



General Operating Policies and Procedures for Seeds of Strength (SoS)

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SEEDS OF STRENGTH MISSION

Seeds of Strength (referred to as SoS throughout) is a women's giving circle, founded in the spring of 2009 and hosted as a donor-designated fund by the Chisholm Trail Communities Foundation (CTCF). The Policies and Procedures set forth in this document are consistent with the SoS Bylaws, revised September, 2015.

The SoS Mission is to provide a social experience for women through which members will learn about the needs and assets of the community and award financial support to specific Georgetown area organizations, as selected by the membership.

SEEDS OF STRENGTH BYLAWS

See the Seeds of Strength Bylaws for the fundamental organizational structure upon which the policies, procedures, duties and responsibilities in this document are based. The Bylaws can be found on our website seedsofstrength.org.

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE—THE GUIDING CIRCLE

SoS is governed by the Guiding Circle. The Guiding Circle consists of 15 to 25 members.

The Executive Committee of the Guiding Circle consists of Officers and Committee Chairs.

- Officers include Chair, Incoming Chair, Immediate Past Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.
- Committee Chairs include Membership Chair, Communications Chair, Grants Chair, Events Chair and Compliance Chair. (Note: the Nominating Committee Chair is not counted here since she is already an Officer by virtue of the fact that she is the Immediate Past Chair.)
- If Co-Chairs exist for any committee, one person should be established as the voting member of the Executive Committee.

Two (2) Guiding Circle members include the Past Chair who has been out of office for 1 year and the Past Chair who has been out of office for 2 years. Past Chairs who have been out of office for 3 or more years may serve as members-at-large.

Ethical Responsibilities

- All Guiding Circle members shall exercise appropriate care to speak as leaders of SoS and accurately represent SoS to the community. Personal opinions should be identified as such.
- All Guiding Circle members shall understand that while each leader has the right, if not the duty, to speak strongly as to issues, a demonstration of respect and consideration for each other, SoS members, grant applicants and grant recipients will facilitate positive decision-making.
- Committee Chairs are expected to make reasonable efforts to attend SoS functions, including membership gatherings, the fall Membership Luncheon, and Guiding Circle meetings.

- All Guiding Circle members shall maintain confidentiality as to information discussed regarding SoS business.

Maintaining Membership

Each Committee Chair is expected to maintain her membership in SoS (timely payment of annual dues) during her term of service. She should ensure that all members of her committee are members in good standing. Members may pay for their membership or donate money to SoS by check or by credit card. Credit card payments are handled through the CTCF office.

Communicating with the Press

Any request for an interview or comment to the press regarding SoS should be referred to the SoS Guiding Circle Chair. However, the Chair can choose to delegate a specific interview to the Communications Committee Chair if she so desires. No other Committee Chair shall make a comment to the press on behalf of SoS unless the Guiding Circle Chair has approved such interview or comment.

Communicating with Members and Committees

Any email sent to the full membership addressing Seeds of Strength business that is not public knowledge should end with the Confidentiality Notice provided below (for example, the annual ballot that links to the SoS grant finalists' applications). Committees may include the notice in their internal or external communications at their discretion (for example, emails distributing lists of members' personal information such as contact information or home address; lists of grant applicants; lists of grant finalists; lists of grant recipients before the list is public on our website).

If the email is sent by Vertical Response, use this notice:

Confidentiality Notice: This email, including attachments, may contain confidential and privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact us by email at info@seedsofstrength.org and delete this message and its attachments. Any unauthorized review, use, or distribution is prohibited.

If the email is sent from an email address, use this notice:

Confidentiality Notice: This email, including attachments, may contain confidential and privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender (only) by reply email and delete this message and its attachments. Any unauthorized review, use, or distribution is prohibited.

If the Confidentiality Notice is going on a document instead of an email, modify the notice accordingly. This example is for a document sent through Vertical Response.

Confidentiality Notice: This document may contain confidential and privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient of the email that provided the link to this document, please contact us by email at info@seedsofstrength.org and delete the email message and its attachments. Any unauthorized review, use, or distribution is prohibited.

Committee Meetings and Reports

The Guiding Circle Chair is an ex-officio member of each committee and shall be made aware of all upcoming committee meetings in the event she may wish to attend. Prior to each Guiding Circle meeting, Committee Chairs shall provide a written report of committee business to the Guiding Circle Chair. This report will be shared with the Secretary to ensure accuracy of the minutes of the Guiding Circle meeting.

Records and Document Retention

Documents

SoS shall maintain appropriate records necessary for the management and operation of SoS. Each Committee Chair shall maintain documents (both electronically and hard copy) such as operating plans, calendars, task lists, databases, lists of vendors, forms, important internal and external correspondence, and any other pertinent information that will enable a smooth transition to future leaders.

