand. This will usually be broken up into several parts, and will take up the bulk of the meeting. This is where you would include items like “Review annual budget” or “Brainstorm fundraising ideas” or “Hear report from Finance Committee”. (60 min total)
- Announcements – This is often kept to the end of the meeting, but because new information can sometimes change the focus of a meeting, it may be useful to have announcements early on. (10 min)
- Decide on time and agenda for next meeting. (5 min).

As you can see from this sample, a good meeting agenda is short and simple. Good luck!