



East Central Women of Today

Member Handbook

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What is the Women of Today?

The East Central Women of Today is a local chapter of the Minnesota Women of Today. The Minnesota Women of Today is a member state of the United States Women of Today.

The East Central Women of Today is a dynamic and diverse women's organization passionately devoted to the betterment of our community. The Women of Today are not politically or religiously affiliated and its members come from many different backgrounds, life experiences and interests.

Any person at least 18 years of age may be a member of East Central Women of Today. Whether you want to give back to your community; develop your individual talents in speaking, writing and other areas; or make great new friends, Women of Today has something for you - and you'll bring something unique to the organization! New voices and new ideas are always welcome.

United States Women of Today

United States Women of Today Creed:

We, the United States Women of Today are dedicated to serving our community and nation, are committed to strengthening our individual talents, and stand united by our friendship and belief in the future.

History & Membership

The National United States Women of Today formed July 1, 1985 has 13 member states including: Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Wisconsin and one international member, the Cyprus International Women of Today in Cyprus.

Two national conventions are held each year: Mid-year and Year-End.

Minnesota Women of Today

Minnesota Women of Today Creed:

*We, the Women of Today, are service, growth, and fellowship.
We believe that through us great lessons can be learned, worthy deeds performed,
and a hand of fellowship extended to millions of women everywhere.
May we leave the world a better place because we lived and served within it.*

Mission

The mission of the Minnesota Women of Today is to help women improve their own lives and the lives of the people in the communities around them. This organization shall be a place in which young women are actively encouraged to become involved and hold positions of leadership.

Women of Today Membership is open to all persons over the age of 18, male or female.

History

In 1950, a group of dedicated women formed the Mrs. Jaycees of Minnesota with a mission of community service. Several name and organizational changes occurred over the years, and in July 1985 they became the Minnesota Women of Today. Since that time, Women of Today has grown to include members in many states throughout the nation. Their three areas of focus are Community Service, Personal and Professional Growth, and Fellowship.

The Minnesota Women of Today is a dynamic and diverse women's organization interested in the betterment of our communities. They are not politically or religiously affiliated. They are women from various backgrounds, communities, and life experiences. They are working women, homemakers, mothers, and grandmothers, married and single women. They are women who want to make their communities a better place for all to live, achieve their own personal and professional growth, and have fun!

They volunteer their time, raise funds for charities, and provide informational seminars that are open to the public. Our members choose the projects they want to participate in, given their interest and time availability. Members can be as involved as they want to be. They are also interested in bettering ourselves and having fun. They have speakers attend meetings, challenge themselves to improve communication skills, gather to develop new talents and plan social events. The wide range of opportunities that Women of Today offers is one of the elements that make it unique. There is something for every woman and new ideas are always welcome.

The Three Pillars of the Women of Today: Service, Growth & Fellowship

As stated in their creed and mission, the Women of Today is built around three pillars:

1. Community Service

The organization shall provide opportunities for all members to contribute to their communities by raising funds for worthy causes and by providing services or education to benefit community members.

Women of Today passionately believe in making the world a better place by serving others in their communities. The needs of every community vary so chapter members choose service projects to sponsor in their local area. Samples of sponsored service projects around the state include:

- Food shelf collections and volunteering
- Assisting with area Walk-A-Thons
- Projects involving youth
- Activities with seniors
- Scholarships
- Craft fairs
- Health and Wellness events
- Green projects

And some of the causes and foundations the Women of Today support include:

- March of Dimes
- Cancer Awareness
- Friendship Ventures
- Domestic Violence Prevention
- And many more!

Each member is encouraged to bring their own passions to the group about how they would like to serve.

2. Personal and Professional Growth

The organization shall provide opportunities for all members to develop and to foster skills and talents related to becoming successful individuals, interacting well with other people, and becoming capable leaders.