Committee Chair Binders

Each incoming Committee Chair shall receive a binder containing pertinent operational information from her predecessor. It is the responsibility of the current Committee Chair to update the binder, as necessary, before distribution to a new Committee Chair. The binder should contain any new policies and procedures for the committee as well as any other relevant information. The incoming Committee Chair should receive training/orientation from the outgoing Committee Chair.

Fiscal Management

Fiscal Management Goals

SoS strives for effective and efficient fiscal management and accountability. Committee Chairs will be vigilant in fulfilling their responsibility to see that funds are used wisely to achieve the results for which they are allocated.

Annual Operating Budget

The purpose of the annual operating budget is to identify adequate financial resources for the operation of SoS and to provide the basis for fiscal accountability. Each Committee Chair works with the Guiding Circle Chair and Treasurer to set a budget for her area for the upcoming fiscal year. Any potential overspending must be submitted, in advance, to the Guiding Circle Chair for approval.

SoS's annual operating budget comes from the following sources:

- Any dollar amount given by a member or group that exceeds the \$1,000.00 annual membership contribution.
- Any money raised from events or projects, or money collected for an event, that exceeds costs.
- Any money donated to Seeds of Strength by friends, family, associates of SoS members or anyone else that is not a donation to fund membership dues.

- The Guiding Circle may, at its discretion, transfer surplus operating budget funds to increase the grants amount.

Use of Membership Dues

All membership dues are applied toward grants and are held in a separate grants account. Grants are awarded annually to one or more nonprofit organizations in the spring of each fiscal year. Membership dues may not be used for operating expenses unless the dollar amount of a contribution exceeds the annual dues.

Expenses

- **Authorized Signatures**
The Treasurer or the Guiding Circle Chair must authorize all disbursement requests from the operating budget account.
 - CTCF allows SoS to name up to three (3) authorized signatories (our "Fund Advisors"). CTCF policy will allow any of the Fund Advisors to approve a disbursement.
 - However, for SoS policy, in order to maintain fiscal control, if a third SoS Signatory (Fund Advisor) has been authorized, the Treasurer must clarify when/whether the third Fund Advisor should approve disbursements during the current term.
- **Cash Disbursements**
 - The Treasurer, if available, shall receive and approve all bills, invoices and reimbursement requests.
 - If any Signatory besides the Treasurer approves a disbursement, copies of disbursement form and receipts must be provided to the Treasurer.
 - Once approved, bills and requests are forwarded to CTCF for payment.
 - For a reimbursement, CTCF requires the original receipt.
- **Reimbursable Expenses**
SoS will reimburse Committee Chairs for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the conduct of SoS business and activities. Both the person who incurs the expenses and the person who approves reimbursement of expenses are responsible for ensuring maximum practical economy in the expenditure of funds. (Expenses are paid by the Committee Chair and then approved and reimbursed by SoS.)
 - **Reimbursable Expenses without Prior Approval**
These expenses include retail purchases of supplies and other low-cost items; printing and copying; postage; and food and beverages associated with SoS training, meetings and social gatherings (excluding "coffee"). For the above items, a Chair shall be reimbursed without prior approval if the amount does not exceed \$100.00. For amounts over \$100.00, expenses must be approved in advance.

- Reimbursable Expenses with Prior Approval
Expenses that require prior approval of the Guiding Circle Chair include, but are not limited to, dues in professional organizations, subscription costs for publications, registration fees and travel expenses for professional conferences, and any other expenses incurred for SoS business that exceed \$100.00.
- Procedure for Reimbursement of Expenditures or for Payment of Bills
 - CTCF requires a receipt for any reimbursement or payment of bills from SoS. Any Committee Chair who has expenses for SoS business or activities should submit the original receipts, or the bill, along with a request for payment to the Treasurer. Include in any request the Name and Address of the person to whom payment will be made.
 - The Treasurer will review and approve the request for reimbursement, or payment of a bill, and will prepare and sign a Check Request for CTCF.
 - The CTCF Bookkeeper will prepare a check and mail it to the address in the request for payment.
- Sales Tax
Each Committee Chair should have a copy of CTCF's letter from the Texas Comptroller exempting CTCF from paying sales tax. (This letter is included in each Committee Chair's binder.) The letter should be presented to retail outlets when purchasing items on behalf of SoS. The retail outlet should then deduct the sales tax. In keeping with the fiscal management goals, it is the expectation of SoS that every effort will be made to use the Texas Comptroller's exception letter.
- Non-reimbursable Expenses
SoS will not reimburse Committee Chairs for the following: mileage, parking, traffic citations, sales tax paid in connection with printing, copying and retail purchases of supplies, food and beverages, at home "coffees," committee meetings, and personal services or personal purchases.
- Recognition of In-Kind Donations
It is SoS's policy to recognize all material in-kind contributions in its financial statement. In-kind donations are contributions of non-cash items, including gifts-in-kind such as supplies, property or equipment, and contributed professional services.

