



Video Conferencing

Tips and Tools

There are two main providers of online meetings:

1. **Zoom:** <https://www.zoom.us/pricing>

- Free to sign up with unlimited one-on-one meetings. Zoom has several paid subscription options, but their free plan allows for group meetings lasting up to 40 minutes.
- Participants can join via videoconferencing from their computer, tablet or smart phone; or can call in using a conference call number that is provided by Zoom.

2. **GoToMeeting:** <https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-ca>

- Offers a free, full-access 14-day trial per email address.
- During the COVID crisis, they are also offering a free 3-month subscription to all non-profits. More information about this program through their emergency remote work program is available on their company website <https://www.gotomeeting.com/en-ca/work-remote>

There are lots of other options out there for you to ensure you stay in contact as a Board group without in-person meetings as we continue to practice social distancing.

For smaller groups, **Facebook Messenger** has a video call tool for Facebook members. **Google Hangout** is also a good option and includes a chat function: <https://hangouts.google.com>.

If you are new to facilitating virtual meetings, here are a few tips that you may find helpful!

Videoconferencing Tips:

1. Ask meeting participants to download and test the videoconferencing platform you are using 10-15 minutes before the start of the meeting so that they can troubleshoot any technical difficulties in advance.
2. At the beginning of your meeting, ask participants to use the mute function unless they are speaking.

3. If you have access to a group chat program (like Slack.com or Microsoft Teams), ask people to indicate they have a question by typing in the group chat. This is great way to manage the flow of your meeting while avoiding interruptions and individuals speaking over one another. Think of it as a virtual way of raising your hand. It can also be helpful to ask someone to assist the meeting chair with monitoring raised hands and calling out questions, so the facilitator can focus on presenting.
4. If you are experiencing issues with slow connectivity, turn off your camera but leave audio enabled and close any web browsers that you are not using.
5. Some platforms will allow you to “share your screen.” This can be a useful tool to present power point slides or other written materials to your group. This will allow participants to see your computer screen. Of course, you can always share materials via email and ask people to follow along without screen sharing.