

People First® of California, Inc.



Welcomes You!

Guide to Becoming a Certified People First Chapter

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Additional copies of this book may be purchased for a small fee to support PFCA.



People First[®] of California, Inc.

Self-Advocates Training Self- Advocates

Your Statewide Self-Advocacy Organization
Run BY and FOR People with Developmental Disabilities

A 501(c)-3 Non-Profit Corporation
Funded Through Donations and Grants

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www.peoplefirstca.org - info@peoplefirstca.org
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Mission Statement:

It is the mission of the People First of California, Inc. to help start, inform, and support local chapters so that we, and all people with developmental disabilities are able to speak for ourselves, know our rights and responsibilities, and are respected, valued members of our communities.

(adopted August 26, 1994)

We Learn and Teach Others to:

We learn:

- To find our voices
- To stand up for ourselves and our peers
- Leadership skills
- To run our own meetings
- Our identity and history
- To make system wide changes
- To be involved in our local neighborhoods
- How to make friends
- To organize chapter functions and conventions
- How the political system works
- Respect and kindness for each other



(Vision Statement - Adopted January 30, 2009)

Guide to Becoming a Certified People First® Chapter

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Chapter 1:



Welcome to People First!

People First Feels:

If you see us as equal, but different, and do not include us in the decisions that affect our lives, you will see us as your disabled client.



People First Believes:

If you get out of our way and we have the opportunity to gather power and knowledge over OUR own lives, we will become strong and successful.

The History of People First of California



People First is the oldest and best known self advocacy organization run BY and FOR people with developmental disabilities. There are chapters throughout the world.

The People First movement has its roots in the civil rights movements of the 60's and 70's. We wanted to be treated with respect and to have equal rights with other citizens.



The History of People First of California

The first Board of PFCA was made up of members representing the north, south, and central parts of the state. The state organization disbanded in 1982-84, but many local chapters continued to meet. Local People First members and Helpers/Advisors from Northern California started having meetings in the Bay Area and Sacramento called "statewide" self-advocacy leadership education seminars to lay the ground work for pulling together a new statewide organization.

In 1990, 500 people from all over the state came to a People First Conference in Redding. In Redding, the group was asked if they wanted to re-start People First of California.

"Do you want to wake up the Sleeping Bear?"

The crowd shouted **"YES!"**



A new "founders" board started working on incorporating PFCA by creating Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation. In July 1991, People First of California was incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)-3 organization in Chico, California.

The first five officers were Barbara Picaso, Jim Picaso, Rosie Ryan, Cary Sofye, and David Moshier. Their first State Advisor Robin Keehn and all the officers came from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities Area Board Region 2.

In June of 1995, ARC of California offered to provide a free space for us at their offices in the state capital of Sacramento, California. So, PFCA moved their office and base of operations from Chico to the "Old Town" district of Sacramento.

In 1995, PFCA contracted with the Supported Life Institute and the Organizations of Area Boards, to co-sponsor the first Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference in Sacramento. People First members from all over the state came together to empower each other. The first People First of California Statewide Conference was in June 1996. The theme was "The Dream is Golden." Over 1,300 people attended. These conferences are now held every year. The conferences help people learn about People First and how to start new Chapters. People with developmental disabilities present all the keynote and breakout sessions. This cutting edge concept of People First members running the conference and making all of the decisions is held sacred in only a few states, with California leading the way.

The History of People First of California

Michael Cooke was in office (2002-2008) as President of People First of California he was instrumental in successfully obtaining generous grants from State Council on Developmental Disabilities. The People First Supporting Statewide Self-Advocacy Grant is designed to specifically strengthen self-advocacy throughout the state. Through this grant, PFCA hired its first self-advocate Executive Director, Joe Meadours. PFCA's voice is more active and available to the Capital on important issues affecting people with developmental disabilities in California. This grant also provides an additional self-advocate position that helps to strengthen People First specifically in Southern California.

Today, our Board has at least one representative in each of the 13 regional areas throughout the state. These Board members represent the views, ideas, and voice of their local People First members.

Local and State Government recognizes self-advocates as a crucial element that has historically been a missing piece in guiding public policy.

For the first time, People First of California has a place, a voice, and the strength of numbers; this enables us to give input to change policies that effect all self-advocates throughout the state.



January 2009
People First of California Board of Directors and Staff

Empowerment Statement

People with developmental disabilities are the only people to empower other people with developmental disabilities.