When possible, send notice of an in-kind donation to the SoS Treasurer to alert her.

When an in-kind donation is received, the SoS Treasurer and CTCF Advisor are charged with reviewing documentation and making an acceptance determination (or, if

necessary, postponing a decision pending the receipt of additional information). The SoS Treasurer and the CTCF Advisor may determine that the original receipt provides adequate documentation. At a minimum, the SoS Treasurer and CTCF Advisor require the following information:

- 1) Name and address of the donor;
- 2) A description of the asset;
- 3) The date this asset was received by CTCF;
- 4) The purpose of the gift;
- 5) An estimate or appraisal of the gift's fair market value and marketability;
- 6) Any potential SoS use; and
- 7) Any special arrangements requested by the donor concerning disposition (e.g., price considerations, time duration prior to disposition, potential buyers, etc.).

If the SoS Treasurer and CTCF Advisor approve the proposed gift, the SoS organization and CTCF Advisor acknowledge receipt of the gift. CTCF does not appraise or assign values to gifts of property for receipting purposes. It is the donor's responsibility to establish a value for the gift and to provide, at his or her expense, a qualified written appraisal required by the IRS in the case of gifts of tangible personal property valued in excess of \$5,000 (five thousand dollars).

The execution and delivery of a deed of gift or other appropriate conveyance acceptable to the SoS organization and CTCF Advisor, and the delivery of the property as applicable, completes the gift. The donor is responsible for all costs associated with the conveyance and delivery of the gift. In addition, the IRS requires the filing of Form 8283 by the donor for gifts of tangible personal property valued at more than \$500 (five hundred dollars). Forms are available on the IRS website @ www.irs.gov.

Valuation for Internal Reporting Purposes

Gifts-in-Kind are generally valued for internal reporting purposes at their fair market value.

- 1) Gifts valued at less than \$5,000 may be evaluated for internal reporting purposes by an independent appraisal; the donor (preferably with a receipt or other printed backup); a qualified, objective faculty/staff member of CTCF; or (in the case of auction items) a winning auction bid.
- 2) All gifts valued at \$5,000 or more are counted at values provided by qualified independent appraisers, who are generally compensated by the donor for tax deduction purposes.

3) Gifts valued at \$5,000 or more for which the donor is not seeking a deduction and/or for any other reason not employing an appraiser may be evaluated by a CTCF-compensated appraiser.

- **Recognition of Certain Donations**

Either the Guiding Circle Chair or the Treasurer should send a thank you note on behalf of SoS for monetary donations identified in CTCF financial reports from friends, family or associates of a Seeds of Strength member, or in-kind donations, when appropriate.

NOTE: these are simply thank you notes. CTCF is responsible for sending letters suitable for tax purposes when it is appropriate to do.

- **Grant Awards**

Grants are awarded annually to one or more local nonprofit organizations. Upon award, the Chair of the Grants Committee will finalize a grant disbursement list and submit it to the Treasurer for formal approval of the disbursement. The Treasurer will submit check requests to the CTCF office for each grant recipient. After the checks are made available to SoS, they will be presented to each grant recipient by a Community Partner Liaison within two (2) weeks, barring unforeseen circumstances.

- **Fiscal Accounting and Reporting**

For each fiscal year, the Chair will ensure that the Accountant (CTCF) maintains current and accurate financial records in accordance with general accepted accounting practices. At each regularly scheduled Guiding Circle meeting, the Guiding Circle Treasurer will report the receipts, disbursements and balances in both the grants and the operations accounts.

DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS OF THE GUIDING CIRCLE

The Officers of the Guiding Circle include the Chair, Incoming Chair, Immediate Past Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. In an emergency, when the Chair is unable to convene the entire Guiding Circle, the other Officers are empowered to act on her behalf. In the absence of the Chair, one of the attending Officers shall conduct the meeting. In general, the Executive Committee, defined earlier in this document, exists to provide support to the Chair at her request.

Guiding Circle Chair

General Policies and Procedures

- Meet annually with all committee chairs and officers to review the policies and procedures and the bylaws.
- Recommend any necessary changes to the policies and procedures and the bylaws to the full Guiding Circle.

- Work with officers and committee chairs to identify and evaluate strategies that will achieve goals and be true to the SoS mission.
- Develop and cultivate collaborative relationships among Guiding Circle members to ensure the ongoing success of SoS.
- Communicate regularly with all committee chairs and act as an ex-officio member of every committee. Attend as many committee meetings as possible.
- Stay abreast of all programs and projects.
- Schedule and conduct six to nine Guiding Circle meetings per year. Notify the Secretary, who will send meeting notices and agendas by email at least one week prior to each meeting.
- Once the slate of members for the next year's Guiding Circle has been approved by the current Guiding Circle, extend an invitation to Guiding Circle meetings to those women who will be new to the Guiding Circle when they take office on October 1st.
- Work closely with the Incoming Chair on all functions to ensure a smooth transition at the end of the Chair's term.

