

FIVE STEP GUIDE TO MEN'S SHEDS



WELCOME

“Welcome to the ChangeX Men’s Sheds guide! We’re excited you’re thinking about starting a shed in your community.

Here you’ll find all the information, practical tips, and resources you need. There is someone to help you at each stage of the journey so don’t be afraid to get in touch!”

**Phil Johnson
US Men’s Shed Association**



Introduction to the Idea

What is a Men’s a Shed?

Men’s Sheds are community-based, non-commercial organizations that address social inclusion, loneliness and promote healthy living. Members of Men’s Sheds come from all walks of life - the bond that unites them is that they are men with time on their hands and would like to undertake something meaningful. A good Men’s Shed has a safe and happy environment where men are welcome to work on a project or just sit and share their story with others. Men’s Sheds are special because research has found that men are less willing than women to attend health education sessions, are less interested in information on illness prevention and are less willing to have an annual health check or to seek advice from a medical practitioner.

The Men’s Shed is one of the most powerful tools we have in addressing health and wellbeing - it is an obvious solution to overcome difficulties in reaching males and provide men friendly information and services in settings which are frequented by males. Good health is based on many factors including feeling good about yourself, being productive and valuable to your community, staying connected to friends and maintaining an active body and mind.

Becoming a member of a Men’s Shed gives a man that safe and busy environment where he can find many of these things in an atmosphere of old-fashioned friendship. And, importantly,

there is no pressure. Men can just come and have a yarn and a cuppa if that is all they are looking for.

What is the USMSA?

The United States Men’s Sheds Association (USMSA) is the national body representing all Men’s Sheds in America. A major objective is to advance the well-being and health of its members and to encourage social inclusion.

The USMSA prioritizes the wellbeing of all men by valuing the role that Men’s Sheds play in the prevention of social isolation and by providing a welcoming place for men to participate in Member determined activities and contribute to the wider community. USMSA endeavors to always address the needs of Men’s Sheds, to advocate on their behalf and to source further funding and resources for the direct benefit of US Men’s Sheds. Sheds registered with the USMSA are to maintain a welcoming, open-door policy, and to conduct themselves in a non-discriminating manner, ensure and observe safe activity practices and aim at improving the wellbeing of all men and support their community.

The USMSA is committed to providing practical support for existing Sheds, aid in the development of new Sheds, attract and secure corporate sponsorship, raise awareness of Men’s Sheds, encourage participation and improve the health and wellbeing of all men.

STARTING A MEN'S SHED

EVERYTHING YOU NEED

TIME



You'll need one day a week to start and manage a Men's Shed.

PEOPLE



You'll need a team of 3-5 people to help you start your shed.

FUNDING



The amount of funding required will depend on the type of shed you set up and the activities you decide to undertake.

Who typically starts a Men's Shed?

Someone who is:

- Passionate about the vision and ethos of Men's Shed
- An inclusive leader
- Has some community development experience

5 Step Summary

- 1 Complete your 30 Day Jumpstart Challenge
- 2 Decide what type of Shed you want to start
- 3 Hold an Information Meeting
- 4 Form a Working Group
- 5 Register with USMSA & meet regularly

Support and Additional Resources

Contact Information for US Men's Sheds Association - info@usmenssheds.org | <https://usmenssheds.com/>

Support from ChangeX: hello@changex.org

MEN'S SHEDS

“I’m Gerry and I set up a Men’s Shed in my community many years ago. I like going to the Shed for the company and the fun! There is the mischief and conversation I used to have at my job that I now have at the shed.



Gerry Walsh, Shedder and Men’s Sheds Advocate

STEP 1: COMPLETE YOUR 30 DAY CHALLENGE



The first step to starting any idea on ChangeX is to complete the 30 Day Challenge. The 30 Day Challenge has been designed to give you a little push to get off to the strongest possible start.