Professionals and people without developmental disabilities cannot control the People First movement.

Only the people who are part of a certain culture can “empower” people of that culture; to become strong, they have to make the decisions and do the work of their movement themselves. People with developmental disabilities are the only people who can truly empower other people with developmental disabilities.

This is what self-advocacy is about, people helping their peers to learn to speak up for themselves, learn about their rights and responsibilities, learn how to make decisions and solve problems, and be contributing members of their community. People need heroes who have “walked in their shoes.” We know that there are people with developmental disabilities in every town, who have taken those first steps, who can be heroes and leaders for their peers.

If people with developmental disabilities stand together in unity, speak with one voice and push forward, our vision for the future will be -- our own!

Professionals or people without developmental disabilities cannot do it for us. Only people with developmental disabilities can truly know what is most important for other self-advocates.

This is Why You Include People First In Your Chapter's Name:

IT IS AN IMPORTANT REQUIREMENT FOR YOUR GROUP TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A PART OF THIS STRONG MOVEMENT.

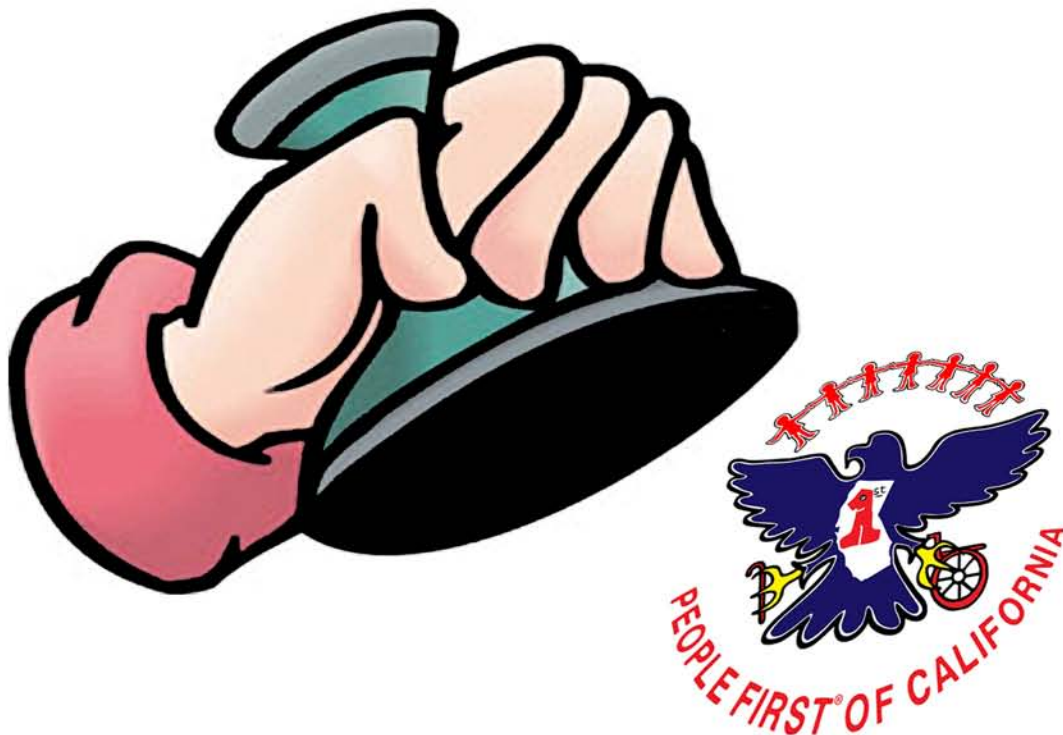
IT PROVIDES UNITY, STRENGTH, AND BELONGING.

In order for this to happen, you will have to include the name People First in your chapter's name. Here are a few examples:

- A. Peaches *People First* of Gridley
- B. San Diego *People First*
- C. *People First* of Ukiah

Feel free to choose whatever you want for your chapter, just include People First in your name.

You are People First!!!



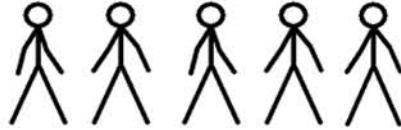
How People First Works

INDIVIDUAL



The Individual person who is becoming the self-advocate is the most important part of People First.

LOCAL CHAPTERS



Members can learn important self-advocacy and leadership skills and put them into action through attending their local People First chapter meetings.

