Starting a New WTS Chapter
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Starting a WTS Chapter is an exciting time for an area. It’s the beginning of a connection to a great organization where the cliché holds true, the more you give the more you get. A successful Chapter includes a mix of people, professions and genders and the more diverse a Chapter becomes, the more resources available to pull. This is very important to a volunteer-based organization.

This document provides an overview of the steps required to form a Chapter. In order to be approved by WTS International, the prospective Chapter must submit the following documents:

- Articles of Incorporation applicable to the prospective Chapter’s country’s/province’s/locality’s law
- By-Laws of the prospective Chapter
- Letter to the WTS international Chair
- List of acting officers for the prospective Chapter
- 20 paid WTS members

Step 1: Develop a Core Group

The first step is to establish a core group of people. If you have not done so already, call 15 to 20 people that you know to gauge interest in developing a Chapter. Once you have about 10 people interested, hold a meeting to discuss the possibility of a Chapter in your area. After identifying your core group of members, appoint one person as Acting Chapter President of the developing Chapter.

This core group should keep a few questions in mind as the process begins, such as: Who will be our members? How much support will our members get from their employers? Will they be allowed to go to programs without taking time off? Will their dues be paid for by their employer? What would happen to your Chapter if one agency decides to no longer support WTS activities? Does the geographic layout facilitate attendance at meetings? Where and when are you going to host programs (morning, lunch time, evening)?

Most likely, several issues and challenges will come up as you discuss starting a Chapter. Be realistic in your planning. Your core group should have members with diverse backgrounds, from both the public and private sector agencies and companies, and people who have energy and drive to volunteer time and commitment. A best practice involves at least three agencies in some manner. You can consider starting with individuals from the State Department of Transportation, an airport authority and regional transit authority in addition to a few consulting firms. Three varying modes of transportation have been a successful strategy.

The core group should give some attention to naming the Chapter. In many cases, the name reflects the major city where most of the members live and activities will occur. In some cases, the name of a Chapter reflects an area. It’s important to use a name that best reflects the intent and geography.

If after your initial planning meeting, the core group decides there is support for a Chapter, then the next step is to assign responsibility for crafting the bylaws, managing the paperwork for the Incorporation process, and recruiting members.
Step 2: Recruit Members

The developing Chapter will need 20 paid WTS members to be certified. The Chapter start-up team should be a resource body of connections to make initial contacts. The key to a successful recruitment effort is to involve as many modes and interests as possible. The more diverse the core group, the greater the opportunity to attract members from all areas and all disciplines of transportation. This will avoid the likelihood of one interest group as dominant. WTS is known for its sense of inclusion and a place for opportunity.

Become a Member: Link to WTS Membership website

With this in mind, the following are some suggestions for recruiting members.

Word of Mouth

In addition to women and men in your own agency or company, most of us know people in many parts of the industry who would be interested in joining WTS. These personal and professional contacts are a valuable in securing potential WTS members and should be cultivated early in the setup process.

Generate a Leader List

Generate a list of leaders across all Transportation agencies and companies in your area. Develop a relationship matrix between your core planning group and the names on the list to determine who knows who and would volunteer to contact the individuals. In some cases, the core group may not have a personal connection. This is okay because this list will be a valuable mailing list in the future. Remember, you’re working on capturing 20 paid members so a list of 40-60 names is a great start.

Write a Letter

A well-written introduction letter from an executive level transportation official will provide prospective members with the knowledge that WTS is being supported at the top. A sample letter of introduction is included in the Appendix.

Modes with a Presence

WTS prides itself on providing knowledge, education and professional development opportunities across all areas of the Transportation industry and within all disciplines. An important exercise is identifying all modes that have a presence in your area. These will become target contacts for programming and recruiting members as your Chapter takes shape.

– State and City Government Agencies
– Transit Agencies
– Railroads
– Airport Authorities and Airlines
– Maritime and Port Authorities
– Trucking
– Logistics

Additional sources include:
– Consulting firms
– Construction Contractors and Suppliers
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– Large manufacturing or distribution companies to transportation
– Colleges and universities, specifically those with a transportation, urban planning or civil engineering curriculum.

