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Welcome to BoardServeNYC:
A United Way of New York City Initiative
in partnership with NYC Service

BoardServeNYC builds the capacity of nonprofits in New York City by connecting them to a pool of prospective board members. Training board member candidates in nonprofit governance and in roles and responsibilities of boards, as well as actively preparing nonprofits to recruit, engage, and utilize new board members, are integral components of BoardServeNYC.

To prepare you for your upcoming training session and the subsequent matching process, we have assembled this set of materials for you.

The tools included in this Nonprofit Orientation & Board Recruitment Kit, along with the orientation session itself, will familiarize you with the BoardServeNYC program, as well as provide you with the tools necessary to recruit new board members effectively.

It is critical that current board members work collaboratively with staff and adapt the tools to best suit the needs, capacities, history and culture of your organization.

Even though all boards have similar responsibilities, there is no one "right way" for a board to meet these responsibilities. Each board must find its own way. Thus, the tools and procedures provided are intended as examples, not as templates.

While using the enclosed tools to address one issue, you may find that the process itself leads to unexpected improvements in other areas of board governance and leadership. To help fine-tune other areas of your board practices, you may refer to the Nonprofit Tune-Up Kit, the companion manual to this book.

The BoardServeNYC training curriculum and kits are developed and designed in consultation with the Support Center for Nonprofit Management and Michael Davidson.
BoardServeNYC

BoardServeNYC is a United Way of New York City initiative to help strengthen the capacity of NYC nonprofits.

The BoardServeNYC program reaches out to volunteers and nonprofits in all five boroughs, aiming to increase the number of trained board candidates available and help nonprofits strengthen and diversify their boards.

United Way of NYC has had a board recruitment, training and placement program since 1989. Over the years the program has evolved and expanded, and was most recently known as “Linkages”.

In the spring of 2009, United Way of NYC partnered with NYC Service. With the city’s support, the program has been able to expand in scope and comprises:

- Monthly board member candidate trainings
- Monthly nonprofit trainings – designed to orient nonprofits about the BoardServeNYC recruitment process
- Six board fairs yearly
- An online board matching tool at www.boardservenyc.org
- Additional events such as panel discussions and networking opportunities

Thank you for participating in BoardServeNYC!

NYC Service

In April 2009, Mayor Michael Bloomberg launched NYC Service, setting a new standard for how cities can tap the power of their people to tackle their most pressing challenges.

NYC Service is comprised of 40 innovative initiatives that aim to achieve three overarching goals:

- Making our city the easiest place in the world to volunteer
- Targeting volunteers to address the city’s greatest needs
- Promoting service as a core part of what it means to be a citizen of the greatest city in the world

NYC Service meets the Mayor’s State of the City pledge for New York City to lead the way in answering President Obama’s nationwide call to service primarily by using volunteerism to address the capacity gap at the local level. A key focus of NYC Service is to heighten accountability within the field and to set a new standard for measuring the impact of volunteerism in addition to participation.

To learn more, visit nyc.gov/service or call 311.
10 Steps for Board Recruitment

This kit aims to help your organization make the most of its participation in the BoardServeNYC program.

In the following pages, you will find valuable tips and tools to help your board recruit and “on-board” new board members.

This kit will help you to:

- Evaluate your current board’s work
- Identify your board’s needs
- Develop an effective board recruitment strategy
- Create an effective on-boarding or orientation process
STEP 1. Review Primary Board Responsibilities

The following list covers the basic fiduciary, oversight and leadership responsibilities of a board. Reviewing the responsibilities generally undertaken by a board and keeping these duties in mind will help you to assess your current board’s strengths and shortcomings, evaluate your current board’s work, and focus your future board recruitment effort.

LIST OF PRIMARY BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Determine the Organization’s Mission and Purpose** – It is the board’s responsibility to create and review a statement of mission and purpose that articulates the organization’s goals, means and primary constituents served.

2. **Select the Chief Executive** – Boards must reach consensus on the chief executive’s responsibilities and undertake a careful search to find the most qualified individual for the position.

3. **Provide Proper Financial Oversight** – The board must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.

4. **Ensure Adequate Resources** – One of the board’s foremost responsibilities is to ensure there are adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission.