REGIONAL MEETINGS



This is where the leaders from all of their local chapters get together to share ideas, information, and put their self-advocacy skills into action within their region.

PEOPLE FIRST OF CALIFORNIA

PFCA is a board of leaders appointed by their 13 local regions.

At the state level, board members provide one voice to educate legislators in how to improve policies that affect the lives of people with developmental disabilities. They also provide ongoing support and training to local chapters.



People First of California Regions

To find your board representative check out our web-site at www.peoplefirstca.com and/or call (916) 552-6625. Each California County is represented by a certain region.





Here are what the different parts of the logo mean:

People Holding Hands:

This represents unity, people working together and supporting each other. By working together, we can help each other and change things for the better.

The Eagle:

The eagle represents power. The eagle is also the symbol for the United States. People wanted that power to be a part of People First of California. The eagle is holding two symbols of people with disabilities: a wheelchair and a cane.

The Shield of California:

The shield represents protection. This shield is in the shape of our state, California. PFCA protects the rights of people with developmental disabilities and People First chapters in California.

People First #1-Person:

Inside the shield is the international logo for People First. It literally means “we are People First” (a person in the shape of a #1). PFCA wants you to always remember and honor our roots. That way we don’t forget where we came from or where we are going.

Chapter 2:



Nuts and Bolts of Getting Your Chapter Started



Chapter Run BY and FOR
People With Developmental
Disabilities



Contributing to
Our Community



Solving Problems
And Making
Decisions For
Ourselves

The Five Principles of a
People First Chapter



Speaking Up
For Ourselves



Knowing our Rights
and Responsibilities

Why I should make a commitment to be a member of a People First Chapter

To learn from my peers
To learn my rights and responsibilities
To problem solve
To be in a place where I feel safe and accepted
To be an equal member
To be in a group where I am not judged
To feel good about myself

To have fun and make friends
To learn about People First
To be accepted for who I am
To be supported
To learn to trust
To feel good about myself
To learn how to be a leader

I CAN DO IT!!!!

Plugging into the Power of People First:



- The name "People First" is a bond that ties people with developmental disabilities together from around the world.
- People First's name will add power to your group as you unite and link to an organization of world wide leaders.

Networking:

- The newest People First chapter never needs to feel alone as you have other chapters that can coach and give you the benefits of their know-how.
- People First of California can help chapters find other PF members and chapters throughout California.
- People First of California can also support, teach, and guide your chapter in any way that you need.

What you can learn from your chapter:



Teamwork:

- People First develops your ability to work as an equal member of the group.
- People First members support and learn from each other.
- A People First Chapter can do more together than a single person can do alone.

Examples could be:

1. Fundraisers
2. Community Projects
3. Plan Conferences
4. Social Events



Roles and Responsibilities of the Chapter Members

- All members are people with Developmental Disabilities.
- Helpers/Advisors are not members.
- All members who are a part of the group shall be open to learning the “Five Principles to be a People First Chapter”.
- All members will contribute in the way that is best for them.
- We will respect each other as equal members.
- Everyone will have an equal opportunity to speak.
- Members need to understand their roles and responsibilities.



A PEOPLE FIRST CHAPTER IS...

...a true grass root organization which encourages self reliance.

People First groups come in all shapes and sizes. There is no “one size fits all” for organizing a local chapter. Every chapter is unique and how the group is organized depends on its members.

In order to be approved as a People First Chapter, you first must meet the following requirements:



The title of People First must be in the name of your chapter



You must run your chapter using the “Five Guiding Principles”

1. Run BY and FOR people with Developmental Disabilities
2. Know your rights and responsibilities
3. Speak up for yourself
4. Solve problems and make decisions for yourself
5. Contribute to your community



In order to start your People First chapter you must elect at least 4 officers to run your meeting

1. President
2. Vice President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Sergeant-at-arms (optional)

How to Get Your Chapter Started

When putting your chapter together you will need to make decisions about the following check list:

- 1. Location
- 2. Food
- 3. Time
- 4. Day
- 5. Transportation
- 6. Membership
- 7. Dues
- 8. Helpers/Advisors



Let's Get Started!



Here are things you need to consider when starting your group:

1. Location

- a. Safe, accessible, not noisy, private, enough room.

2. Food

- a. Do you want to have food at your meetings?
- b. Will having food at the meeting cause any problems for members?
- c. Can people afford the cost for the food?
- d. Do people have time to eat?
- e. Should we eat before or after the meeting?

