

STEPS TO EFFECTIVE BOARD DEVELOPMENT

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Step 1. Assess current board members

The Board Development or Governance Committee must conduct an assessment of the current board. The committee looks at the types of skills needed and requisite demographic characteristics. Most important is to think about what will add strength, stature and balance to the board. Assess your board development composition needs by key criteria:

- A. Review the strategic plan to ascertain future needs. For example, if the strategic plan includes a goal to increase public awareness, do you have sufficient expertise and experience in marketing and public relations?
- B. Review operational and fundraising needs. These include skills in finance, law, human resources, strategic planning as well as fund raising.
- C. Determine desirable composition, including age, gender, and ethnic and cultural background. It is extremely important to have good diversity among all these demographic characteristics. The more diverse the group, the better the discussions and the decision making process.
- D. Most desirable board size. If your bylaws stipulate a number range for members of the Board, determine what you currently need in terms of numbers right now. Having 3 roll off does not automatically mean you must have 3 coming on the board.
 - Interview current board members scheduled to rotate off to determine ongoing interest in a new term;
 - Review the number of members desired;
 - Determine number of new board members needed.
- E. Use a nominating grid (see Attachment #1) to illustrate current composition and areas of need. Fill in the names of existing/continuing board members along the top and ask them to provide information needed to determine what they bring to the board. This will provide the committee with concrete information about the types of board members needed to build a strong board for the future.

Step 2. Identify, cultivate, and recruit potential board members.

While the Nominating or Board Development committee is assessing board needs, *all members* of the Board should be working to identify, cultivate and recruit potential board members. Some places to look for prospective potential board members include:

- Persons whose current terms are ending
- Referrals from other board members and agency volunteers
- Staff
- Board and staff of other agencies

- United Way
- Individuals you meet at community affairs
- Organizations interested in community service
- Ethnic leaders
- Business and government leaders
- Professional groups
- Records of previous board development nominating process
- Religious leaders
- Friends, colleagues and associates
- Donors

Consider asking every board member to nominate at least one person each year. Board members do not need to be concerned with what the current needs are; rather, they should nominate individuals who they believe would make good board members. The Nominating/Board Development Committee will then have a sufficient pool of candidates to review and find individuals who have the needed characteristics for each specific year.

Nominating Process:

- A. Nominating or Referral Form – Board members must have some way to collect basic contact information from the nominees. See Attachment #2 for an example
- B. Board Application – the committee can ask potential nominees to complete an application form that will provide the information needed to compare with the recruitment grid. See Attachment #3 for an example

Step 3: Interview and Recommend

Once a pool of nomination forms/applications have been received, the Nominating or Board Development Committee reviews the applicants against the recruitment grid and selects those individuals the committee believes will best meet the agency’s needs. It always a good idea to select more nominees than what is needed. The committee then should personally interview the group most interested in. Interviews can be held with more than one person at a time. During the interview:

1. Clearly express expectations – Provide potential board members the essential information about the organization, the board and board member responsibilities.
2. Be prepared for what prospects ask:
 - A. Why are you interested in me as a board member?
 - B. What role do you see me playing on your board?
 - C. What is unique about your organization?
 - D. What will my responsibilities as a board member be?
 - E. What will I need to know to be an efficient, effective member?
 - F. Will I receive appropriate training?
 - G. How much time will I need to assume my responsibilities as a member

(planning, committee assignments, attendance at meetings, special events, special meetings, other events)

- H. What are my personal financial obligations?
- I. Am I expected to participate in fund raising?
- J. Have community needs been assessed?
- K. Are Board members indemnified or covered by liability insurance?
- L. What are the agency's immediate future goals?

3. In the interview:

- State your needs openly and do not minimize such critical items as time commitment
- Present benefits of involvement as a volunteer. Emphasize what's in it for them.
- Ask about previous volunteer or board work.
- Deal honestly with objections by hearing them out and responding with options
- Be sure to have some printed material to leave with person
- Arrange for any specific follow-up.
- Make no promises! An interview should not necessarily mean approval for membership.

4. Follow-up:

Once interviews have been completed, the Nominating or Board Development committee reconvenes to discuss interview outcomes and selects the individuals the committee believes best meets the board vacancy needs and will work best with the overall board. The names of these individuals are then submitted to the full board as the committee's recommendations. During the board meeting, because this is a committee recommendation, the committee report serves as a motion and only requires a second to allow for discussion.

Please note – it is important that no communication is made with potential board members until the board votes. For those individuals who were interviewed but were not selected, a member of the Board Development/Nominating Committee must contact them personally to let them know and to encourage them to become involved with the agency in some other way until next year when they will once again be considered (along with others). Once new board members have been selected, it is time to conduct orientation for those members who are selected.

Step 4: Orient and train new board members.

Remember that board orientation starts in the initial interview. Once board members have been selected, a detailed training and orientation is critical. How else can you expect new board members to make thoughtful, careful decisions unless they have the foundation of knowledge they need? There are several ways to conduct this orientation:

1. Immediately after his or her selection, new Board members should receive a welcome call from the Board chair to welcome and offer any assistance.

