

Board Recruitment

An effective board does not happen by accident. It must be carefully built and maintained by the collective efforts of every board member. The executive director should also collaborate on identifying new board members. Two factors should serve as starting points. The first is the need for diversity. This includes diversity of demographics including race, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and the presence of a sensory, mental or physical disability; linkages to various sectors of the community; and the individual skills and interests which members bring. Strong boards have a composition that is representative of the larger world in which they operate.

The second factor is the need for commonality in board members. While acknowledging the need for diversity, the board must ensure that members have a shared belief in the mission and essential values of the organization. Each member must be committed enough to give the time and resources needed.

The objective of the recruitment process is to identify and select people who can operate as a team in performing the board's duties. The first step is to identify those skills and characteristics that are needed on a well-rounded board. Common skills sought for CASA boards include human resources/personnel management; public relations/media experience; nonprofit management skills; accounting/financial management; office administration; fund development experience and volunteer management.

Potential board members should be interviewed personally by members of the board development committee to determine their interest and suitability and to explain the responsibilities and expectations of CASA board members. Screening of potential members should be conducted using the same methods required for staff and volunteer applicants. This includes child protective services and criminal background checks. This sends the clear signal the CASA program is a professional organization that is serious about finding quality board members. The board candidate should be informed in advance about the screening process and should be asked to sign a release authorizing the program to obtain the necessary information.

Once board members have been selected, they should be given a thorough orientation regarding the CASA program and what will be expected of each board member and the board as a collective body. Training for the new board on the roles and responsibilities of boards is imperative at this stage. In addition to the learning opportunity, it also offers a chance for new board members to get to know each other. An existing board member is assigned to "mentor" the new board member for the first 6-12 months.

Considerations in Selecting Board Members

A major goal in selecting board members for our CASA program is the continued development of a professional and credible image in the community, particularly among the many professionals that will come in contact with the program once volunteers are assigned to cases. It is crucial, therefore, to develop a board of individuals who are not only qualified and committed to the CASA program, but who are also free of potential bias or conflict resulting from their employment or other organizations with which they are affiliated. CASA program planning committees often specifically recruit people with these connections, believing that the program will benefit from their other affiliations. A CASA board member must be able to make a firm commitment to carry out the duties of membership. As long as a potential for conflict exists, that person faces the likelihood that at some future point, one or both of their roles may be compromised.

BOARD AND BACKGROUND SELECTION CHARACTERISTICS MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

- ⌚ Finance/Accounting
- ⌚ Law
- ⌚ Personnel
- ⌚ Strategic Planning/Visioning
- ⌚ Community Needs Assessment
- ⌚ Membership Services
- ⌚ Public Relations
- ⌚ Marketing
- ⌚ Computerization
- ⌚ Managing Geographically Separate Offices
- ⌚ Leadership Skills
- ⌚ Leadership Potential
- ⌚ Public Speaking
- ⌚ Community Savvy/Contacts

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION

- ