



GUIDELINES FOR STARTING AN INTEREST GROUP

INTEREST GROUP LEADERSHIP

Leading an Interest Group is an important responsibility. Leaders are encouraged to follow principles and practices of Servant Leadership (1), and groups are encouraged to utilize methods of participatory leadership. Assistance in learning about these approaches may be obtained from Membership Committee contacts.

FORMULATE YOUR IDEA

Before completing the Interest Group Application Form:

- Articulate clearly the purpose of the Interest Group.
- What will be done or accomplished each time the group meets?
- How often will the group meet?
- What will be the length of each meeting?

HOW TO PROPOSE A NEW Interest Group

Request and complete an **Application for a New Interest Group**. The form is available online at OLLI.UNL.EDU/COMMITTEE_RESOURCES, by contacting the OLLI office at olli@unl.edu, or by calling 402-472-6265.

- Submit the form to Membership Committee Interest Group Coordinators by email attachment to olli@unl.edu or by mail to the OLLI Office
- Your application will be reviewed by the Membership Committee for compliance with OLLI policies, mission, and goals.
- You will be notified by the Membership Committee of the outcome.

PLAN THE FIRST MEETING

- Remember that OLLI Interest Groups must comply with OLLI policies, rules and mission, including those in place at the formation of an interest group, as well as any new requirements that are issued.
- The original meeting should be focused, organized, and designed to obtain specific results.
- Choose a convenient date/time/place which provides easy parking, etc. Coffee shops and libraries are good.
- Have everyone who attends sign in with phone number and email address. (This list will be needed to notify group members of time, place, and preparations for future meetings.)
- Introduce yourself. Briefly describe the purpose of the *Interest Group*, and the agenda.
- Ask each person to introduce themselves, briefly share their interest in the group, and how they think the group might work. Record the ideas.
- Working together, establish a fixed date/time/place for the *Interest Group* to meet, or decide how future meetings will be arranged.
- Anyone attending an Interest Groups should also be a member of OLLI. Non-members may attend for 1 or 2 meetings but should be encouraged to become OLLI members if they wish to participate further.

ADVERTISE/ANNOUNCING A NEW *Interest Group*

Once a new *Interest Group* is approved by the Membership Committee, the information will be published in the OLLI weekly email newsletter with a description and contact information. In addition, all *Interest Groups* will be listed on the website and in the catalog.

Each *Interest Group* is responsible for recruiting participants, notifying members in advance of meetings, and for helping to keep information published about the group up-to-date. The methods for publicizing Interest group activities and recruiting new members are:

- The list of Interest Groups with contact information is published on the OLLI website and in catalogs. Please send updates to olli@unl.edu.
- If you are trying to get a new group up and running or want to have a general announcement in the OLLI weekly email newsletter, send your information to olli@unl.edu by noon on Monday. Please send our news at least one week prior to the meeting date.

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES

Immediately notify Membership Committee Interest Group Contacts by email to olli@unl.edu of any changes in leadership or schedule.

Notify the OLLI office at olli@unl.edu of changes in information for contact person(s) and contact information. We try our best to make sure the website and catalog information is up to date but we rely on you to keep us informed of changes in your group's regular meeting schedule.

HAVE PATIENCE

A well-conceived and operated Interest Group is a joy to participate in. Be prepared for the long haul to get your proposed group up and running. Numbers are not very relevant to the success of an Interest Group. Historically members who sign up initially drift away, others arrive and the group size increases and decreases, and even after a year or so gradually becomes stable in size, and sometimes membership. It takes only two members to establish an Interest Group, and it takes work and commitment to develop and evolve a good group. Always feel free to work with the Membership Committee Interest Group Contacts to provide advice and counsel.

ENJOY

Enjoy being together and meeting new people who share your interest.

¹ **Servant leadership** is both a leadership philosophy and set of leadership practices. Traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the "top of the pyramid." By comparison, the servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. Servant leadership turns the power pyramid upside down; instead of the people working to serve the leader, the leader exists to serve the people. When leaders shift their mindset and serve first, they unlock purpose and ingenuity in those around them, resulting in higher performance and engaged, fulfilled employees. A servant leader's purpose should be to inspire and equip the people they influence.