2. Set up a regular orientation training session that gives a thorough introduction to the programs of the agency as well as the board work (i.e. strategic plan, financial statements, budget, etc.)
3. Consider asking an experienced board member to act as sponsor for each new board member so they have someone they know from the onset.
4. Arrange an informal occasion where full board can meet new members
5. Give all new members a packet of materials in a board manual. See Attachment #5 as an example.

Example of Agency
Board of Directors Nominating Form
(to be completed by the individual making the nomination)

Nominee's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone #: _____ Fax : _____

E-mail address: _____

Experience related to **issue of agency**: _____

Board or other non-profit related experience: _____

What strengths and/or resources do you believe this individual has to offer the **agency**:_

Other comments: _____

Has this individual been contacted and expressed interest in the **Agency** Y N

Nominator's Signature: _____

(Please attach resume [if available] and/or any other relevant information to this nominating form)

Attachment #3

BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPLICATION

Name _____

Age Under 30 _____ 30-45 _____ 45-60 _____ Over 60 _____

Home Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone: (_____) _____ Cell: (_____) _____

Fax: (_____) _____

Race/Ethnicity/Disability: African-American/Black _____ Asian/Pacific Islander _____

Caucasian _____ Hispanic/Latino _____ Native American/Indian _____ Other _____

Area of Residence: City _____ County _____ State _____ Other: _____

Congressional District _____

Employer: _____

Title: _____

Work Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Work Phone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

Email Address: _____

Spouse's Name: _____

No of children: _____ Ages of children: _____

Listed below are ways in which board members can participate. We would like to know which activities most interest you either because you have experience and can lend expertise or because you have interest in and would like to develop your skills and knowledge in a particular area of board service. Rank your interest 1-5:

1 - indicates no interest, 5 –indicates great interest

Please indicate if you have a professional skill or practical experience in an area by providing a short explanation [E]

1. Administration/Management: Helping with the administrative efficiency of the organization (general management, leases and rentals, salary assessments, outcome measurements, etc.).
1 2 3 4 5 E _____
2. Finance: Assisting with specific financial aspects of the nonprofit (budgets, financial statements, the audit, investment policies, etc.)
1 2 3 4 5 E _____
3. Fund Raising: Assisting with and/or overseeing fund development issues (crafting a development plan, annual funds, capital campaigns, special events, corporate/private solicitations, grants, etc...)
1 2 3 4 5 E _____
4. Human Resources: Helping in the areas of personnel management (i.e. hiring, personnel policies, human resource laws, etc.).
1 2 3 4 5 E _____
5. Legal: Lending professional knowledge regarding various legal issues (i.e. leases, contracts, nonprofit law, etc.).
1 2 3 4 5 E _____
6. Marketing / Public Relations: Assisting with and/or overseeing public relations and marketing management functions (crafting both plans, conducting an assessment, helping staff to insure continuity of printed and electronic messages, R&D, demographic studies, etc.).
1 2 3 4 5 E _____
7. Strategic Planning: Nonprofit Planning (including strategic thinking and planning, scenario planning, forecasting, operations plans, business plans, etc.).
1 2 3 4 5 E _____

8. Public Policy: Activism/advocacy for issues related to child abuse and neglect (including meeting with elected officials regarding policy and/or funding issues).

1 2 3 4 5 E _____

9. Program Focus: Program research and performance (liaison between board and staff for program literacy, program budgeting, program management, outcome measurements, costs, revenues, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 E _____

10. Technology: Assisting with and/or overseeing information technology needs (on-site IT assessments; software; equipment; web design and management; improving communications, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 E _____

11. Leadership Skills: Developing your own leadership skills (attending national and state conferences for our organization and related to development of your skills as an officer, serving as a committee chair and or possible officer of the board, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5 E _____

12. Organizational Experience (please check all that apply):

Business – corporate _____

Small business _____

Faith-based _____

Government _____

Education _____

Nonprofit _____

Other _____ Specify: _____

13. Other areas in which you feel you can contribute to AGENCY:

SUGGESTED OUTLINE OF A BOARD MANUAL

Section One: Board and Staff Directory

- Current listing of all board members' name, address, phone number. Include key staff.

Section Two: Overview of the Organization and Board of Directors

- Mission statement, short history of the organization, statement of the general role of the board in the life of the organization, latest annual report, and any pertinent brochures.

Section Three: Board Activities and Membership Expectations

- Annual board schedule (include planning, budgeting, etc.), brief overview of board committees and activities, and a clear statement of what is expected of board members.

Section Four: Board Committees

- Detailed information about each committee and its charge, membership, and schedule.

Section Five: Program Information

- One page synopsis of each program operated by the organization.

Section Six: Organizational Policy Statements

- Collection of all board approved policy statements currently in force.

Section Seven: Board Minutes

- Minutes from the past several board meetings with the ability to add the new sets.

Section Eight: Staff Reports

- Collection of the past several staff reports

Section Nine: Organizing Papers

- Articles of Incorporation, by laws, and any other organizing papers such as charters.

Section Ten: Finances

- Annual budget and most recent financial reports.