Women of Today provides opportunities for members to experience personal and professional growth in areas such as self-esteem, communication skills, confidence, and working effectively with others. Personal Enrichment courses are offered on a variety of topics and additional training is also available. Support is provided internally as well as from outside sources. Leadership opportunities exist at all levels of the organization (local, district, state, and national) through committee work, chairing projects, and holding officer positions.

Through the Women of Today, members can learn about

- Goal Setting
- Financial Planning
- Leadership Training
- Time Management
- Team Building
- Public Speaking
- Effective Writing
- Effective Speaking
- ...and more!

3. Fellowship

The organization shall provide opportunities for all members to develop friendships and to find personal support within the organization.

Membership in Women of Today provides opportunities to develop friendships with people who share similar interests. It is a great way to make friends in the local community, across the state and

the nation. Every chapter holds a variety of social activities for members to get together and have fun! Examples of these activities include:

- Death by Chocolate parties
- Scavenger Hunts
- Girls Night Out
- Wine Tasting parties
- Game Nights
- Scrapbooking Nights
- Statewide Conventions
- ...and many more!

Members of Minnesota Women of Today have fun, form long-lasting friendships, develop their personal and professional talents, and give back to their communities.

State Organization

The Minnesota Women of Today maintains a strong support system by providing individual chapters with educational information, fundraising ideas and membership encouragement.

Women of Today Membership is open to all persons over the age of 18, male or female. Active chapters need a minimum of seven members under the age of 40. State membership dues are \$40 and National dues are \$5. Some chapters also have chapter dues. State conventions are held three times a year, hosted by different chapters around the state.

The Minnesota Women of Today Calendar is broken into 3 trimesters

1st Trimester: May, June, July, August

2nd Trimester: September, October, November, December

3rd Trimester: January, February, March, April

Districts

Chapters throughout the state are organized into districts to promote communication and mutual support. The Minnesota Women of Today currently have 11 districts made up of 4-10 chapters each. District meetings are held a minimum of three times a year as scheduled by the individual districts. District meetings are a good way to network with other chapters and share new project ideas. The East Central Women of Today are in District 6.

District 1: Detroit Lakes Women of Today, Hawley Women of Today, Mahnommen Women of Today, Red Lake Falls Women of Today, Thief River Falls Women of Today

District 2: Greenbush Women of Today, Lake of the Woods Women of Today, Middle River Women of Today, Roseau Women of Today, Warroad Area Women of Today

District 3: Aitkin Women of Today, Brainerd Lakes Area Women of Today, Duluth Women of Today, Hibbing Women of Today, Longville Women of Today, Nisswa Area Women of Today, Virginia Women of Today

District 4: Albany Women of Today, Avon Women of Today, Benson Women of Today, Melrose Area Women of Today, Morris Area Women of Today

District 5: Foley Women of Today, Monticello Women of Today, Rice Women of Today, Sauk Rapids Women of Today, St Cloud Women of Today

District 6: Anoka Women of Today, Big Lake Women of Today, Champlin Women of Today, Elk River Area Women of Today, East Central Women of Today, St Francis Area Women of Today, St Michael/Albertville Women of Today

District 7: Brooklyn Park Women of Today, Fridley Women of Today, Maple Grove Women of Today, New Hope Women of Today, White Bear Lake Women of Today

District 8: Arlington/Green Isle Women of Today, Burnsville Women of Today, Eagan Women of Today, Eden Prairie Women of Today, Savage Area Women of Today, Woodbury Women of Today

District 9: Balaton Women of Today, G-M-T Women of Today, Hanska Area Women of Today, Marshall Women of Today, Montevideo Women of Today, New Ulm Women of Today, Redwood Falls Women of Today

District 10: Adrian Women of Today, Fairmont Women of Today, Jackson Women of Today, Madelia Women of Today, Slayton Women of Today, St James Women of Today, Windom Women of Today

District 11: Blooming Prairie Women of Today, Byron Women of Today, Glenville Women of Today, Kenyon/Wanamingo Women of Today, Mankato Area Women of Today, Owatonna Women of Today, Straight River Women of Today. Winnebago Women of Today

Chapter: East Central Women of Today

Chapter History

2015

The Mora Women of Today changed their name to the East Central Women of Today in January 2015. At that time they expanded their service area to include the five county area of Kanabec, Pine, Mille Lacs, Chisago and Isanti counties. They also adopted the current logo.