3. Day

- a. Which day is available?
- b. What works best for most people?
- c. Weekday or Weekend? (Pros and Cons)



4. Time

- a. Morning, afternoon, or night?
- b. Do people have a conflict with time? (Helpers/Advisors included)
- c. Transportation and availability can be an issue.
- d. How often do you want to meet?
- e. How long should your meetings last?

5. Transportation

- a. How are people going to get to the meeting and get home?
- b. Is it close to a bus line?
- c. Is the transportation in a safe location?
- d. When does the transportation schedule stop running?



6. Membership

- a. Who can be a member?
- b. Where can we find members?
- c. How to get members involved?



7. Dues

- a. Do we need dues?
- b. Can people afford it?
- c. What do we do with the money?

8. Helper/Advisors

- a. Do we want a helper or advisor?
- b. What do we want them to do?



What is a Helper/Advisor?

A helper/advisor provides support to members. This means that the helper/advisor:

- Listens to the group, hears what they have to say without interrupting and does not take control of the group process.
- Works hard to give silent support to the group.
- Watches to make sure that the group benefits from the support they get.
- The helper/advisor should not make decisions for individuals or the group.
- The helper/advisor is not the problem solver for the group.
- The helper/advisor promotes problem solving from within the group.
- The helper/advisor does not provide personal and attendant care for the member.
- The helper/advisor should not push their ideas on the chapter that makes members feel like their voices and choices are not being heard.
- Helpers/advisors can provide transportation.
- There should be 2 helpers/advisors for each chapter, this will help to prevent an imbalance of power and create a check and balance system where helpers/advisors monitor each other.



Your First Chapter Planning Meeting

These first few meetings may be social gathering where you informally talk about the purpose of your future chapter. At these meetings you will need to decide whether you will adopt the mission and vision statement of PFCA. You must do this to become a certified People First Chapter. When you have made this decision, you are now on your way.

Growing into a People First Chapter:

Election of Officers:



In order for meetings to run smoothly and orderly, chapter members elect at least four officers. The purpose of the officers is to support and organize the business meeting and to guide and connect the group to meet their goals.

List of Officers:

- President/Chairperson
- Vice President/Vice-Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Sergeant-at-Arms (Optional depending on the size of the group)



Roles and Responsibility of Officers

What are Officers?

Officers are members who have been elected by the group. Officers work together with the members to help the chapter reach it's goals by:

- Creating a Mission and Vision for the chapter.



Here is a check list of things to consider before electing an officer:



Officers need to:

- Believe in People First.
- Be good role models.
- Work together with the chapter members to run meetings, goals and get things done.
- Share responsibilities and ask for support when they need it.
- Get everybody involved in chapter activities.
- Be respectful and polite to everyone.
- Know that everybody has different skills and talents to share.
- Contact the other officers if they are unable to attend a meeting. It is their responsibility so that the chapter can stay on track.
- Explain things by using simple words and examples everyone can understand.
- Learn and practice the 5 Guiding Principles of People First
- Communicate with local chapters, the regional group, and the state board of People First of California to get support as needed for your chapter.
- Believe that people with developmental disabilities can make the community a better place to live.

Elected Officers:

In order for meetings to run smoothly and orderly, chapter members must elect at least four officers to lead the chapter meetings. Listed below are the officers and their responsibilities.

President or Chairperson

- Attend officer's meetings
- Help plan agenda for chapter meetings
- Ask the Secretary to take roll call or have introductions of members
- Ask the Secretary to read the minutes of the last meeting
- Ask the Treasurer to give the Treasurer's report
- Leads the talk about old business
- Leads the talk about new business
- Asks other officers to help lead different parts of the meeting
- Guides the voting process when a vote needs to be taken
- Introduces the program or a guest speaker



- Asks the Vice President to take over the President's responsibilities if unavailable to attend the chapter meeting. This should be done before the day of the meeting
- Ask for a member to represent the chapter at regional meetings, core group meetings, and conferences
- Adjourns chapter meetings



Vice President or Vice-Chair

- Know the President's/Chair's responsibilities
- Know the different parts of the meeting
- Help with the meeting when the President/Chair asks
- Attend officer's meeting to help plan the agenda for the chapter meeting.
- Tell the President/Chair when he/she is not able to go to the chapter meeting. This should be done before the day of the meeting
- Lead the chapter meeting and do all the President's/Chair's responsibilities when the President/Chair is not there