Follow-Up
The value of following up is a crucial part of your start up efforts. For example, if a potential member is invited to one of your start up programs and does not attend, follow up with a call or email inviting the individual to the next meeting. It’s important to talk and connect with everyone who attends your start up programs so they feel their time invested has value. A follow-up call or email thanking them for their attendance is highly suggested in this process. And, perhaps you could ask for their feedback on the program. This is a good time to remind them to visit the website for becoming a member. First impressions are important and will go a long way toward establishing the credibility of WTS in your community.

Website: Link to WTS website

Step 3: Begin the WTS Chapter Certification Process

Articles of Incorporation and Tax ID number
You will be establishing WTS as a 501(c)(6) entity in your state. The IRS website explains that the Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code provides for the exemption of business leagues, such as WTS, which is not organized for profit and no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual. Not-for-profit entities help bolster business conditions in sectors, often acting as trade associations that promote a common interest.

To be incorporated, you will need to research the process in your state (typically start through the Secretary of State office) and then provide WTS International with all the required documentation. Below are the steps to consider for obtaining your articles of incorporation. Note: identify a few sponsors of the Chapter to help cover up front costs. They are usually minimal and vary from state to state.

1. The paperwork will most like request a purpose of the 501(c)(6). Use the mission statement from the WTS international Strategy Plan to indicate the purpose.

2. Organize a board of directors. Via personal and group interviews, ensure that each board member has the proper background, experience and perspective to lead your business league. Each state requires a different number of board members for 501(c)(6) organizations, but most states require a minimum of three.

3. Complete and submit IRS Form SS-4 to obtain an employer identification number (EIN). Pay all associated filing fees.

4. Obtain Articles of Incorporation for a nonprofit organization from your State Secretary or Attorney General’s office. The Secretary of State's office should be able to direct you more specifically and direct you to the proper forms (which are usually available on the state government website). Complete the articles and file them with the State Secretary or Attorney General, paying any required fees along the way.

5. Apply for tax-exempt status by filing IRS Form 1024, “Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501(a),” which also applies to 501(c)(6)s. Include a completed copy of IRS Form 8718, the “Exempt Organization Determination Letter Request.” Have someone with the power of attorney sign the application, include proof of your EIN, submit the forms and pay the associated fees.
6. Get in touch with your local, county and state departments of revenue. Ask about filing for tax-exempt status on each level, and follow the given instructions. Each department of revenue determines its own application process, so procedures may vary.

7. File a Statement of Information form. You will need to file a Statement of Information form in some states. This document must be filed a few months after the initial filing of the articles. Some states require that a Statement of Information form be filed each year following the incorporation. Check the Secretary of State's website to see whether the form is required in your state. This form can usually be submitted online and includes fairly basic information about the corporation; think of it as a company census you must complete every year. It usually includes:
   - Names and addresses of executive committee (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary)
   - Members of the board
   - Vacancies or changes in leadership
   - Mailing and street address of the Chapter (find a volunteer entity to allow use of their address)

Bylaws

The second requirement is the adoption of Chapter By-Laws. Bylaws are the rules that are adopted for conducting your Chapter’s business. Included in these Bylaws are articles that define items such as the responsibilities of the Board of Directors, membership meetings and voting procedures. A dissolution procedure is also required. Every Chapter has varying committee structures and procedures. We do suggest keeping your Bylaws from being too specific. The Chapter President and Secretary should sign them once approved by your committee.

Model Bylaws are included in Appendix 3.

Officers

You will need to appoint officers, which include Chapter President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. For the application process, it is not necessary to have in place committee chairs, however it is highly recommended someone is identified for membership and programs. As your Chapter grows, you can begin to expand the number of committee chairs to suit your needs.

Step 4: Submit Paperwork to WTS Office

The WTS International Board meets in person quarterly and also via teleconference calls on a monthly basis. You may submit the required documents electronically at any time during the year. The packet of documentation must be received by the office at least two weeks prior to a monthly Board call or three weeks prior to a Board meeting.

The packet must include:
   - Cover letter from appointed Chapter President
   - Incorporation papers
   - Signed bylaws
   - List of Chapter Officers
   - List of 20 paid WTS members.

A checklist is included in Appendix 1.
As the final step, the WTS International Board will review the packet and approve certification if all requirements are met. If there is an issue, the acting President will be contacted to further discuss the concern. You will then have the opportunity to resubmit the paperwork once the concern is addressed.

Upon Chapter approval, your Board will continue to establish routine Board meetings, monthly or quarterly programs, professional development activities and much more.