Guidelines for Members

Attend Meetings

Try to attend as many general meetings as you can. It's important that you be there because you have something unique to offer. Meetings are also where you can get information on upcoming activities, projects and opportunities.

Volunteer

Volunteer your help when you can. It can be disheartening if a chairperson struggles to find help for a project and it is nice to see members volunteer. Volunteering not only helps the communities we serve but helps spread positive messages about the Women of Today.

Share your interests

Let people know what your interests and passions are – especially where you would like to help. Consider tackling an area or co-chairing where you have not worked before.

Work with each other for success

The success of the Women of Today is everyone's responsibility. Let the president and board members know your feelings and share your knowledge. If you know of some prospective members, encourage them to attend meetings and activities. Also, let the membership vice president know.

Use a calendar

Use a calendar to mark general meetings and you will know at a glance if Women of Today activities conflict with personal commitments.

Be proactively positive

Try something new or different as a chapter. Be courteous: listen when people are talking. Go out of your way to meet new members and visit with the others. Try to be receptive of new ideas. Be kind: direct your comments to the issues, not the person that is speaking. Avoid negative thoughts and comments.

Speak up & share your ideas

When the president calls for discussion, share if you have something to say. It might not get said if you don't say it and it might be too late if you wait. Be willing to bring up new topics or ideas.

Say thank you

Remember those who have done a good job or helped on projects that you have chaired. Keep in mind someone who helped out when you needed it.

Don't gossip

This is the surest way to create friction in a chapter. It is vicious and yet it is so hard sometimes not to. If you hear something negative – don't pass it on.

Chapter Meetings

The Women of Today holds two types of meetings:

1. General Membership Meetings
2. Board of Director Meetings

General Membership Meetings

This is where a lot of fun as well as business happens. Member meetings usually begin with an ice breaker or some kind of fun activity.

The meetings also allow each officer to share what has been happening in their area officer and then there are decisions to be made regarding the chapter's finances, donations, activities or any news business.

Board of Director Meetings

Board meetings are once a month and are attended by the Board of Directors and by any general members that choose to attend. They are an in-depth review and planning session designed to analyze where the chapter has been, where it is and where it is going. It also gives the board a chance to regroup and discuss the agenda for the next general membership meeting.

Chapter Officers

Chapters have members. Out of those general members, officers are elected to serve on the East Central Women of Today Board of Directors. These officers, along with the past president, will make up the chapter board. The chapter board meets monthly to discuss the agenda for the upcoming general membership meeting.

Officers elections occur in either April or May after which the Women of Today hosts LOTS (Local Officer Training Session) so each newly elected officer can get training on their duties and responsibilities.

Board of Director Meetings

Board meetings are once a month and are attended by the Board of Directors and by any general members that choose to attend. They are an in-depth review and planning session designed to analyze where the chapter has been, where it is and where it is going. It also gives the board a chance to regroup and discuss the agenda for the next general membership meeting.

Officer duties

This is a summary of possible duties. The by-laws and/or policies for your chapter may include additional information. Elected officer definitions and their duties are:

President

- Presides over meetings of the chapter including setting an agenda for each meeting. The entire board should assist in finalizing the agenda.
- Oversees other officer positions, assisting when necessary.
- Attends as many district, state, and area meetings as possible.
- May also assist in the completion of SUCCESS each quarter and submit a year-end and/or mid-year evaluation.
- Complete monthly reports
- Attends training (LOTS, District)
- Assists with chapter training of board
- Assists with chapter training of local program managers if requested
- Represents the organization as the official spokesperson at public events

State Delegate

- The official liaison between the chapter and the district and state organization.
- Should attend as many district and state meetings as possible.
- Responsible for RSVPing for district, state, and area meetings.
- Report to chapter about the highlights of convention and other meetings after attending.
- May also submit a year-end and/or mid-year evaluation.