5. **Ensure Legal and Ethical Integrity and Maintain Accountability** – The board is ultimately responsible for ensuring adherence to legal standards and ethical norms.

6. **Ensure Effective Organizational Planning** – Boards must actively participate in an overall planning process and assist in implementing and monitoring the goals of the organization.

7. **Recruit and Orient New Board Members and Assess Board Performance** – All boards have a responsibility to articulate prerequisites for candidates, orient new members, and periodically and comprehensively evaluate its own performance.

8. **Enhance the Organization’s Public Standing** – The board should clearly articulate the organization’s mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garner support from the community.

9. **Determine, Monitor, and Strengthen the Organization’s Programs and Services** – The board’s responsibility is to determine which programs are consistent with the organization’s mission and to monitor their effectiveness.

10. **Support the Chief Executive and Assess His/Her Performance** - The board should ensure that the chief executive has the moral and professional support he or she needs to further the goals of the organization.

Adapted from Ingram, Richard, and Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards. Board Source
STEP 2. Complete a Board Assessment Survey

With a comprehensive list of responsibilities in mind, a good next step is to allow the board to step back and evaluate its work. This process will help you identify areas which could benefit from new board members’ skills and expertise.

A board assessment survey is a useful way to evaluate a board’s work. Using this tool will help you to recruit the new board members that best suit your board’s needs.

- It is important that the survey be anonymous, so that each board member can be as candid as possible.
- The survey can be administered through an online service, such as Survey Monkey
- The survey results should be compiled by an outside party or a board member whose confidentiality can be relied upon, in a way that the comments cannot be clearly associated with individual respondents

The survey summary should be provided to the board and discussed at a specified board meeting or as part of a retreat, where the board can find solutions to the areas which need attention.

SAMPLE BOARD ASSESSMENT SURVEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Strategic Direction</th>
<th>Please write short answers – or check the appropriate box – below.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In your own words, how would you state the mission of your organization (i.e., the impact that it seeks to have)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you think that your fellow board members share your understanding of the mission?</td>
<td>□ Yes □ No □ I don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What do you see as the primary goals and objectives for your organization?</td>
<td>1. _____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. _____________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. _____________________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does the board currently have the required skills and representation to achieve these goals and objectives?</td>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. Determining the Mission and Directions</th>
<th>Not Confident</th>
<th>Confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Board members actively participate in strategic planning and ongoing strategic thinking.</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □ □</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The board has adopted and utilizes explicit measures of progress toward identified outcomes.</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □ □</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Please write comments below.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### III. Insuring Financial Integrity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Confident</th>
<th>Confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The board monitors financial performance and projections on a regular basis.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Board members are sufficiently knowledgeable to ask meaningful questions about finances and financial management.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The board reviews the audit report and has an opportunity to ask questions about the findings.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The board reviews financial controls and their implementation.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The board ensures legal compliance with federal, state and city regulations and contract requirements.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The board has established an investment policy and reviews investment performance.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Board members are aware of and observe the conflict of interest policy.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The board reviews the IRS 990 prior to filing.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

Please write comments below.

### IV. Ensuring Adequate Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Confident</th>
<th>Confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The board has a clear policy on the responsibilities of board members in fundraising.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Board members make personally meaningful financial contributions to the organization.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Board members actively participate in fundraising activities and solicitations.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### V. Serving as Advocates for the Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Confident</th>
<th>Confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The board reviews the compensation of the executive director based on industry standards.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Board members are knowledgeable about the organization’s programs.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Board members act as ambassadors to the community on behalf of the organization and its constituencies.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Selecting, Supporting, Compensating and Reviewing the Executive Director</td>
<td>Not Confident</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The board reviews the compensation of the executive director based on industry standards.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. There is an annual review of the executive director.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The respective roles of board and staff are discussed openly.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

Please write comments below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VII. Insuring the Present and Future Health of the Board</th>
<th>Not Confident</th>
<th>Confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. There is an effective process to determine board recruitment priorities based on the work of the board.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Board composition reflects the expertise, diversity of background and access to resources needed by the organization.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Clear expectations are explained during the recruiting process.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. There is a process for leadership development of new board members, including orientation, training and partnering with more seasoned board members.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Past leaders allow new leaders to lead.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Board members are placed in leadership positions after a reasonable amount of board service and are supported in fulfilling their leadership responsibilities.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The performance of board members in meeting board expectations is assessed annually.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

