

Guide to Forming a Leadership Team

A leadership team is the foundation of your FRN chapter. Student leaders are responsible for facilitating the stakeholder relationships that make recovering food possible. While it may be tempting to jump right into starting a chapter on your own, a committed team is critical to the success and sustainability of your chapter. A supportive, strong team will lessen the workload on each individual as you work together to establish a recovery program on your campus. In this section, you'll find details about what a leadership team could look like and advice on how to make it as strong as possible.

Student Leadership Team Roles and Responsibilities

Build your leadership team to match the specific needs and goals of your school, but there should be a minimum of three students and a staff advisor. It's crucial to have at least three individuals responsible for coordination between the stakeholders.

Note: The following are recommended roles. How you choose to arrange decision-making responsibilities is up to you and your team.

President

- Supports and leads the leadership team with their various roles and responsibilities
- Delegates responsibilities to other leadership team members and follows up to ensure they are completed
- Schedules & facilitates meetings
- Ensures that all necessary steps are taken to become and remain an organization on campus
- Makes final decisions about recovery protocols (eg. minimum number of volunteers per recovery, how recoveries are reported), expansion, etc.
- Follows up with recovery leaders to ensure that food tracking forms are completed after every recovery
- Serve as the point of contact with FRN National

Vice President/Co-President

- Sees that tasks are accomplished if they can't be completed by other team members
- Recruit applicants and facilitate voting for future leadership positions
- Supports and advises team in decision-making processes
- Takes notes at meetings; sends meeting minutes afterward

Treasurer

- Maintains the chapter's financial records
- Seeks out and applies for funding from institution and grants, including FRN National grants
- Coordinates fundraisers for chapter needs (and travel to FRN's national conference, National Food Recovery Dialogue)

Food Donor Coordinator

- Acts as the main point of contact with campus dining services, local restaurants, and/or farms — whoever your food donor is
- Ensures the food donor portion of recoveries runs smoothly and that all food safety procedures are followed
- Establishes, updates, and manages a food recovery schedule in accordance with food donor and volunteers availability
- Ensures that the [online food tracking form](#) is filled out after each recovery, or that all recoveries for the week are accounted for in a weekly form
- Works with food donor(s) and other team members to organize collaborative events beyond recoveries

Partner Agency Coordinator

- Acts as the main point of contact with partner agencies that receive recovered food donations
- Maintains relationships with a primary and secondary representative at each partner agency
- Ensures partner agencies are aware of and in agreement with the recovery schedule, the items donated, and the procedures followed
- Establishes regular communication with partner agency representatives to ensure that the partnership is operating at its best
- Works with other team members to organize events in collaboration with, or in support of, the partner agency
- Leads outreach for new partner agencies; ensures Partner Agency Agreement is signed and submitted at the beginning of each partnership

Volunteer Coordinator

- Recruits volunteers using techniques listed in the [Volunteer Recruitment Guide](#)
 - Additional recruitment tips:
 - Recruit from freshman events to get early engagement from student body
 - Encourage a diverse Leadership Team (various engagements outside of FRN, greek life, hospital, sporting events, etc.). Different connections are important.
 - Focus on student groups that that need service hours (pre med, greek life, public health/policy majors)
- Documents all volunteer information: name, email address (school + personal) and expected graduation date
 - Add if they can be drivers (have a car or certified)
- Institutes and maintains a system for volunteers to sign up for scheduled recoveries
 - We recommend these FREE accounts: [Golden Volunteer](#), [Google Sheets](#), [Signup Genius](#), and [SignUp](#).
- Coordinates the student volunteers scheduled for each recovery, ensuring there are enough volunteers present and that they show up on time
 - You can remind volunteers with the Signup Genius Remind Feature.