Membership

- Work with the Membership Chair and Treasurer to keep accurate records of new members and renewing members.

Grants

- Attend as many Grants Committee meetings as possible.
- Read all grant applications.
- Welcome attendees at the Grant Proposal Voting and Award Reception.

Communications

- Work with the Communications Chair to ensure effective communication to the public and members.
 - Provide the Communications Chair with periodic blog or email-to-members content.
 - Approve interviews, articles and/or statements released to the media.
- Determine who will manage the website's "Info" email address for the current term. Given the variety of requests that may come to this email address, the responsibility should be held by a person familiar with how SoS operates, or who can benefit from becoming more familiar with how SoS operates due to her role in the organization.
 - Note: the website's "Membership" email address is managed by the Membership Chair. The "Grants" email address is managed by the Grants Chair.

Events

- Approve all expenditures for events, based on existing budget and event requirements.
- Submit names of speakers for events and when necessary, contact speakers.
- Address membership at every event, introducing committee chairs and officers.

Guiding Circle Meeting Communication

- Work with the Secretary on all correspondence and communication initiated by the Chair, e.g., meeting agendas, minutes.

Expenses

- Work with the Treasurer on approval of all operating budget expenses.
- Work with the Treasurer and Membership Chair to keep accurate records of new members and renewing members.
- Receive regular financial reports from CTCF. Three (3) positions in SoS are designated as the SoS Fund Advisors receiving these reports: the Guiding Circle Chair, the Treasurer, and the Membership Chair.
- Work with the Treasurer to decide how to handle donation thank you notes, when they are appropriate.

Guiding Circle Incoming Chair

The duties of the Incoming Chair are closely related to those of the Chair. Tasks assigned to the Incoming Chair help familiarize her with the duties of the Chair and provide substantial support to the Chair in her multiple roles. Duties may include, but are not limited to, a liaison role with various Guiding Circle committees, presiding at Guiding Circle meetings or other events should the Chair be unable to attend, and assisting with other Chair-related responsibilities.

Specific Policies and Procedures

- Encourage new members to learn about committee involvement.
- Attend all training sessions for the reading of grants.
- Determine the plan for Guiding Circle orientation for women who will be new to the Guiding Circle when they take office October 1st.
- Be a member of the Nominating Committee.

Guiding Circle Immediate Past Chair

The Immediate Past Chair continues to exercise leadership on behalf of the Guiding Circle by chairing the Nominating Committee and by providing advice as needed. She continues to provide leadership as a member of the Executive Committee of the Guiding Circle. She is encouraged to remain active in all Guiding Circle activities.

Specific Policies and Procedures

- Chair the Nominating Committee.
- At all events and functions, greet each attendee at the door, reminding each to get a name tag and sign the registry, if provided.
- Assist future chairs by collecting records useful for her reference in the next term. Examples could include, but are not limited to, copies of past versions of SoS bylaws

and Policies and Procedures (with dates noted), Guiding Circle rosters from previous years, list of each year's grantees and amounts awarded, etc.

Guiding Circle Secretary

The Secretary is the conduit of official correspondence to and from the Guiding Circle as related to the following:

Guiding Circle Policies and Procedures

- Notify Guiding Circle members of all upcoming meetings in a timely manner.
- Take minutes at all Guiding Circle meetings.
- Distribute minutes of the Guiding Circle meetings within 7 calendar days.
- Annually, provide a copy of the Guiding Circle minutes to CTCF that show the newly elected Guiding Circle roster. CTCF uses those minutes as the documentation that authorizes name changes for positions. For example, since the election is in mid-September and the new board takes office October 1, CTCF needs the minutes from the late September Guiding Circle meeting with a full list of names and positions.
- Maintain the permanent records of the Guiding Circle at the CTCF offices. (Note: clarification is required as to what records should be kept at the CTCF offices and for how long.)

Guiding Circle Treasurer

The Treasurer is the Chair of the Finance Committee (which may consist of just the Treasurer, or may be a committee with additional members, whichever is most appropriate for SoS in a given year), and must therefore have a strong financial background and the ability to work independently. The Treasurer is the liaison between SoS and CTCF in the Foundation's role as fiscal agent for SoS.

Specific Policies and Procedures

- Assist in the development and oversight of the annual operating budget.
- Supervise the collection and accounting of all money received by and expended for the use of SoS.
- Deposit monies received by SoS in the name of Seeds of Strength at CTCF.
- Receive and approve all bills, invoices and reimbursement requests. Once approved, forward to CTCF for payment.
- Work with CTCF to maintain accurate records.
- Receive regular financial reports from CTCF. Three (3) positions in SoS are designated to receive these reports: the Guiding Circle Chair, the Treasurer, and the Membership Chair.
- Work with the Membership Chair and the Events Committee Chair to create and monitor budgets for events.