Secretary

- Be able to read and write
- Have members introduce themselves
- Help with the meeting when needed
- Attend the chapter meeting
- Take roll call or have members sign an attendance sheet
- Read the minutes of the last chapter meeting (notes that tell what happened)
- Take minutes of the chapter meeting (notes of what is happening at the meeting)
- Keep an updated list of chapter members with addresses and phone numbers
- Attend the officer's meeting and help plan the agenda for Chapter meeting
- Lead the chapter meeting and do all the President's responsibilities when the President and Vice President are not there
- Tell the President when not able to go to the chapter meeting. This should be done before the day of the meeting



Treasurer

- Know how to count, add, and subtract money
- Put the chapter's money in the bank
- Attend the chapter meeting
- Help with the meeting when needed
- Write down in a book all the money the chapter makes and spends
- Give the Treasurer's report (tell about the chapter's money)
- Attend the officer's meeting to help plan agenda for the chapter meeting
- Tell the President when not able to go to the Chapter meeting. This should not be done before the day of the meeting



Nominations of an officer position means that:

1. You or another member feels you have the skills needed for this position.
2. Nominations should not be a popularity contest, the best person for the position is not necessarily the most popular member.
3. You are willing to learn and want to meet the responsibilities of this position.
4. If you accept the nomination you need to be willing to give a short speech on why you would be the best person for the position, and how you will use your skills and experience to support the group.

Opening the Nomination:

Before you have the officers of the group you will need to appoint a chairperson for the nomination process. Once you have done this you can:

1. Open the nomination by saying "Nominations for (President/Chairperson) are now open".
2. Members nominate who they want by saying "I nominate (name of person) for (President/Chairperson)." A member can nominate himself/herself.
3. Another member seconds the nomination. If no one seconds the nomination, the person is not nominated. A nominee cannot "second" their nomination.
4. The people who are nominated for (President/Chairperson) tell the members if he/she will or will not accept the nomination.
5. Nominations are closed by a member saying "I move the nominations shall be closed." Another member seconds the motion.

Once the nominations for President/Chairperson are closed, repeat the steps 1-5 for each of the additional officer positions (Vice President/Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Sergeant-at-Arms).

At this point the group decides if nominees will make their speech at this meeting or the next one. After speeches voting begins.



Chapter 3:



Registration for Certification of
Your People First Chapter



OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION AS A
PEOPLE FIRSTST CHAPTER IN THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DATE: _____

SAN DIEGO
PEOPLE FIRSTST OF CALIFORNIA

Executive Director

Board President



How to get Certified from PFCA

Please make a copy and mail the following information to:

People First of California
1225 8th Street, Suite 360
Sacramento, CA 95814

Or Fax: (916) 441-3494



1. Tell us the name you have picked for your chapter.

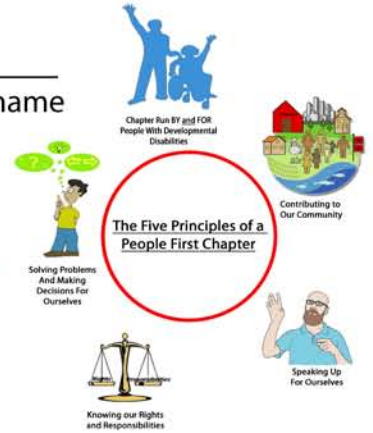
check here

Chapter Name: _____

*Please remember that *People First* needs to be included in your name

2. Check that you agree to follow the five principals.

check here



3. List the names of the officers you have elected.

check here

President: _____

Vice President: _____

Secretary: _____

Treasurer: _____



4. How can those interested get a hold of your Chapter:

check here

Chapter Address : _____

Chapter City, ST, Zip: _____

Contact Phone Number: (_____) _____

Contact Email (if available): _____@_____

Meeting Place & Times (if available): _____

5. You will receive a certificate in the mail!



You can tear this page off and mail or fax back to PFCA...see back page to mail. —>

3 - Once #2 folded tape together with tape to #4.

2 - Fold on dotted line over #1 Fold below.

Your Name: _____
Address: _____
City, ST, Zip: _____



Put Stamp

**People First of California
1225 8th Street, Suite 360
Sacramento, CA 95814**

4 - Tape #3 to here when Fold #2 is folded to here.

To Fold for mailing: 1 - Fold bottom part of page up at dotted line.