- Ensures that all volunteers are briefed in food safety, and that at least one leadership team member or experienced volunteer is present at each recovery

Public Relations/Marketing Manager

- Creates, maintains, and interacts with followers on the chapter's social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).
 - Ensures that FRN National knows your social media accounts
- Creates and implements social media marketing campaigns
- Takes pictures at every opportunity (meetings, recoveries, etc.) to post on social media
- Works closely with the Events Coordinator to market events on social media
- Writes articles about the chapter's success and submits them to campus media outlets and the FRN National blog
- Represents the organization in a professional manner on social media and throughout campus

Events Coordinator

- Organizes education and awareness events on campus, at partner agencies, or in other parts of the community
- Works with the treasurer to organize fundraising events and campaigns
- Works with the Partner Agency Coordinator to organize events with partner agencies
- Works with the Food Donor Coordinator to organize events with food donors
- Writes articles and blog posts about the chapter's events/experiences and takes pictures at every opportunity

Recovery Leader(s)

- Must have volunteered with FRN in the past
- Ensures volunteers are following food safety
- Submit an internal form of how many supplies were used during recoveries
- Delegate tasks throughout the recovery process
- Submit the food tracking form after each recovery

Chapters sometimes develop additional leadership positions, such as Co-Presidents, Secretaries, or roles based on particular chapter functions (Sports Recoveries Lead, Gleaning Liaison, Transportation Lead, Catering Liaison, etc.). No matter how you structure your team at the beginning, keep in mind that you can always restructure as necessary.

Pro tip: Schedule weekly leadership meetings! We also recommend having 1:1 meetings with the board on a semester basis to find out how everything is going!

Recruiting folks to join your leadership takes time and effort. To help organize your thoughts on targeted outreach toward classmates, partner organizations, and staff advisors, please use the following worksheet: [Leadership Team Brainstorming](#). If you plan to solicit applications for your leadership team you can use this [form](#), which can be printed out and distributed to potential leadership team members.

Lastly, as you plan what your leadership team will look like, implement best practices to prevent common problems. The following tips will help ensure your leadership team is on the same page, able to respond to issues as they arise, and is prepared to pass the torch to future student leaders.

Communication

- Share phone numbers & email addresses with your full team
- Use group messaging platforms like GroupMe and Slack, which are common and free, or create a Facebook group for internal chapter communication
- Confirm the best mode of communication for everyone
- Create a chapter or club email address through Google Mail and establish who will check it and at what frequency
 - Some colleges may assign your chapter a student club email with their domain

Meetings

- Hold a weekly or biweekly leadership team meeting
 - This will allow you to hold each other accountable for tasks and stay up-to-date on news and important information
- Consider holding biweekly or monthly general meetings that bring together your chapter's student volunteers and leadership team
 - This allows your volunteers to feel like they are part of a group, in both a social and organizational context

Team Spirit

- Don't underestimate the benefits of establishing a positive and inclusive team culture from the beginning. The more fun, meaningful interactions you have with your team, the more others will want to join!
- Organize bonding activities for your team members (such as gleaning, group lunches, or movies), purchasing matching swag, and recognizing hard-working members with occasional awards

A Note on Staff Advisors and Student Clubs

Since FRN chapters are student-led, it is inevitable that leadership team members will graduate. The key to creating a sustainable chapter is thinking ahead and anticipating this turnover. Working with a staff advisor who will probably be on campus longer than the tenure of a student will contribute to the sustainability of your chapter. Staff advisors can also be particularly helpful for navigating the unique administration of your college or university. The role of a staff advisor can look very different depending on your school, so it's up to you to decide the extent of their involvement. Overall, an advisor's responsibilities include:

- Pro-tip: Find an advisor who has a staff role that is in charge of student health or social service or something related to food recovery and an on-campus pantry

- Find the person in charge of the pantry or social impact division and even if they are not you are advisor seek assistance from them
- Knowing which students are on the leadership team, keeping track of their contact information, and checking in with them periodically
- Offering tips and tricks for navigating campus policies
- Connecting student leaders to campus or community resources
- Brainstorming solutions in tricky situations
- Communicate with FRN National if student leaders have not been replaced

Club Status on Campus

FRN National highly recommends you become an independent School Recognized Organization (SRO) or club on your campus, in addition to becoming an official FRN chapter.