Please write comments below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIII. Maintaining a Productive and Engaging Board Culture</th>
<th>Not Confident</th>
<th>Confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. There are agreed-upon expectations for board participation.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Board meetings are characterized by substantive discussions, respectful debate and informed decision-making.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Confident</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Decisions are made by the full board rather than by the Executive Committee, the chair or the executive director alone.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Board members understand the respective roles of board and staff</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The executive director welcomes board involvement in appropriate matters.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The board chair encourages board member engagement.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The board chair does a good job encouraging and dealing with different points of view.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The board agendas structure the meetings to provide opportunities for engaging discussions on policy and strategic matters.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Board meetings begin and end on time.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Board members are familiar with the bylaws and policies of the board.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Board members maintain confidentiality of all board deliberations.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. There is a good relationship between the board chair and the executive director.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. There is a good relationship between the executive director and the members of the board.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. There is a good relationship between the chair and the members of the board.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Items that we should spend less/more time on at board meetings:</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Changes in communication that would improve the effectiveness of the board might include:</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IX. Managing the Work of the Board**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Confident</th>
<th>Confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. There is a board process to establish specific goals for each committee.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. There is a board process to assess progress made towards achieving those goals.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Board members follow through on their commitments.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Which are the most active committees of the board?</td>
<td>Please write comments below.</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are there committees that should be more active?</td>
<td>Please write comments below.</td>
<td>☑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Are any additional committees or task forces needed?  

7. Additional comments or suggestions about how the board could be more effective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X. Personal Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What do you view as the purpose of your service on the board?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What would you regard as your most satisfying personal accomplishment as a board member?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What would you hope to be able to accomplish in the future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What might enhance your experience on the board?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XI. Going Forward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What do you consider to be the strengths of the current board?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What were the board’s most important accomplishments of the past year?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What would you like to see the board accomplish in the coming year?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XII. Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any additional comments on your board that we should be aware of:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey adapted from the Board Leadership Project of Governance Matters
STEP 3. Complete a Board Profile Worksheet

After assessing the current work of the board, it’s time to take a closer look at your board composition. This sample board profile worksheet can be adapted to assess your organization’s current board composition and to make a plan for the future.

- The governance committee can develop an appropriate grid for the organization and then present its findings to the full board.
- Once completed, you can look back at this worksheet to identify gaps in skill sets or perspectives.
- Remember, an organization will look for different skills and strengths from its board members depending on its stage of development and other circumstances.

SAMPLE BOARD PROFILE WORKSHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Category</th>
<th>Number of Individual Trustees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 – 34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 50</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>51 – 65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity/Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Indian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness/Ability to Contribute Financially</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Financial Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Relationships/Resources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Relationships/Resources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Relationships/Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Community Connections</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Association/Umbrella Organizations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Large/National Nonprofit Organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Philanthropy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Qualities**
- Leadership Skills
- Willingness to Work
- Personal Connection with the Organization’s Mission

**Personality**
- Bridger
- Spokesperson
- Strategist
- Visionary

**Areas of Expertise**
- Administration / Management
- Entrepreneurship
- Financial Management
- Accounting
- Banking and Trusts
- Investments
- Fundraising
- Government
- International Affairs
- Law
- Marketing, Public Relations
- Human Resources
- Strategic Planning
- Physical Plant (Architect, Engineer)
- Real Estate
- Representative of Clients

**Special Program Focus**
- (Education, Health Public Policy, Social Services)

**Technology**
- Other

**Number of Years (or Terms) on the Board**
STEP 4. Create a Detailed Job Description

After evaluating the board and assessing the board’s composition, an organization should create a clear description of the work that needs to be done by the board or committee, and to specify roles and responsibilities related to that work. This will help in pinpointing the best candidate for your board needs. The example below is a job description for a Governance (or Nominating) Committee posting, but it can help serve as a general guide for any work description.

A working Governance Committee is essential to the effectiveness and long term health of a nonprofit board. It is the group whose ongoing responsibility is the life of the board. The board should review these descriptions and hopefully agree that such a committee is needed. The chair will be responsible for appointing a chair of this committee. Other than as ex-officio, the chair of the board should not be a member of this committee. The committee should include both junior and senior members of the board and may include non-board members who represent important constituencies.

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
The Governance Committee is responsible for ongoing review and recommendations to enhance the quality of the board of directors. The work of the committee revolves around five major areas:

1. Helping to Create Board Roles and Responsibilities
   - Leading the board in regularly reviewing and updating the board’s description of its roles and areas of responsibility and what is expected of individual board members
   - Assisting the board in periodically updating and clarifying the primary areas of focus for the board’s work and helping shape the board’s agenda for the next year or two, based on the strategic plan

2. Paying Attention to Board Composition
   - Leading in assessing current and anticipated needs related to board composition; determining the knowledge, attributes, skills, abilities, influence, and access to resources the board will need to accomplish future work
   - Developing a profile of the board, showing how it should evolve over time
   - Working with other board members and the chief executive to identify potential board member candidates and explore their interest and availability for board service
   - Nominating individuals to be elected as members of the board
   - In cooperation with the board chair and chief executive, contacting each board member eligible for re-election to assess his/her interest in continuing board membership and working with each board member to identify what he or she might be able to contribute to the organization

3. Encouraging Board Development
   - Working with the chief executive to provide candidates with information needed prior to election to the board
   - Working with the chief executive to design and oversee a process of board orientation, sharing information needed during the early stages of board service
   - Working with the chief executive to design and implement an ongoing program of board information, education, and team building
4. **Assessing Board Effectiveness**
   - Initiating periodic assessment of the board’s performance and proposing, as appropriate, changes in board structure and operations
   - Providing ongoing counsel to the board chair and other board leaders on steps they might take to enhance board effectiveness
   - Regularly reviewing the board’s practices regarding member participation, conflict of interest, confidentiality, and so on, and suggest needed improvements
   - Periodically reviewing and updating the board policy and practices

5. **Preparing Board Leadership**
   - Taking the lead in succession planning; taking steps to recruit and prepare for future board leadership
   - Nominating board members for election as board officers

Adapted from: Support Center for Nonprofit Management and Fred Miller, Chatham Group, Inc.
**STEP 5. Outline a Board Recruitment Plan**

Like any other board activity, recruitment requires the board to agree on the work that needs to be done in order to identify candidates that will meet the board’s needs. With a clear vision of your board’s needs, the next step is to outline a board recruitment plan.

This recruitment strategy must describe:
- How the board will identify the needed skills and resources
- How candidates will be identified, cultivated and reviewed
- How new board members will be oriented

To better clarify the recruitment process for you, we’ve provided a brief outline of recommendations below:

**Board Recruitment Plan: Recommendations**

1. **Identification of Recruitment Priorities**
   - Assess current board composition
   - Solicit input from board committees and senior management regarding the board needs for expertise, representation and access to resources
   - Define priority recruitment needs
   - Create a board recruitment prospectus that identifies the needed board members and the board action priorities

2. **Candidate Identification**
   - Communicate needs to board candidate sources, including:
     a. BoardServeNYC
     b. Others, such as:
        i. BoardAssist
        ii. BoardNetUSA
        iii. Arts and Business Council (for arts and culture organizations)
        iv. Youth Inc. (for youth-serving nonprofit organizations)
        v. Online sources, such as Idealist.org or NYCServe.org
        vi. NY Junior League Nonprofit Board Clearing House
        vii. Corporate board placement programs, e.g. Time Warner, Chase

   - Conduct additional research for candidates with identified qualities, by soliciting board and senior management recommendations
3. **Screening**
   - Obtain basic candidate background material through the referral source
   - Determine priorities among the potential candidates identified
   - Arrange a personal meeting with member of the Governance Committee to assess potential interest and suitability
   - Arrange a formal interview with senior management and a member of the governance committee
   - Have governance committee share recommendations to board

4. **Appointment**
   - Meet with board chair to decide on committee and/or affiliate board assignment
   - Invite candidates to attend the board retreat
STEP 6. Draft Board Member Contract/Expectations

A good, clear way to communicate your expectations for new or existing board members is with a board member contract, or list of expectations.