- Work with the Guiding Circle Chair to decide how to handle donation thank you notes, when they are appropriate.
- Work with other Committee Chairs, as appropriate, to create and monitor committee operating budgets.
- Ensure implementation of financial policies and procedures.
- Maintain two separate accounts. Report the status of the operating budget account and the grants account at each Guiding Circle meeting. This includes income from membership dues, seed money contributions, and funds raised in excess of specific events (e.g. the membership luncheon).
- Report income and expenditures to the Guiding Circle at each meeting or whenever required by the Guiding Circle.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR COMMITTEES

Committee Chairs are members of the Executive Committee of the Guiding Circle. (Per the policy on page 2 of this document, if Co-Chairs exist for any committee, one person should be established as the voting member of the Executive Committee.) Committees include the Communications Committee, Events Committee, Grants Committee, Membership Committee, Nominating Committee and Compliance Committee.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is responsible for recruiting candidates for the positions of Incoming Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Committee Chairs as well as new Guiding Circle members-at-large.

Nominating Committee Policies and Procedures

- The Immediate Past Chair of SoS chairs the Nominating Committee.
- The Incoming Chair is a member of the committee.
- One (1) additional member may be appointed by the SoS Chair to serve on the committee
- SoS members vote on the proposed slate by e-vote prior to the annual Membership Luncheon in September.
- New Officers and Guiding Circle members are presented to the membership at the luncheon.

Events Committee

The Events Committee works with the appropriate Committee Chairs and the Guiding Circle Chair to plan and implement all events established and scheduled by the Guiding Circle. There are currently six (6) annual events sponsored by SoS. (Note that the bylaws only require 3.):

- Wine, Chocolate/Women & Giving, in February, a social event for new and renewing members, and guests.

- New Member Welcome Reception held in the Spring.
- Grant Finalist Presentations, Voting and Awards Reception held in April or May.
- Membership Luncheon held in September.
- Educational Event held in October.
- Holiday Event held in December.

Events Committee Policies and Procedures

- Select the specific venue, date and time for each event.
- Determine the style of invitations, and whether electronic or standard mail will be used.
- Decide the theme of the event and decorations needed.
- Select the menu.
- Determine if a speaker is needed and work with the Guiding Circle to select the speaker.
- For each event, committee members work on all facets of event preparation. They work with the venue regarding menu, AV equipment, and other venue requirements. They contact speakers, when appropriate, and confirm the date, time, and place in writing..
- On the day of each event, committee members take charge of room set up and clean up, set up a registration table with name tags (with the Membership Committee), and welcome attendees.

Events Committee Chair Responsibilities

- Schedule committee meetings as necessary to plan and implement each event.
- Work with the Guiding Circle Chair to determine the cost to members for the Membership Luncheon.
- Notify Guiding Circle members of specific dates determined as well as specific tasks that will require additional Guiding Circle member support.
- Create a checklist for each event to ensure that all tasks are covered and completed.
- Assign tasks to members along with specific dates by which task must be completed.
- Meet with committee members and anyone who will be speaking at an event at least one week ahead of time to finalize timing and execution of event.
- Supply vendors with CTCF letter of nonprofit 501(c)(3) status so tax will not be charged on items purchased.
- Supply venue with CTCF letter of nonprofit status in order to receive a discount on the room rental. If the venue is not charging SoS for the room, the venue can use the letter for tax purposes.
- Inform the SoS Chair of all upcoming committee meetings, in case she wishes to attend.
- One week prior to each Guiding Circle meeting, distribute an Events Committee report via email to the SoS Chair and the Secretary.

Communications Committee

The Communication Committee gathers and conveys accurate, timely information about SoS both internally, to and from the membership, and externally, to and from the public as related to the website, Facebook, and media.

Communications Committee Policies and Procedures

Publicity & Media

- Develop an overall communications/public relations strategy to make SoS as well known and positively viewed as possible.
- Maintain a list of publications that offer free publicity to provide a level of legitimacy that paid ads cannot offer and work with Webmaster to create an electronic mailing list.
- Seek opportunities to build rapport with local media outlets.
- Work with the Events Committee Chair and the Membership Committee Chair to determine publicity needs and create press releases for: new member orientations; Wine, Chocolate/Women & Giving; the Grants Awards Reception; the Membership Luncheon; the Holiday Event; and any other events deemed appropriate by the Guiding Circle.
- Work with the Grants Chair to create press releases announcing the time period when applicants may apply for SoS Grants.
- Work with the SoS Chair to finalize all communications for external dissemination.
- Select pictures for internal and external use. Determine the best method for archiving SoS photos. See the Photo Policy later in this section.

Website & Vertical Response Correspondence to Members

- Update information on the website as needed, including the slides on the home page, events, grants, membership, articles for the blog, etc.
- Help members access the website, as needed..
- Work with appropriate Guiding Circle members to create Vertical Response invitations for SoS events.
- Use Vertical Response to disseminate information to the membership, such as event invitations and reminders, notification when new blogs are posted, messages from the Chair, etc.
- Note that the Webmaster is not the contact person responsible for information sent to SoS through the website. See the section "Communication" under "Guiding Circle Chair", earlier in this document.

Facebook

- Take photos at SoS events and post them on Facebook.
- Post information related to SoS grantees.
- Post appropriate information from the website, e.g., blogs.

Photo Policy

- If a nonprofit supplies photos, the committee verifies SoS has permission to post them on the blog and/or Facebook, asking for help from the Community Partner Liaison, if needed, to contact the nonprofit.
 - If the photo has an identifiable minor, Communications asks the nonprofit for their policy on how the nonprofit secures parental permission to use a photo, with similar caution for a photo of an adult in any sensitive situation.

- Communications keeps a copy of the email showing SoS has permission. If permission is verbal, Communications keeps a copy of an email within the committee that states permission was verbal so SoS has a record of the conversation (e.g., an email from the committee member to the Communications Chair).
- To ensure SoS has options for an article, if SoS takes a photo, avoid shots showing identifiable minors and photos of adults in sensitive situations. Consider taking at least one photo that is "privacy neutral" (for example, a long shot; someone's back; adult volunteers who verbally agree it's ok to use the photo; a place not a person).

Communications Committee Chair Responsibilities

- Serve as SoS Editor, as needed, for official SoS documents , and internal or external communications.
- Maintain regular contact with the co-chairs to ensure that eblasts, website and Facebook content, and public relations communications are being handled in a timely manner.
- Schedule committee meetings as needed.
- Create and/or approve all communications for external dissemination.
- Approve copy created for the website and Facebook prior to posting.
- Approve copy created for dissemination to the membership via Vertical Response prior to sending.
- Notify Guiding Circle members of specific tasks that will require additional Guiding Circle member support as well as specific dates and/or timelines.
- Coordinate with other Committee Chairs to ensure that the Communications Committee has needed information on events in order to disseminate that information to members and to the public in a timely manner.
- Inform the SoS Chair of all upcoming committee meetings, in case she wishes to attend.
- One week prior to each Guiding Circle meeting, distribute a Communications Committee report via email to the SoS Chair and the Secretary.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee implements ideas that come from the general membership to grow membership and retain current members.

Membership Committee Policies and Procedures

Fall Membership Luncheon

- Work with the Events Committee on the program for the fall Membership Luncheon.
- At the luncheon, distribute any handouts that have been approved by the Guiding Circle including, but not limited to, the SoS brochure, and membership forms.

Prospective Membership Gatherings

- Determine whether these gatherings will be hosted for the current membership year, and determine where and how many.

- Refreshments are the responsibility of the hostess. Costs are not reimbursed.
- Ensure that each hostess has brochures, Q & A sheets, membership forms, etc. (Information should be provided on individual and shared membership and options for paying dues, i.e., monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annually.)
- Attend membership gatherings whenever possible.

New Member Welcome Reception

- Work with the Events Committee and the Guiding Circle on the location and program.

Additional Responsibilities

- Work with the Membership Chair to make personal contact with every new member of SoS by phone, email and/or with a personal note.

Membership Committee Chair Responsibilities

- Schedule “membership gatherings” for prospective members.
- Attend “membership gatherings” whenever possible.
- Collect and record all checks for membership dues.
- Keep the membership records up to date:
 - As new membership forms are received, record the names and contact information on a master “list of prospective members.”
 - As checks are received, add each person to the master list of members; make a copy of the membership form and check; and send the check and original form to CTCF, Attn: SoS Treasurer.
 - Ensure that each new member receives timely communications, which may include a membership packet, a thank-you note, a phone call and an invitation to a new member orientation, or any combination of the above.
- Maintain a spreadsheet that provides a record of the following dates: new member’s check received, thank-you note sent, packet sent, phone call made.
- On a regular basis, ensure new member names are added to Vertical Response either by updating the information directory or by sending the names to the Communications Chair and the Webmaster.
- Send Committee Chairs the names and contact information necessary to reach out to members who have expressed an interest in a particular committee.
- Send the Publicity Coordinator any information on membership programs and goals that should be included in local publications.
- Inform the SoS Chair of all upcoming committee meetings, in case she wishes to attend.
- One week prior to each Guiding Circle meeting, distribute a Membership Committee report via email to the SoS Chair and the Secretary.

Grants Committee

Each year, the Grants Committee follows a formal process for selecting grantee finalists. The committee consists of a chair, an incoming chair and additional members.

Grants Committee Policies and Procedures

- Review and update the process for selecting grantee organizations each year.
- Review the grant applicant forms and the forms for evaluating grant proposals.
- Participate in training to learn how to evaluate grant applications.
- Review and score the grant proposals.
- Select grantee finalists.
- Work with the Events Committee to plan the Grants Voting and Awards Reception.
- Any member, who has a connection as a board member, or other close tie to an applicant or feels that for any reason she cannot maintain objectivity, will not be allowed to score grant applications from that organization. (Refer to Conflict of Interest statement.)

Grant Committee Chair Responsibilities

- Manage the review and editing of application materials, coordinating with relevant external agencies as needed.
- Coordinate with SoS Communications Chair to ensure application materials and information are available to agencies in a timely manner, using appropriate technology resources.
- Develop appropriate training and evaluation materials.
- Schedule and conduct training and all committee meetings during the grant cycle, including a debriefing meeting after the grant awards are completed.
- Conduct preliminary review of completed applications to identify those that are incomplete or do not meet SoS guidelines.
- Review and distribute the completed applications to committee members; ensure every member has access to the documents.
- Notify grantee finalists and apprise them of requirements for the Voting and Awards Reception.
- Create voting ballots for members, including absentee ballots to ensure all members have an opportunity to vote. Create online materials for the ballot for members to access.
- Work with the Compliance Committee on reviews of mid-cycle and end-of-cycle reports from grantees. If an issue arises, work with the Compliance Chair to determine the recommended SoS response or position.
- Inform the SoS Chair of all upcoming committee meetings, in case she wishes to attend.
- One week prior to each Guiding Circle meeting, distribute a Grants Committee report via email to the SoS Chair and the Secretary.

Conflict of Interest

- SoS members are committed to acting with integrity in all relationships and in selecting grant recipients through an honest and fair process.
- The SoS Conflict of Interest Policy requires disclosure of relationships between Grants Committee members and any grant applicant or potential grant applicant. A Grants

Committee member is also required to recuse herself from the discussion and/or vote on any topic where a conflict arises.

- Only those members serving on the Grants Committee are required to disclose conflicts of interest. However, SoS expects all members to act in an objective and fair manner and to refrain from any attempt to gain an unfair advantage for a particular grant applicant by, among other things, disclosing confidential information and/or attempting to influence the vote of a member of SoS.

Compliance Committee

The Compliance Committee provides a communication link with grantees with the objectives of ensuring contract compliance and of assisting/facilitating the grantee with an issue if appropriate. Committee Members are assigned as "Community Partner Liaisons" to current grantees.

Compliance Committee Policies and Procedures

- If a committee member is NOT also a member of the Grants Committee, the Grants Committee confidentiality agreement must be signed.
- Present the contract to the grantee's executive director, emphasizing the use of the SoS logo on their marketing brochures and/or giving SoS credit in publicity that promotes the program that SoS has funded.
- Encourage the grantee to share videos, photos or other material with SoS (in addition to the news releases, published material or media articles requested in the contract), so SoS can help spread awareness of the program. The Liaison provides copies of all such material received to the Communications Committee for consideration in SoS publicity.
- Reach out to grantees on occasion during the grant period. Check for the SoS logo on the website.
- Committee members are to feel free (but not required) to attend grantee functions, as appropriate.
- Obtain and review the mid-cycle and final reports from grantees. Provide copies to the Grants Chair for her review. If an issue arises, work with the Grants Chair to determine the recommended SoS response or position. Follow up with the grantee as needed on any actions to be taken.

Compliance Committee Chair Responsibilities

- Manage the review of forms and processes used by the Committee to perform its responsibilities. Schedule committee meetings as needed.
- Schedule training on the contract for new committee members, or for all committee members if the contract changes.
- Assign a Community Partner Liaison to each grantee. If practical, assign where a member has expressed a preference. Avoid conflicts of interest.
- Coordinate with other Committee Chairs when committee duties or grantee issues affect other areas.

- Inform the SoS Chair of all upcoming committee meetings, in case she wishes to attend.
- One week prior to each Guiding Circle meeting, distribute a Compliance Committee report via email to the SoS Chair and the Secretary.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR MEMBERS

Membership Contributions

- Membership checks should be payable to Chisholm Trail Communities Foundation, with Seeds of Strength written in the “memo” section of the check. The completed membership form should be included with the check. The method of payment must be indicated on the form. Checks and forms should be sent to: Chisholm Trail Communities Foundation, 116 West 8th Street, Georgetown, Texas, 78626.
- Members who wish to pay by credit card should follow the directions on the website. They should send the completed membership form to CTCF. The method of payment must be indicated on the form. Credit card and PayPal processing fees are operational expenses that are paid by Seeds of Strength.
- Only those members whose contributions are current as of the last day of February are eligible to vote for that year. Members whose checks arrive at the CTCF office on or after March 1 will be contacted to let them know that they will not be eligible to vote in the current grant cycle and will be added to the membership roster for the following year. They will be encouraged to visit the website and they will receive invitations to all events and functions, with the exception of Grant Proposal Voting. They will not be eligible to hold an office or chair a committee prior to the next annual Guiding Circle election, but will be welcome to participate as a committee member with the exception of the Grants Committee.

