

BOARD MEMBER

ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

This checklist is a general outline to guide the orientation of new board members. Your organization should modify it as you see fit to ensure that all new board members are provided with the information necessary to fulfill their responsibilities.

PROGRAM

- ✓ Tour facilities
- ✓ Presentation by chief executive, key staff, video, or other electronic media.
Materials to share with board members:
 - Organization's web site address
 - Annual calendar
 - Publications and programs list

HISTORY

- ✓ Ensure that new board members understand the history of the organization.
When was it founded? Why? How has it grown and developed over time?
Materials to share with board members:
 - Brief written history or fact sheet on the organization
 - Brochures
 - Newsletters
 - Articles of incorporation
 - Note whether Directors and Officers insurance has been used in the past

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS

- i Know the organization's mission, goals, policies, programs, services, strengths, and needs, as well as the larger ecosystem and its collective purpose.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- ✓ Review strategic plan
Materials to share with board members:
 - Most recent strategic plan
 - Current case statement
 - Recent press clippings

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS

- i Follow trends in the organization's field of interest and keep informed.

FINANCES

- ✓ Presentation by chief executive, chief financial officer or treasurer.
- ✓ Review recent financials and teach board members how to read and understand organizational financial statements.
- ✓ Provide an overview of the budget practices board members will need to know, including what to know to approve organizational budgets, what the Form 990 is, and how to read a financial statement.

Materials to share with board members:

- Annual reports
- Last three Form 990s (this information should also be shared during recruitment, even if documents are public).

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS

- i Faithfully read and understand the organization's financial statements and otherwise help the board fulfill its fiduciary responsibility.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- ✓ Review bylaws
- ✓ Review organizational chart
- ✓ Introduce key staff members
- ✓ Make sure board members not only understand how the organization is structured, but also how the board interacts with specific departments and staff members.

Materials to share with board members:

- Committee job descriptions
- List of staff positions
- Bylaws

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS

- i Avoid prejudiced judgments on the basis of information received from individuals; urge staff members with grievances to follow established policies and procedures through their supervisors. All significant matters coming to you should be called to the attention of the chief executive and/or the board's elected leader as appropriate.

BOARD ROLES & INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ Discussion with board chair or whole board about the role of the full board versus the responsibilities of individual board members

For a brief overview, [download our infographic on board member responsibilities](#).

- ✓ Include fundraising responsibilities of individual board members, role that advocacy plays in mission achievement, and how board members can stand for their missions

Materials to share with board members:

- Board member letter of agreement
- Conflict of Interest policy
- Board roster
- Board member position description
- Document describing board roles v. individual board member roles
- Recent board meeting minutes

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS

- i Prepare for and conscientiously participate in board and committee meetings, including appropriate organizational activities when possible.

Understand and embrace fiduciary responsibilities.

Act as an ambassador for the organization when in public, speak only with one voice outside of board room.

Volunteer outside of board role when appropriate.

Suggest to the appropriate committee possible nominees for board membership who would make significant contributions to the board and organization.

BOARD OPERATIONS

- ✓ Review board manual
- ✓ Meet with board chair
- ✓ Accept committee or task force assignment
- ✓ Attend board meetings

Materials to share with board members:

- Schedule of board meetings
- Schedules of committee meetings
- Full board roster and committee rosters

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS

- i Serve in leadership positions and undertake special assignments willingly and enthusiastically.

Attend all board meetings and come prepared to participate.