



The Herb Society of America, Inc. Guidelines for Forming a New Unit

Introduction

The Herb Society of America is pleased with your interest in forming a new unit. The information in this packet is designed to help you through the decision process. It answers many basic questions about unit creation and includes the procedures for forming a unit, the history of The Society, the benefits of membership, the HSA by-laws and membership policy and other information that may be helpful in forming a new unit. At any point during the process, you are free to contact the national office with any questions or concerns that may arise.

Procedure for Forming a New Unit

The Herb Society of America wants to ensure that all units are successful. Before considering unit status, the Board of Directors recommends that:

- The group have a minimum of eight members
- The group is located in a geographic area not currently served by an existing unit,
OR
- The group serves a market or has a purpose distinct from nearby units.

The following are suggested procedural steps for forming a new unit:

1. Contact the membership chairperson.

An individual or group interested in forming a unit of The Herb Society of America may contact the membership chairperson directly through national headquarters or through their membership delegate. The membership chairperson or headquarters may serve as the main contact during the process of unit formation.

2. Evaluate the benefits and responsibilities of becoming a unit of HSA and vote on whether to apply for unit status.

New units will have support, when needed, from the membership chairperson, headquarters, and their district membership delegate. Keep in mind that even if the group chooses not to become a unit, membership in The Society is open to all individuals as members at large.

3. Elect or appoint unit officers including an interim chairperson, secretary and treasurer or form a steering committee to organize the prospective unit structure, develop by-laws and determine future activities. Electing or appointing officers will help establish clear responsibilities. If the unit is forming from an existing herb group, it is common for their officers to continue as officers of the new unit.

Although it is not required, we have found that it can be helpful to have at least one member of the prospective unit be a member of HSA. This will give the committee first-hand knowledge of the organization.

4. Draft By-laws

The by-laws should be consistent with those of The Herb Society of America. Included in this packet are by-laws from an existing unit and a template that may be used when



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writing unit by-laws. The national membership chairperson will review the unit's by-laws before presenting the unit application to the HSA board.

5. An Organizational Meeting

The prospective unit may choose to have an organizational meeting open to all individuals in the community who may be interested in belonging to The Herb Society of America. Plan to present information about The Society and have an educational program as well. Above all, the meeting should be fun and informative! Post flyers in a number of areas including botanical gardens, garden centers, and community centers. Send announcements of the meeting to other gardening groups, public schools, agrilife agents and local media. Headquarters and/or the membership chairperson can provide you with examples of flyers and press releases to advertise your meeting. In addition, headquarters and/or the membership chairperson can arrange to have the event posted on HSA's website. Tables should be available for registration and also to display Society information, publications, examples of unit and district newsletters, and other materials. Upon request the Society's headquarters will provide this information for your meeting.

6. Develop a membership form and determine local dues.

If the new unit is being formed from an existing herb group, there is no need for an additional membership form. A new group may contact headquarters or the membership chairperson for samples of forms used by other units. The amount the group charges for local dues may change as the unit develops, but at a minimum, it should be set at a level that will cover the cost of refreshments, photocopies, postage and other business relating to the unit.

7. Send a membership roster, the Application for a New Unit, **by-laws**, and national dues to HSA.

For the initial application, the group should collect national dues separately from local dues. Local dues should be deposited in the group's bank account while the checks made out to "The Herb Society of America, Inc." should be forwarded to the national office along with the roster and the application. All individuals will be classified as members at large until the new unit is formally accepted. (NOTE: members of the prospective unit who are already members of HSA do not need to pay national dues at this point. The national office will prorate their dues for the subsequent year. Please note these individuals on the roster.)

Presentation of Prospective Unit Application to HSA Board of Directors.

When the application for the prospective unit has been received by headquarters and/or the membership chairperson, the membership chairperson will present the application for the prospective unit to the board of directors for approval at the board's next regularly scheduled meeting. Board meetings are usually held in February, May or June and October. The membership chairperson's presentation to the board includes a brief description of the new group, including any activities and community-related projects the group plans to undertake.

Finalize unit structure, by-laws and officers.



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Following approval by the board of directors, the new unit will have six months to finalize their organizational structure, elect officers and approve the unit by-laws.

Name

The official name of the unit should follow the format: The Herb Society of America, (The) _____ Unit.

State Registration

HSA recommends that units register with their state. Registering-the unit within the state protects the name of the organization from use by others. Contact the Secretary of State's office to learn the specific requirements for registering. Many states require ratified by-laws. After obtaining the specific state requirements, you can determine if you will need the assistance of an attorney to complete the process.

Employer Identification Number

Banks usually require an Employer Identification Number (EIN) and may need to see by-laws or proof of registration of the name of the unit. To obtain an EIN, use IRS Form SS-4 available from 1-800-TAX-FORM or www.irs.gov.

Officers

By tradition, the titles of unit officers are chairperson and vice-chairperson (to distinguish unit officers from national officers, who use the titles president and vice-president). The executive board typically includes a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary. Standing committee chairs can be created to suit the unit's needs and often include newsletter, programs, ways and means (fund raising), horticulture and membership.