Many benefits come with being an SRO, and it's up to you and your leadership team to determine how your chapter meets the requirements of your school. Organizing your recovery program as a student club can help you recruit and retain volunteers, who may be more inclined to join a recognized organization, and feel like they are a valued member of a student group. A common practice for many FRN chapters is to incorporate the food recovery program in an existing SRO on their campus (such as sustainability, nutrition science, or student government). Regardless if you join an existing SRO or create a new one, doing so will help integrate food recovery into your campus community, allowing it to continue beyond you and your leadership team's graduation. Some benefits that other chapters have received after becoming SROs:

- Funding from the institution (budget allocations)
- Access to institution transportation (such as vans)
- Access to campus space for meetings and events
- Solidifying and integrating food recovery awareness into the campus' culture

Here is an example [Club Constitution](#) that you can use to create your own for your chapter.

Structuring Your Chapter as a Student Club: Two Case Studies

University of Houston

The University of Houston joined FRN in October 2014. During their first semester, the chapter consisted of a small leadership team and roughly three volunteers working together to recover from an on-campus Panera Bread. By their second semester, they expanded to a second recovery location off-campus and increased their donations to three more partner agencies. By Spring 2016, the chapter was recovering from a total of six locations and donating to six partner agencies. University of Houston's chapter has recovered more than 50,000 pounds since their chapter was founded, including nearly 8,000 pounds in a single semester.

Yash Desai, Chapter President from Fall 2015 to Spring 2017, attributes much of his team's growth and success to the chapter's strong organizational hierarchy. While much larger than most chapters, University of Houston's leadership team is comprised of 16 total members: one president, four senior officials, and 11 junior officers. The junior officers are divided into five small groups of three to four people, whose responsibilities include membership and volunteer coordination, event coordination, social media, and university affairs. The junior officers report to one of the four senior officers, who in turn reports to the president. Determining clear lines of communication, role responsibilities, and oversight ensures all the details required to execute roughly 19 recoveries per week are in line. This leadership team structure did not appear overnight; as the chapter expanded, students adjusted the structure to meet new needs.

University of North Carolina, Greensboro

UNC Greensboro joined FRN in Spring 2015, and after five years had recovered nearly 20,000 pounds of surplus food from their dining hall. Their structure is unique in that the chapter's goals go far beyond recovering food; they also prioritize partnering with many community organizations and creating meaningful experiences for volunteers and team members. For example, UNCG's chapter leaders hosted Project Clean Plate in partnership with their dining hall, screened educational movies, partnered with a local women's hospital to recover from their events, and hosted a food drive competition with a nearby college. As founding member and president Levi Saavedra says, "as we get, we always give."

The team has several strategies in place for the recruitment and retention of volunteers. UNCG's students use a system called Canvas to register for classes and clubs, and interested students select FRN through the system. They also use the online tool Signup Genius for scheduling volunteers for recoveries, and have a general email listserv for students who are interested. They keep their chapter's social media accounts active by sharing stories, successes, and articles. Once volunteers join the team, they meet every couple of weeks as a group. The leadership team picks a Volunteer of the Month and celebrates them with a gift of FRN swag (which serves the dual purposes of boosting commitment and promoting the club). A major priority is ensuring that participation in FRN can help volunteers achieve their personal and career goals. Giving students opportunities to lead projects relating to food, hunger, waste reduction, and poverty alleviation in their community sets them up for success in the future.

Final leadership team thoughts

Forming a strong leadership team from the start will provide a solid foundation for your recovery program to grow. Anticipating changes and being prepared to address them is critical to the longevity of your chapter. With a team of dedicated students by your side, you'll be ready to face these challenges head on.

Once you determine the individuals who will make up your chapter's leadership team, remember to let [FRN National](#) know their names, emails, leadership positions, and phone numbers. If you have any questions about this, you can contact FRN National at programs@foodrecoverynetwork.org.