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**SUGGESTIONS
FOR
BLOCK LEADERS**

WISCONSIN STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE

1943



MRS. C. J. OTJEN
*First State Chairman, Wisconsin
Block Plan Organization*

PURPOSE

The purpose of these suggestions for Block Leaders in Wisconsin communities is to concentrate in as few pages as possible the aims and objectives of the Wisconsin Block Plan Organization and to revitalize the war consciousness of the Home Front by specific suggestions resulting from the experiences of those who have "blocked" conscientiously, consistently and successfully since the organization had its beginning in Wisconsin. Read and learn, Block Leaders.

GERTRUDE M. PUELICHER,
State Chairman.

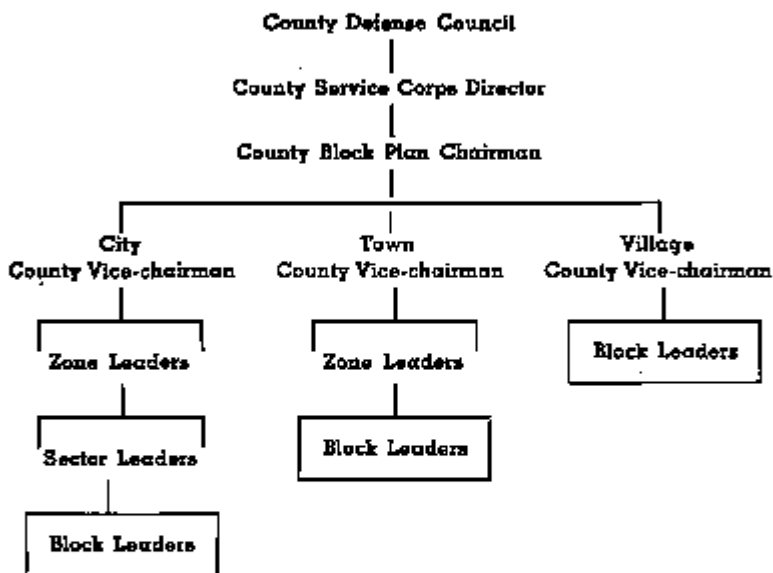
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BLOCK PLAN ORGANIZATION WITHIN THE COUNTY



Do Not Try to fit a square peg into a round hole.

Adapt the plan to the community, not the community to the plan.

Note that the burden falls upon the individual Block Leader.

FUNCTIONS OF THE BLOCK PLAN ORGANIZATION

1. To further each Civilian Defense project:

Car Sharing	Victory Gardens
Salvage	Assisting Recruiting of Women
Careless Conversation	for the Various Services

2. To give vital war information to each home rapidly and accurately.
3. To gather from each home information of vital importance to the community war effort.
4. To re-establish community spirit.

Summary: To enlist each Wisconsin home in the war effort to the limit of its capacity.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A BLOCK LEADER

Tact	Sincerity
Courtesy	Patriotism
Sympathy	Enthusiasm
Patience	Sense of humor
Ability to handle women	War-consciousness

Take stock of yourself, Block Leader.

Where do you stand on a self-rating chart?

HOW DOES A BLOCK LEADER OPERATE IN FURTHERING A CIVILIAN DEFENSE PROJECT

1. Block Leader receives literature describing project from her Zone or Sector Leader or Chairman.
2. Studies project carefully so she can explain it to her "Block."
3. Calls Zone or Sector Leader or Chairman in relation to a point in the project of which she is uncertain.
4. Studies newspaper and magazine articles in relation to the project so that she may be in a position to answer questions or criticisms.
5. Listens to any radio broadcasts on the subject involved.
6. Prepares a short outline of the outstanding points in the project so that she will be able to explain it easily by virtue of having reduced it to its simplest terms.
7. Decides upon the best time to talk with the housewives in her block.
8. Organizes her material so that it will be in order when she is ready to visit her neighbors.

DONT'S IN YOUR INTERVIEW

1. Don't telephone Mrs. Jones about the project. You can't see her face and you don't know what she is thinking. Personal contact is the basis of success.

2. Don't choose the busiest time of the day to make your visit. Your block list shows you that Mrs. Smith has three children, one of whom is a baby that has to be bathed each morning. Mrs. Brown does all her own laundry work so don't visit her bright and early on Monday morning.