The sample document below is a statement of what board members will hold themselves, and their colleagues, accountable to, including: standards for contributions; meeting attendance and participation; committee service; etc. Having agreed-upon expectations is a necessary in order to encourage high standards for board members, determine who should be re-nominated and to inform prospective candidates of the expectations of membership.

- The Governance Committee or Executive Committee can review this statement and decide on what to propose to the board for consideration and adoption
- Each board member should sign two copies of this agreement, return one copy to the board chair and keep the other for reference

SAMPLE BOARD MEMBER CONTRACT

I, ________, understand that as a member of the Board of Directors of _______, I have a legal and ethical responsibility to ensure that the organization does the best work possible in pursuit of its goals. I believe in the purpose and the mission of the organization and will act responsibly and prudently as its steward.

I accept the following responsibilities as a board member:

1. Outreach
   - I will interpret the organization's work and values to the community, represent the organization, and act as a spokesperson.
   - In turn, I will interpret our constituencies' needs and values to the organization, speak out for their interests and, on their behalf, hold the organization accountable.

2. Board and Committee Participation
   - I will attend and prepare for at least ___ percent of board meetings, committee meetings, and special events. I will inform the board in advance of any meetings that I cannot attend.
   - I will be an active member of at least one committee or task force and will be willing to take a leadership role on a committee or on the board.
   - In addition to committee work, I will be willing to accept at least one individual initiative to be determined in collaboration with the chair and the executive director and to share my professional expertise.

3. Resource Development
   - I will make an annual, personally meaningful, contribution of no less than ________.
   - I will actively participate in one or more fundraising activities.
   - I will be willing to solicit donations from individuals, corporations and philanthropies [Solicit donations of at least ____________ each year from individuals, corporations and foundations.]

4. Board Policies
   - I will excuse myself from discussions and votes where I have a conflict of interest.
   - I will maintain the confidentiality of board deliberations and will publicly support the decisions of the board, including those with which I might have been in disagreement.
5. Active Participation
   
   • I will stay informed of the organization’s business and happenings and of developments in fields relevant to the organization. I will ask questions and request information. I will participate in and take responsibility for making decisions on issues, policies, and other matters. I will not stay silent if I have questions or concerns.
   
   • I will encourage, enable and respect the participation and contributions of fellow board members
   
   • I will support, where possible, the recommendations of the committees.
   
   • I will participate in the assessment of my own performance and the performance of the board as a whole, recommend candidates for board nomination and be available to mentor a new board member.
   
   • I will respect and support the executive director’s authority, communicate ideas about program or administrative activities to the Executive Director rather than to line staff, refrain from making special requests of the staff and avoid discussion of personnel matters with staff.
   
   • I will work in good faith with staff and other board members as partners towards the achievement of our goals.
   
   • If I don’t fulfill these commitments to the organization, I will expect the board chair to call me and discuss my responsibilities with me.

In turn, the organization will be responsible for …

1. Sending regular financial reports and an update of organizational activities that allow me to meet the "prudent person" standards of the law. (The "prudent person rule," applied in many legal settings in slightly differing language, states that an individual must act with the same judgment and care as, in like circumstances, a prudent person would act.)

2. Offering opportunities to discuss the organization’s programs, goals, activities, and status with the executive director and the chair. Additionally, I can request such opportunities.

3. Helping me perform my duties by keeping me informed about issues in the industry and field in which we are working and by offering me opportunities for professional development as a board member.

4. Responding in a straightforward fashion to questions that I feel are necessary to carry out my fiscal, legal, and moral responsibilities to this organization. Board members and staff will work in good faith with me toward achievement of our goals.

5. If the organization does not fulfill its commitments to me, I can call on the board chair and executive director to discuss the organization’s responsibilities to me.

Signed by _________________________, Board Member, Date ________

and by __________________________, Chair of the Board of Directors, Date _______

Adapted from Board Café by Jan Masaoka, October 9, 2009
STEP 7. Develop Candidate Interview Questions

As you begin to meet potential board candidates through BoardServeNYC, you'll want to know about their skills, professional experience and interests, to ascertain whether or not the candidate will be able to fulfill your board’s expectations.