Shared Memberships

- A Shared Membership consists of a group of two, three, or four women who share the \$1000.00 annual contribution.
- The women in the group select a name, e.g., Sunshine Group, and receive one ballot for Grant Proposal Voting, which will indicate a consensus of their selections.
- Women participating in a shared membership are eligible to serve as members of the Guiding Circle, as Committee Members, and Committee Chairs. (Per SoS Bylaws, the officer positions of Chair, Incoming Chair, Immediate Past Chair, Secretary and Treasurer must be filled by members with individual memberships.)
- The number of Shared Memberships available in any given year is based on the terms cited in the Seeds of Strength Bylaws.

Guiding Circle Member Code of Conduct

This code describes the values that are to be embraced at all times by all members of the Guiding Circle (GC) in exercising their duties:

- Act with integrity, transparency and in good faith at all times.
- Have an overriding primary regard in all decisions for the well being and success of SoS in all matters.
- Operate harmoniously and constructively as a member of the GC and come to the meetings prepared, having read the meeting materials ahead, if available.
- Work in partnership with CTCF staff when appropriate.
- Scrupulously abide with all applicable requirements of conflict of interest, pecuniary interest and confidentiality.
- Effectively articulate the views, requirements and decisions of the GC.
- Be accountable for the development of SoS's vision, mission and the strategic directions and initiatives.
- Make decisions objectively with due care for the common good and the needs of the community we serve.
- Openly participate in the decision-making process.
- Be respectful of other people's ideas.
- Support and take responsibility for the consequences of GC decisions and actions.
- Regularly attend GC and committee meetings, arriving on time and staying to the end.

Seeds of Strength Confidentiality Agreement

The nature of our role as a funding source for nonprofits in our community results in our members receiving extensive information that is considered privileged. Much information is shared with SoS because of our reputation for trust and our ability to make fair and democratic decisions. To safeguard SoS as a responsible grantor and to protect our capacity to gather data necessary to make those decisions, SoS subscribes to specific policies on confidentiality.

Policy:

- SoS members, who have access to any documents submitted to SoS for review with an application for funding, should not engage in private discussion of SoS matters.
- The positions or statements of Guiding Circle members or Grants Committee members should not be discussed outside of official SoS meetings and processes.
- Content of SoS business, including documents or SoS' analysis of documents, should not be discussed or shared outside official meetings and processes.

I acknowledge and respect the importance of confidentiality in my work with SoS and commit to uphold the policies pertaining to the confidential nature of SoS business.

I understand that my failure to do so may result in my being dismissed from service as a member of the Guiding Circle or Grants Committee by majority vote of the SoS Guiding Circle.

I understand that all grant applications and supplemental materials are the sole property of SoS.

I understand that certain confidential materials will be made available to me for the purpose of fulfilling my role as a Grants Committee member. By my signature, I confirm that I will guard, protect and keep safe and confidential, without disclosing contents to persons outside SoS meetings and processes.

I have read and understand, and have had any questions explained to me about the Seeds of Strength Conflict of Interest Statement. I understand that my failure to do so may result in my being dismissed from service as a committee member or member of the Guiding Circle by a majority vote of the SoS Guiding Circle.

Signature

Date

Tips for Successful Committees

1. Develop written statements of committee responsibilities, guidelines and annual goals, and review and revise them periodically.
2. Appoint an effective chairperson who clearly understands the organization, the role of the committee, and the importance of conscientious committee leadership.
3. Choose (recruit) committee members whose experience, skills and interest support the goals of the committee and complement the abilities of fellow members.
4. Create written job descriptions for committee members. State expectations clearly. Distribute tasks reasonably among members.
5. Arrive at a clear understanding of the relationships and respective roles of the Guiding Circle, committees and other members.
6. Give committee members thorough information to aid in their decision making.
7. Make timely reports to the Guiding Circle on committee actions and recommendations, allowing the opportunity for members to consider the information before discussion.
8. Set terms of service for committee members to ensure new perspectives and to give committee members the opportunity to contribute in different areas.
9. Set meeting schedules well in advance, in consultation with members. Make effective use of meeting time by sending materials and an agenda to members in advance. Move through the agenda in a business-like way.
10. Schedule an orientation session for new committee members.
11. Recognize and express appreciation to for the achievements of committee members.