3. Don't ring the doorbell imperatively and then insistently if you don't get an immediate response. Give the wife a chance to drop what she is doing.

4. Don't sound like a high-powered salesman.

5. Don't depend upon the literature alone to create interest in the project.

6. If it is necessary for you to obtain information that must be listed on a card or form sheet, don't be hard-boiled in your manner so that Mrs. Jones feels you are checking up on her and her activities.

7. Don't ever "snoop." The personal affairs of your neighbors are definitely none of your business. If it is necessary for you to ask questions to further a war effort, confine yourself to the matter in hand.

8. Don't give the impression that you are endowed with authority other than that of Block Leader.

9. Don't make the fatal mistake of carrying tales from one home to another. What you see or hear in Mrs. Smith's home has nothing whatever to do with Mrs. Jones or Mrs. Brown.

10. Don't overstay the time necessary for the interview. Your neighbors are busy. So are you.

DO'S IN YOUR INTERVIEW

1. Whenever possible, chat with the women to whom you must convey information while they are working in their gardens or while they are out-of-doors for a few moments of relaxation. An informal conversation is often a far better medium for furthering Civilian Defense projects than is the formal, door-bell ringing type.

2. Always remember that you come in a friendly capacity, that of serving those in your block. Establish a friendly contact in your first visits, and it won't be necessary to show your credentials every time you appear.

3. The literature you bring need not necessarily be explained. Very often a tactful reminder that you have left material on the table is sufficient to arouse interest in its reading.

4. When one of your block members has done a particularly fine piece of war work, be sure to praise her. See to it that others interested in the community Block Plan Organization know of what she has done and that they praise her. Recognition is important to each of us.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BUILDING UP BLOCK MORALE

1. Ask one or two women in the block to assume the responsibility of getting blood donors from the block.

2. Ask a mother or wife of a man in service to keep track of all homes in the block that carry service flags. Suggest that part of her work is to watch casualty lists so that in case of a loss to a home in the block or injury to a boy from the block, neighbors may have an opportunity to show their sympathy.

3. Draw up a block cook book compiled of wartime recipes. (Send to state Block Plan office for sample copy compiled by Block 3, Precinct 9, Ward 21, Milwaukee)

4. At periodic block meetings, show films relative to war or OCD projects.

5. At periodic block meetings, give all block members an opportunity to speak, discuss or suggest.

6. Always give enthusiastic credit to all block members who have been particularly successful in a particular project.

7. Whenever possible, get newspaper publicity for your block.

8. Maintain a friendly interest in the affairs of your block.

There is something fine about everyone. All you need do is be fine enough to draw fineness forth from others.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

On September 26th, 1942, the original State Advisory Committee of the Wisconsin Block Plan Organization, composed of representatives of statewide women's organizations, elected as chairman of the Wisconsin Block Plan Organization, a woman whose organizing ability and whose reputation as a leader in worthwhile civic activities had long been recognized, namely, Mrs. C. J. Otjen of Milwaukee.

Under the stimulus of Mrs. Otjen's enthusiasm and tireless energy, the women of the state responded eagerly. Here was a woman with vision, foresight, intelligence and, most important of all, with force of character to put into effect a pioneer plan, which required careful handling and constant alertness to the opportunities for war service that might arise.

Mrs. Otjen's work has received not only state but regional and national acclaim. Mr. Robert W. Hansen, Senior Civilian War Services Advisor, Regional OCD, states, "Mrs. Otjen has done a truly magnificent job of enlisting the womanpower of Wisconsin in Civilian Defense work. Her contacts with women civic leaders, her ability to tap reservoirs of community leadership and her remarkable talents as an organizer gave Wisconsin a block or neighborhood organization second to none in the nation. Materials prepared by Mrs. Otjen have been sent throughout the country to stimulate similar activity in other states. State Civilian Defense leaders throughout America are familiar with the fine job she has done."

Forty thousand Wisconsin women, from Judy O'Grady to the Colonel's lady, are working quietly, earnestly, enthusiastically in a day by day effort to make their war contribution a constructive force.

Are You One of the 40,000?

"The Block Plan Organization is the greatest challenge to woman's initiative that was ever developed," said the Block Plan chairman of Eau Claire County.

Block Leaders Belong to the Privileged Class

**They are privileged
to serve**

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