**Step 5: Get Support from the broader organization**

WTS has a Region Council model where groupings of Chapters based on geography are connected. Each professional Chapter has a representative on the Council. An element of the Region Council Charter is to support the development and onboarding of new Chapters. The Council is an excellent source for you to tap and ask questions. The power of WTS is the willingness to help and support its sister Chapters. It is highly recommended to use the Council to help with recruiting members, learning the ropes of other Chapters who recently became certified and getting ideas for programs and professional development. Contact information for each Region Council can be found on the WTS website.

The WTS International Board of Directors is another viable resource for startup Chapters. Members of the Board can help provide direction and answer any question that comes up. The Board will help get you connected to public sector officials in your area. Most Board members have a wide network of connections and can be very advantageous in this effort. Contact information of the Board members can be obtained from the WTS office or on the WTS website.
CHECK LIST
Documents to submit to the WTS Office for ratification approval

- Cover letter to WTS International Board Chair
- Paperwork for articles of incorporation from your state
- Bylaws drafted and signed
- List of Officers appointed, include all contact information
- List of twenty (20) members (or more) who have joined WTS
SAMPLE LETTER/EMAIL OF INTRODUCTION

Dear <name> (use appropriate salutation):

Exciting news! We are launching a WTS Chapter in <location> and we would like to invite you to join us at our inaugural program to learn more about the organization and possibly get more involved in the start up effort.

WTS stands for achieving equity and access for all women in the Transportation industry. The organization was founded in 1977 and is dedicated to building the future of transportation through the global advancement of women. Today, WTS is 6,500 members strong with more than 60 professional chapters around the globe. Education remains a primary focus of what we do. And, we are much more than that. WTS provides access to the highest levels of the transportation industry, sponsors monthly programs on relevant topics and networking events, and WTS provides mentoring and professional development. Women leaders of today are providing guidance and feedback to female and male leaders of tomorrow.

.include program meeting details....time, date, location, speaker info, registration information, deadline to sign up, etc>

If you would like to talk about WTS in advance of this program, please let me know. I will follow up to make arrangements. Thank you for your leadership. We look forward to seeing you on <date>.

Sincerely,

<yournam>
<connection to WTS (title)>
Contact information
SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR CHAPTER BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. Name

The name of the Corporation is Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) -<name of Chapter>.

ARTICLE II. Location

The principal office of the Corporation shall be located in _________________.

ARTICLE III. Purpose

The vision of the Corporation is equity and access for women in transportation. The mission of the Corporation is to attract, sustain, connect and advance women’s career to strengthen the transportation industry. The objectives of the Corporation are to be served and accomplished through programs, services, scholarships, and other stimulating activities that will support the mission of the organization. All policies and activities of the Corporation shall be consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws and legal requirements and applicable tax exemption requirements, including the requirement that the Corporation not be organized for profit and that no part of its net earnings inure to the benefit of any private individual.

ARTICLE IV. Membership

Section 1. Eligibility
Membership is open to persons having a professional interest in the field of transportation.

Section 2. Admission
Members shall be admitted upon the annual payment of all fees and dues to WTS International.

Section 3. Type of Membership
The WTS International Board of Directors establishes appropriate categories of membership, and establish policies for the benefits conferred with each type of membership and the obligations of members to remain in good standing.

Section 4. Dues
The WTS International Board of Directors establish the annual fee for membership.
ARTICLE V.  Meetings of the Membership

Section 1.  Annual Meeting
An annual meeting of the Chapter membership shall normally be held for the purpose of presenting reports of activities of the Corporation. The day, time and place fixed for the Annual Meeting will be designated by the Chapter Board of Directors.

Section 2.  Special Meetings
Special meetings of the Chapter membership may be called by the President, the Chapter Board of Directors, or not less than one-tenth (1/10) of the members having voting rights. No business may be introduced for vote at a special meeting that was not included in the notice for the meeting.

Section 3.  Notice of Meetings
Written notice stating the place, day, hour, and purpose of any meeting of the Chapter membership shall be delivered personally, by electronic communications or by mail to each member entitled to vote at such meeting, not less than ten (10) nor more than sixty (60) days before the date of such meeting. Distribution by the Internet or electronic communications technology media may be used if approved by applicable law.