Below are some sample questions you might want to ask candidates, to see if they have the right skills and interests for your board.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR BOARD CANDIDATES

- What about the mission of our organization resonates most strongly with you?
- What would you like to gain personally and professionally from board service?
- Are you willing to cultivate supporters and solicit funds or help cultivate potential board members?
- Are you willing and able to read and understand financial statements?
- What do you enjoy most about your work?
- Please give an example of something that was personally satisfying in your work life. Please also give an example of something satisfying outside of your work life.
- Have you worked on projects with teams? What did you like about that? What did you dislike?
- What roles do you tend to take in group projects?
- What did you most like and dislike about prior volunteer and board experience?
- How do you work with conflicting points of view?
- Are you willing and interested in developing new skills?
- Are you interested in learning about the programs and work of the organization?

Here are some questions that candidates might ask during the recruitment and interview process that your organization should be prepared to answer.

SAMPLE BOARD CANDIDATE QUESTIONS FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

- What is your organization’s mission? What are the specific programs or business activities?
- What are the key issues affecting the nonprofit’s current work? What issues are anticipated in the next two to three years?
- What are the organization’s plans for the next three years?
- Does your organization carry directors’ and officers’ liability insurance?
- How financially stable is your organization? Does the board anticipate issues that might have a significant impact on revenue or expenses?
- How stable is the organization from a management perspective? Is the board satisfied with management? What is the relationship between the board and the executive director?
- What takes place at a typical board meeting? Are there reasons to believe that board activity will change in the foreseeable future?
- What is the style of board interaction?
- How often does the board meet? What does the nonprofit expect/require from its board members in terms of time? What does the board expect in terms of committee participation?
- What does your nonprofit expect/require from its board members in terms of personal contributions and fundraising solicitations?
- What is the recruitment process for new board members?
- What is the term of board membership for regular board members? For officers?
- What are the strengths and challenges of the board as a group?
**STEP 8. Create a Board Manual**

When taking potential board candidates to the next level of consideration for board membership, it is essential to have a board manual available. This manual should provide the candidate all of the documentary material needed for an introduction to the organization and to the board, and will help them better understand what services the organization and board do, how they perform these tasks as well as how they are run.

**SAMPLE BOARD MANUAL CONTENTS**

I. Organizational Overview  
   a. History of the organization  
   b. Mission statement  
   c. Strategic plan  
   d. New developments

II. Staff  
    a. Organizational chart  
    b. Bios and contact information for senior staff

III. Programs  
    a. Program overview  
    b. Program statistics  
    c. Client numbers  
    d. Demographic statistics  
    e. Trends  
    f. Outcome data  
    g. Brochures and flyers  
    h. Program events calendar  
    i. Grant application examples

IV. Finance  
    a. Most recent annual financial report and audit  
    b. Current budget  
    c. Most recent budget to actual report  
    d. Most recent IRS Form 990  
    e. Current funders

V. Policies  
    a. Internal financial control policies  
    b. Investment policies  
    c. Personnel policies  
    d. Program policies  
    e. Conflict of Interest  
    f. Document Retention  
    g. Whistleblower
VI. Board Organization
   a. Officers and directors with bios and contact information
   b. Committees, chairs and members
   c. Committee and task force job descriptions
   d. Board activity
   e. Calendar of board meetings
   f. Board minutes from the last 2 years

VII. Events and Marketing
    a. Annual Report
    b. Gala invitation
    c. Newsletter
    d. Press clippings

VIII. Organizational Documents
      a. Certificate of Incorporation
      b. Bylaws
      c. Board responsibilities
      d. Board member responsibilities
      e. Directors and Officers Liability Insurance policy
STEP 9. Develop a Clear Orientation Procedure

You have evaluated your board’s needs, followed through with your recruitment plan, identified good candidates and invited them to join your board. You will also want to ensure a smooth transition for new board members and strengthen their connection to the board and the organization’s mission.

The following steps for a clear orientation procedure have proved valuable in on-boarding new board members.