We've seen in the past that there are two very tangible things that help projects stay focused and that's what the next 30 days are all about:

1. Setting a date for a kick-off meeting to talk about the idea with others
2. Getting the commitment of 2 or 3 more people to form a team to help you get started.

Understand the challenge

Watch the short welcome video on your ChangeX page and read this page.

Learn more about the idea you're starting

This '5 Step Guide' includes all you need to know about the specifics of starting your project.

Find 4 interested people

You already have your own project page on changex.org. Use it to share the project with others and recruit your first supporters.

Set up a casual kick-off meeting

Host a meeting at your home, in a pub, or in a café and come up with an action plan along with your team. You can use your ChangeX page to set up an event and invite people.

Give us a heads up that you are up and running

At your event, take a team picture and agree to the first step you will take as a group to get started.

STEP 2: DECIDE WHAT TYPE OF SHED YOU'LL START

There are two different ways for local individuals or groups to start a Men's Shed in the US. One approach is for an existing non-profit organization to add a Men's Shed as another of their activities, and the other approach is to start a Men's Shed as a new community organization / non-profit. Here are more details on each to help you decide which one is best for you and your community:

Sponsorship

The Sponsorship Approach is used to start a new Men's Shed as an "Activity," under the sponsorship of a parent organization such as a community center, city government, health service, YMCA, etc. This approach is a great way to start a Men's Shed when you don't have much money, because the Sponsoring organization provides you with critical resources to get the new Shed started quickly and at no cost to you. In this approach, the sponsoring, or parent, organization saves you the time and money you would otherwise have to spend when setting up a new Men's Shed, such as getting your own tax-exempt status, facility costs, liability protection, operating expenses and business services. The advantages of using the Sponsorship-approach can be:

- Your Men's Shed receives the immediate strength of the parent organization's identity and tax-free status.
- The Shed saves the money and effort needed to incorporate and therefore, does not have to form a formal Board of Directors or submit tax filings.
- The Shed uses a free venue to start meetings and hold activities right away.
- The parent organization provides free office services, such as mailing, answering phones, making copies, developing promotions and other services
- Because the Shed is included as an activity of a parent organization, it receives liability protection that you would otherwise have to pay for.
- Banking support can be provided to the new Shed allowing you to immediately accept tax-free donations through the parent organization.

Possible disadvantages can be:

- The sponsoring organization will have influence on decision making and direction of the shed, including what activities it allows or prohibits, their Shed to do, such as the use of power tools.
- The sponsoring organization will control the hours of operation and the access to facilities used by the Men's Shed.
- The sponsoring organization may have restrictions on the space that the Men's Shed may need and what can be done there.

Independent Organization

The Independent, or Stand-Alone approach requires registering and establishing your new Men's Shed as an independent legal entity in your state and with the US IRS. Experience shows that this can take, on average, from six-months to a year to setup, and the investment of \$1,000 to \$2,000 in start-up costs. It also requires the Shed's leader or Board of Directors to obtain and maintain their own facility, or venue, to hold their meetings. The advantages of using the Standalone-approach typically are:

- Your Shed will be relatively independent in decision making and have its own identity and is not limited to the size, availability or capabilities of the venue they
- The shed will have its own days and hours of operation and have direct access to the venue whenever the members want.

Possible disadvantage can be:

- You may need to find your own venue
- There is increased risk and responsibility for the Shed and its Members, such as managing the safe use of tools, providing staffing and maintaining the venue.
- It requires more management time, effort and skills from the leadership and members than the Sponsorship approach.

Regardless of the final decision on the approach you take to starting your local Men's Shed, the key to having a successful Shed is that the Members enjoy being with the group and enjoying the company of men.

STEP 3: HOST AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING

This is a very important step as the more community support you attract, the easier the job will be. Whether you're doing this within an existing organization or setting up a new one, building support and enthusiasm from the start will be important. A wide variety of enthusiastic supporters can also provide a wide range of skills and experiences.

The US Men's Sheds Association (USMSA) has a lot of informational and promotional materials that can be provided to you to help you determine if a Men's Shed activity, program or club would benefit your community.

Often an initial "show of interest" meeting can advance the idea and will motivate people to get involved. By holding a public meeting you will not only find potential members, but organizations and businesses who may want to support the Men's Shed and its activities within the community. The supporters may also be able to supply information concerning the needs of the local area and may be interested in sponsoring the Men's Shed.

These supporters can become potential members for the Shed who may donate equipment and services. This is the ideal forum for the project to really start to gain momentum. From this initial meeting it is also possible to form a Steering Committee and get the community involved at an early stage.

Planning the Meeting

1. Find a free venue to host the meeting - any community center, library, etc. will work
2. Identify a key person to lead the meeting.
3. Develop an agenda for the meeting - you can find a suggested agenda in the Appendix to this guide
4. Promoting & Inviting - You want to invite many people to your initial meeting. It is important to have input from as many diverse organizations as possible! You can do this by: placing posters in shop windows and on community notice boards; talking to as many people as possible and inviting them to spread the word; discussing with community center and library staff and advertising within their facilities; contacting local radio stations; notifying local service clubs such as Lions and Rotary; and inviting local senior groups.

Running the Meeting

It's important to bill the meeting in terms of 'Would you be interested in setting up and/or being part of a local Men's Shed?' This way you will not over commit yourself and others until the level of initial interest is clear and tangible. People will also feel part of the starting process and will be more willing to help out. Having a person who is comfortable facilitating the business and process of the meeting will convey confidence to your audience and ensure that good participation happens. You should also have someone take notes during the meeting: the issues raised, suggestions made, and additional information sought. Be sure to get the names and contact details of all attendees for future reference to keep them informed of progress and ask for help required.

Consider serving tea or coffee and a light snack, as food helps people to feel welcome and to mingle with others.

Assessing the local environment

Some additional things to think about before and during your first meeting:

1. What facilities are needed in the local area?
2. Are there adequate activities available for local men?
3. Assess the level of support for the shed locally - there is no point in undertaking extensive planning and establishing a Men's Shed if there is no community support or benefit.
4. What does the local area currently offer that could be advantageous?
5. Are there opportunities to collaborate with other organizations or services.

Set a date for the next meeting! In these early stages it is crucial to meet either formally or informally again in the near future to maintain the momentum and enthusiasm.

STEP 4: FORM A WORKING GROUP

After completing your 30 Day Challenge and your public meeting, you'll hopefully have a small team of interested people on board to help you get started with your Shed.

Coming out of this first meeting you'll have a few guys who are interested in meeting again. For the Shed to become established, a core group of individuals will be needed to get through the early stages of development.

Don't rush. Spend time with your group zeroing in on what the groups visions are for the shed. It's very important for everyone to feel invested in the mission. Do the research from a dozen countries such as Australia, Ireland, Canada, United Kingdom, Wales and the US. Questions; talk to members of the USMSA. We have done it ourselves, as well we have assisted many in the process.

The USMSA can provide you with a long list of the activities other US Men's Sheds have been doing successfully for your group to consider. Men's Shed members are responsible for deciding what things they'd like to do.

A perfect way to do this is to speak to other Men's Sheds. There are now 17 Active Sheds across the US. Email info@usmenssheds.org to get connected to your nearest one. Meeting people who have already travelled the road you are setting out on will be very informative and could help you to avoid some potential obstacles along the route.

When you visit a shed what will you see?

You'll see anything from a number of men restoring furniture for an old folks home or putting new life into disused bicycles for a local school, or maybe fixing lawn mowers. You might also see younger and older men learning new skills from each other as well as sharing life experiences. Sheds across have all sorts of different activities going on so be inspired, get some ideas and don't be afraid to come up with your own ideas for what you want your shed to be!



CALL

Give us a call if you have any questions on running your information meeting – we're here to help!



STEP 5: REGISTER WITH THE USMSA & MEET REGULARLY

The Network of Men's Sheds in the US is growing quickly. There are now Sheds in multiple States across the US with almost 10 Sheds in Minnesota. The USMSA's work includes hosting events that give Sheddors opportunities to network with each other, share ideas, and generally keep up to date with what's going on across the network. Once you've registered your new Shed on ChangeX, you'll be guided through the registration process with the US Men's Sheds Association.

You are now an official US Men's Shed! Continue to meet and to determine the activities the entire group wants to do. You'll also want to get the word out that there is a Men's Shed in your community and bring in more guys to join.

If your Shed is set up as a stand-alone shed, your first big task to undertake will be finding a suitable premises. This can be done in several different ways. You can locate vacant buildings or vacant spaces within buildings from many sources. To ensure the sustainability of your shed, finding rent-free premises is critical. Most sheds across the country have managed to find one, so don't be afraid to start looking!

The most important asset to have when looking for a rent free premises is patience. It is easy to find a great space if you are willing to pay commercial levels of rent. Finding a rent free premises is harder. Don't let the group of men become disillusioned if suitable premises are not identified quickly. Remember that the project you are setting up should last for several years and a little patience and persistence in the early stages will bring immense rewards in the years to come.

Some Sheds have "caretaker agreements" with their landlords where the men from the Shed look after the building or surrounding area instead of paying rent.

Most of the Sheds around the world are in a low or no rent situation. Paying commercial rents for premises is unsustainable for a Men's Shed unless they receive higher levels of funding support.

Many Sheds also start out in an existing community premises like a Senior Center or a Community Center. This can be a great way to get the Shed off the ground without having to find a premises from the very beginning.



Things to consider when looking for a premises

1. Is there public transport access? Some men choose to travel by bus for local travel when they retire.
2. Convenient car parking. Cars are also used to transport tools, materials, and finished goods, so vehicle access is critical.
3. Accessibility. Wheelchair access and ramps will probably be required along with accessible restrooms.
4. Could neighbors be affected by the operation (e.g. noise and dust)?
5. The number of days that the Shed will be open.
6. The types of projects that are planned and whether a number of activities will be occurring at the same time.
7. Are there necessary and adequate services available (electricity, water and sanitation)?
8. Storage space is essential, both in the work area and outside. There is never too much storage for materials, finished goods, and tools.
9. A major aspect of Men's Sheds is to promote socializing. The layout of the building should include a "chat and eating" area.

Where to look?

Is there an existing building that could be used?

Sites that other Sheds have used:

Unused or under-utilized buildings on Church or Local Government sites

Disused Scout Halls located on Council land.

Unused Fire or Ambulance Stations

Showgrounds or Sporting Grounds

Converted shipping containers.

A Mobile Shed that can travel to different locations.

Who to ask?

- Service Clubs e.g. Lions, Rotary
- Community Groups
- Community Organizations
- Local Business community
- Sporting Clubs



APPENDIX – ADDITIONAL INFO

Initial Meeting – Draft Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Explain Purpose of the Meeting.
3. Input or Presentation on ‘What is a Men’s Shed– values and ethos?’
4. Questions and Answers
5. Establishing a Men’s Shed: Who wishes to support the idea and who wishes to be a member?
6. Forming a Working Group or Steering Committee
7. Circulate Attendance Sheet for contact details and follow-up
8. Any Other Business (including a date for a follow-up meeting in 3/4 weeks).

Follow-up Public Meeting – Draft Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Agree to the Draft Agenda
3. Requirements for Starting a Men’s Shed
 - a. Constitution
 - b. Membership
 - c. Shed Steering Group
 - d. Venue
 - e. Insurance
 - f. Sponsorship
 - g. Program Activities
4. Questions & Answers
5. Next Steps: What’s to be done and who will do it?
6. A.O.B.



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