Section 6.  Quorum
Chapter members holding <one-fifth (1/5)> of the votes present in person, including electronic or telephonic participation, shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the Chapter members. If a quorum is not present at any meeting of the Chapter members, a majority of the members present may adjourn the meeting to another date.

Section 7.  Voting
Where Chapter Board of Directors are to be elected by the members, such election may be conducted by electronic ballot in such manner as the Chapter Board of Directors shall determine.

ARTICLE VI.  BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1.  Authority and Duties
The Chapter Board of Directors shall have the authority and the responsibility to direct and manage all affairs of the Corporation not expressly precluded by the bylaws. Members of the Board will serve on committees, task forces and perform special assignments; participate in association meetings, events and programs; be informed about the organization’s mission, services, policies and programs.

Section 2.  Composition
The Chapter Board of Directors shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, the Immediate Past President, and a minimum of <six (6)> and not to exceed <xx number> of Directors at large and/or Committee Chairs. Each member of the Chapter Board of Directors must be a member of the Corporation.

Section 3.  Meetings
The Chapter Board of Directors of Directors shall hold regular meetings to transact any business within its powers. The Board shall meet a minimum of 4 times a year with special meetings called as necessary. Special meetings may be requested by a member of the Chapter Board of Directors or not less than <1/5> of members having voting rights.

Section 4.  Notice and Frequency of Board Meetings
Notice of special meetings of the Chapter Board of Directors shall be given at least two (2) days previously, in person, by mail, or electronic media to each member of the Chapter Board of Directors.
Section 5. Quorum

A majority of the Chapter Board of Directors members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Chapter Board of Directors of Directors. If less than a majority of the Board of Directors is present at said meeting, a majority of the Chapter Board of Directors present may adjourn the meeting.

Section 6. Manner of Acting

The act of the majority of the Chapter Board of Directors members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Chapter Board of Directors of Directors unless the act of a greater number is required by law or by these bylaws.

Section 7. Vacancies

Any vacancy occurring in the Chapter Board of Directors due to resignation, incapacitation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise, shall be filled by election by the Board of Directors, except a vacancy in the position of Chair shall be filled by the Vice Chair. A person elected to fill a vacancy shall be elected for the predecessor’s unexpired term in the office. The person filling a midterm vacancy in a Director at Large/Committee Chair position may serve a maximum of two (2) terms consecutively in that position. Serving the midterm Director at Large position constitutes one term, if the person serves at least half of the unexpired term. The person filling the midterm vacancy in an Officer position may serve a maximum of one (1) term in that position. Serving the midterm Officer position constitutes one term, if the person serves at least half of the unexpired term.

Section 8. Removal

Any member elected or appointed to the Chapter Board of Directors, including any officer, may be removed by the Chapter Board of Directors whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Corporation would be served. Such removal will be initiated by the Chapter Board of Directors, and must have the approval of a majority of the Chapter Board of Directors. Such removal shall be without prejudice.

Section 9. Compensation

Chapter Board of Directors members as such shall not receive any salaries or compensation for their services.

ARTICLE VII. Elections of Board of Directors

Section 1. Elections

The members of the Corporation shall be elected by the members for a two (2) year term of office commencing January 1 through December 31. The election will be conducted by electronic media in a manner determined by the Chapter Board of Directors. Any member in good standing with the Corporation shall be eligible to hold office. The person holding the position of Vice President shall, unless the individual declines the nomination, automatically become the candidate for President on the ballot. The ballot or accompanying materials will contain instructions for voting, the date on which voting shall begin and end, and information regarding each candidate seeking election. Candidates receiving a majority of the votes cast for the position will be elected. In the event of a tie for any position, a run-off election between the tied candidates will be held to determine the election for that office. Each Board member shall be a WTS member in good standing and shall hold office until a successor has been duly elected and qualified.

Section 2. Term Limits

The term of office of an elected Officer and Director at Large/Committee Chair is two years. No member may hold more than one concurrent office. No officer shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office. A board member filling a mid-term vacancy may serve a maximum of two (2) terms consecutively in that position. Serving the mid-term position constitutes one term, regardless of the length of service in that position.
ARTICLE VIII. OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers of the Corporation
The officers of the Corporation shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Any such appointed or created officers will serve for a stated period of time, not to exceed the period of the next regular election of officers.