STEPS TO ON-BOARDING NEW BOARD MEMBERS

1. Assign a “board buddy” to each new member for their first year, to guide them through the formal and informal workings of the board
2. Arrange meetings with senior staff to review programs
3. Organize a program site visit with a board member and / or the executive director
4. Hold a meeting with board leaders and executive director to review board manual, responsibilities, procedures and current challenges and opportunities
5. Hold a meeting with board chair to discuss committee and individual assignments
6. After six months, have new board members meet with one member of the board development committee to discuss problems, issues, etc.
7. Offer opportunities to participate in board training
STEP 10. Create a Board Prospectus Outline

Just as an organization puts time and energy into marketing itself to a potential funder, it should market itself to prospective board members. A board prospectus of no more than 3-4 pages should make the case to prospective candidates as to why they would want to join your board and what they could look forward to in terms of the interesting challenges that they might become involved with. This document describes what your organization has to offer to the community and can be given to prospective board candidates as well as anyone else who might be interested in your organization.

A board prospectus should answer the following questions:

- Who are we and where are we going?
- Whom do we serve and with what programs?
- What difference/impact do we make?
- What are the skills, expertise and connections that we need to get us where we need to be?
- What will be the committee/task force work?
- What might be individual assignments?
- What are the benefits of board membership?

SUMMARY: The Board-Building Cycle

1. **Identify board needs**: skills, knowledge, perspective, connections, etc., needed to implement the strategic plan. What do we have? What is missing? Identify sources of board members with the needed characteristics.

2. **Cultivate potential board members**. Get them interested in your organization and keep them informed of your progress.

3. **Recruit prospects**. Describe why a prospective member is wanted and needed. Describe expectations and responsibilities of board members, and don’t minimize requirements. Invite questions, and elicit their interest and preparedness to serve.

4. **Orient new board members to the organization**—program, history, bylaws, pressing issues, finances, facilities, organization chart—and to the board—recent minutes, committees, board member responsibilities, lists of board members and key staff members.

5. **Activate all board members**. Discover their interests and availability. Involve them in committees or task forces. Assign them a “board buddy.” Solicit feedback. Hold everyone accountable. Express appreciation for work well done. Educate the board. Provide information concerning your mission area. Promote exploration of issues facing the organization. Don’t hide difficulties. Celebrate accomplishments.

6. **Rotate board members**. Establish and use term limits. Do not automatically re-elect for an additional term; consider the board’s needs and the board member’s performance. Explore advisability of resigning with members who are not active. Develop new leadership.

7. **Evaluate the board and individual board members**. Engage the board in assessing its own performance. Identify ways in which to improve. Encourage individual self-assessment.

8. **Celebrate!** Recognize victories and progress, even small ones. Appreciate contributions to the board, the organization, and the community. Make room for humor and good laughs.
AFTER TRAINING: Making the Most of the BoardServeNYC Program

After completing the assessment, interview questions, board manual and new board member orientation, you are poised to maximize your participation in BoardServeNYC and find new board members.

NEXT STEPS

After completing the BoardServeNYC nonprofit orientation session, you will be eligible to participate in board matching opportunities.

- **Access to Our Online Matching Tool.** Shortly, you will gain a username and password to our online matching tool, where you will be able to search for new board members based on their skills, experience and interests. They will also be able to contact you.

- **Invitations to Events.** You will receive invitations to our regularly scheduled recruitment events. Our signature event is the “board fair”, where you will be able to meet board candidates, talk about your organization, and network with fellow nonprofit leaders. We will also send information about various panels, workshops and other events.

On the following pages, you will learn how to make the most of the BoardServeNYC program.
Online Matching Tool: www.boardservenyc.org

A very important component of the BoardServeNYC program is the online matching tool, which allows you to post a profile detailing your organization’s mission, geography of population served, and what you’re looking for in new board members. It also lets you browse the credentials of our trained board candidates.

Each organization is responsible for inputting their own information and for using the online matching tool to find and engage eligible candidates that best suit their needs.

GUIDELINES TO THE BOARDSERVENYC MATCHING TOOL

1. **Complete a Profile.** Once you’ve received your username and password, log on and complete your organizational profile and board needs. You must fill out the profile for you to be visible. Candidates will be able to view all information you provide. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** For your profile to be visible you must click “submit to be visible” on every tab, not “view my profile”.

