



**THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF  
CLEVELAND, INC.**

*Women building better communities*

## **Successful Meeting Guidelines**

- 1) **Set an agenda.** List all of the topics you need to discuss and the amount of time you will spend discussing each issue.
- 2) **Have a clear purpose.** Make sure you and everyone at the meeting are clear about why you are meeting. Setting an agenda is not enough. Before the meeting plan out what you want to get accomplished and how you will do that.
- 3) **Stay focused.** Meetings are more effective when a leader controls the direction of the meeting and keeps everyone focused on the agenda. Even the best-intentioned participants will start discussing topics unrelated to the issue at hand, and an effective meeting leader will politely stop such digressions quickly.
- 4) **Start and finish on time.** If a meeting is scheduled to start at 7 pm start at 7:00 pm, not at 7:05 or 7:10. When people know that your meetings start promptly, they will arrive on time more often. Meetings should also end on time. Time limits create a sense of urgency, and meeting participants will usually react by concentrating on the issues at hand, avoiding idle chatter, etc.
- 5) **Schedule intelligently.** The best time to schedule a future meeting is at the end of one. Rather than making phone calls and sending emails announcing an upcoming meeting, set a time and place to meet again while everyone is together. For regularly occurring meetings consider scheduling all of the meetings at one time.
- 6) **Take meeting minutes and capture action items.** Make sure it is clear what was decided, what are the action items and who is responsible for them.
- 7) **Do your homework.** Make sure that issues and action items from previous meetings have been addressed and set the ground rule that participants must come prepared and have done their homework.
- 8) **Create a "parking lot" for other issues.** Some issues, while not appropriate to your specific meeting, do need to be dealt with. When these issues come up, take note of them and handle them after the meeting.