Section 2. President
The President shall be the President of the Chapter Board of Directors and shall preside at all meetings of the members and the Chapter Board of Directors. The President shall have the power to appoint volunteers to key leadership positions such as committee chairs not elected by the members and subject to the approval of the Chapter Board of Directors. The President may sign with the Secretary any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other such documents with which the Chapter Board of Directors has authorized to be executed, except in such cases where the bylaws or statute has expressly delegated the authority to sign to some other officer of the Corporation. In general, the President shall perform all duties incident to the office of the President and such duties as may be assigned by the Chapter Board of Directors.

Section 3. Vice-President
The Vice-President shall preside in the absence of the President or in the event the President is unable to or refuses to act. When so acting, the Vice-President shall have all powers of and be subject to all restrictions upon the President. The Vice-President shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the President or by the Chapter Board of Directors.

Section 4. Secretary
The Secretary shall be the guardian of Corporate records. The Secretary is responsible for keeping the minutes of all the meetings of the members and the Chapter Board of Directors; for keeping a current register of the post office address of each member of the Corporation; for all official correspondence and notices of the Chapter in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws; and other such duties as may be assigned by the President or by the Chapter Board of Directors.

Section 5. Treasurer
The Treasurer shall be responsible and have charge and custody of all funds, securities, and contracts of the Corporation; receive and give receipts for money due and payable to the Corporation; deposit all such monies in the name of the Corporation as approved by the Chapter Board of Directors; prepare financial reports and an annual report as of the end of each year; and such other duties as may be assigned by the President or by the Chapter Board of Directors.

ARTICLE IX. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Designation
The Chapter Board of Directors may designate or appoint one or more committees, each of which shall consist of one (1) or more persons to carry out the management of tasks delegated to them. This authority shall not operate to relieve the Chapter Board of Directors or any individual officer of any responsibility imposed by these bylaws or by law.

Section 2. Chairperson(s)
For each committee, the President shall appoint one (1) or two (2) persons to chair the committee. Each chair appointment shall be until the election of new officers. The remaining members of the committee shall volunteer or be appointed by the Chapter Board of Directors with the approval of the chair of said committee.
Section 3. Vacancies
Vacancies in the Chair of any committee may be filled by appointments made in the same manner as provided in case of the original appointment. Vacancies occurring in the membership of said committee shall be filled by the Chair with the consent of the Chapter Board of Directors for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Section 4. Quorum
Unless otherwise provided in the resolution of the Chapter Board of Directors, the act of a majority of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the committee.

Section 5. Ad Hoc Committee
The President may establish any ad hoc committee that the President or the Chapter Board of Directors deems appropriate. The committee that is termed ad hoc shall have a specific task or function to perform that is limited in nature and in time frame. Once the task or function of the ad hoc committee has been completed, the committee shall cease to exist upon the recommendation of the committee’s final report to the President.

Section 6. Meetings.
Committees may select the number and times of meetings. Meetings shall be called by the committee chair or by any two members of the committee. Committee chairs shall notify committee members of the day, hour and place of meetings and shall notify members of the agenda items to be discussed or acted upon by electronic communications. Committees shall use procedures that include decisions made by majority or unanimous consent, and in accordance with the WTS Bylaws, Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, for committees and WTS Chapter Policies and Procedures.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed by a majority of the voting members of the Board of Directors at which a quorum is attained. New bylaws may be proposed by the Chapter Board of Directors or from a member and adopted by a majority of the voting members of the Corporation at which a quorum is attained.

ARTICLE XI. RULES OF PROCEDURE

The Chapter Board of Directors may establish rules that are consistent with these Bylaws for the policies, procedures and programs of the Corporation. The business of the Corporation with respect to adoption of motions presented to the membership or to the Chapter Board of Directors shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of Robert’s Rules of Order. Deliberation of issues affecting the organization may be carried on by alternative methods consistent with these bylaws and at the discretion of the Chapter President.

ARTICLE XII. DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution of the Corporation, the Chapter Board of Directors shall pay or make provisions for the payment of all liabilities of the Corporation. This will be done exclusively for the purposes of the Corporation or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable or educational purposes.
These Bylaws are approved by the Chapter Board of Directors

APPROVED:

(Signature)  (Print Name)  (Chapter President)  (Date)

ATTESTED:

(Signature)  (Print Name)  (Chapter Secretary)  (Date)