Internal and External Vice Presidents (IVP) (EVP)

- Encourages local program managers (LPM).
- Helps orientate the LPMs.
- Reminds LPMs of quarterly report deadlines.
- Helps recruit members to take programming positions.
- Assists in reporting in the areas that do not have an LPM.

Membership Vice President (MVP)

- Assists the chapter with membership responsibilities including renewals, membership nights, orientation of new members, and installation of new members.

Secretary

- Keeps the official minutes of each meeting.
- May also serve as the official contact with the PALS chapter.
- May coordinate chapter newsletter.

Treasurer

- Keeps track of the chapter finances.
- Manages the checkbook and reports the financial status of the chapter at each meeting.
- Assist with annual Audit.

Parliamentarian

- promotes efficient business meetings through Robert's Rules of Order.
- Reads the orders of the day at each meeting.
- Establishes if there is a quorum at the meeting.
- Assists in the voting process.
- May be chair of the Bylaw/Policy review committee.

Programing

Programming is a really unique aspect of the Women of Today. “Programing” is how Women of Today classifies and organizes its activities. Each programming area has a manager assigned to it (Local Program Managers or LPMS) within each Women of Today chapter as well at the district and the state level.

Programming is divided into two groups: 1) Internal Programming Areas & 2) External Programming Areas.

For example, the East Central Women of Today has an annual fundraiser, the Holly Fair Art & Craft Show. Fundraisers are organized under the “Ways and Means” programming area which is an internal area.

Another example would be when the Women of Today volunteer at the Family Pathways Teen Center, that activity or project would be classified under the “Youth of Today” external programming area. When the Women of Today volunteer for Adopt a Highway, that would be classified as “Community Connections” external programming

Internal Programming Areas

Internal Programming Areas are things that chapters do for their own members. For example, Ways and Means raises funds to support the chapter and Living and Learning promotes the personal growth of chapter members. While sometimes these projects can benefit the community, their intent is to benefit the chapter and its members.

External Areas

External Programming Areas are those things that chapters do for their community. For example, projects that help young people would fall under the Youth of Today area. While these projects can also benefit chapter members, their intent is to benefit the community (either local or otherwise).

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PROGRAMING SEE THE APPENDIX.

Guidelines for Local Program Managers

Decide what your goals are and what you hope to accomplish. Submit it in writing to the chapter president.

Let the District Program Manager in your area know who you are.

Submit the LPM trimester report (found at http://mnwt.org/bof/form_report_lpm_trimester.htm)

Give reports at chapter meetings. When you do, try to keep them fun, informative and short (about 2 minutes).

Remember to encourage members to chair the projects coming under your area. You do not need to chair them yourself; however, do keep in touch with the members chairing the projects. Try to find new projects if your area is lacking interest.

When making donations to the state in your programming area, the money must go through the chapter Treasurer.

Certifications

Certifications are a unique offering of Minnesota and United States Women of Today Programming. Think of it like a girl scout doing a task and earning her badge.

Certifications offer an opportunity to focus on personal growth and be recognized for it. For example, USWT Health and Wellness Certification asks the member to complete 15 of 30 tasks within a year, each one related to health. Some of these tasks include having a mammogram, getting a flu shot, eat breakfast and wear your seatbelt.

The certifications can be completed once each Women of Today year (May 1- April 30) and are due prior to the Annual Awards convention in May (but can be submitted earlier). Most certification forms can be found in the Book of Forms on the MNWT website

There are certifications specific both to the MNWT and the USWT.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CERTIFICATIONS, SEE THE APPENDIX.