2. **Complete the “Board Posting”**. Be specific in what you’re looking for. You may post multiple listings.

3. **Search for Candidates.** The system will refer “Recommended Matches” to you based on skills, experience and interest. You may also choose to browse the profiles or refine your search based on skills, experience and program areas of interest.

4. **Reach Out.** The board candidates are aware that nonprofits will be reviewing their credentials just as they will be reviewing different organizations’ profiles. Use the site’s messaging tool to send any candidates of interest a message. Follow up with candidates in a timely fashion. Note that if you receive messages from an interested candidate, you will also receive a copy at the e-mail address listed as the ‘main contact’ in your profile.

5. **Check Our Site Frequently.** Candidates apply daily and are trained monthly. The candidate pool changes and matches occur on a rolling basis. Thus, it is good to check the site often.

6. **Activate/Deactivate Your Listing Accordingly.** If you succeed at finding a board member to fill the posting, please delete the posting on our site. You will also be able to “hide” your profile.

7. **Share Your Stories With Us!** Please let us know when you successfully recruit a new board member. We love success stories! And it helps us keep our numbers and records accurate.
Board Fairs

The “board fair” is BoardServeNYC’s signature event. Much like a job fair, the board fair gives nonprofit organizations a chance to meet our prospective board candidates, talk about your organization and network with fellow nonprofit leaders. BoardServeNYC holds six board fairs annually. You can check our website for exact dates, times and locations. You will also receive invitations to these events via e-mail.

PREPARING FOR A BOARD FAIR

For many candidates, fairs may be their first contact with your organization. It is crucial that you prepare for the event, and consider how you want to present your organization to prospective board members.

1. BoardServeNYC will send you an e-mail about an upcoming board fair about 3-4 weeks prior to the event. It is crucial that you complete the online RSVP form or RSVP on our website, www.boardservenyc.org, for the event as soon as possible after receiving the invitation. Space is generally limited to 50 organizations and is granted on a first-come, first-served basis.

2. At our board fairs, each nonprofit is provided one table. Put some thought into what materials you want to bring and who from the organization will attend. (We generally ask that the executive director and a board member attend.)

3. Be sure to bring:
   ● Pamphlets or brochures of different programs
   ● Business cards of the main contact person
   ● Promotional items if appropriate

4. Think about how you want to verbally present your organization to our candidates. Make sure that whoever represents your organization at the event is well-versed in your “elevator pitch” – a short explanation on what your organization does, and what you’re looking for. Share personal anecdotes on particularly meaningful projects or programs.

5. Brainstorm some interview questions to ask the candidates. Be prepared to answer candidates’ questions (see page 20 for sample questions).

6. Begin searching for prospective candidates using our online tool before the fair. Use the messaging feature to reach out to any that meet your criteria and seem like a possible match. After some correspondence has been exchanged and mutual interest has been established, feel free to invite them to meet you at the board fair.

Please note that we cannot provide access to electrical outlets for computer presentations.
Contact Information

The tools, advice and guidelines included should help you assess your board needs, find and recruit board members, and to make the most of our board recruitment and placement program.

If you come across any questions during your board candidate search, please feel free to get in touch with any one of our team members. The general e-mail below is checked on a daily basis and messages are forwarded to one of our team members. They will get back to you as soon as possible.

The BoardServeNYC Team

General E-mail: BoardServeNYC@uwnyc.org
Website: www.boardservenyc.org
Telephone: (212) 251-2500

Milica Boskovic – Director, BoardServeNYC

Michael Davidson – BoardServeNYC Orientation Facilitator | E-mail: midavidson@aol.com
Telephone: (646) 418-9619

Fred Fields – Associate Vice President, Strengthening NYC Nonprofits

Natalia Jasienowicz – Corporate and Volunteer Liaison

Michael Mahoney – Nonprofit and Volunteer Liaison

Marie Restaino – Events Planning Coordinator

For technical assistance with the website, please contact
Raquel daSilva – Information Technology | E-mail: rdasilva@uwnyc.org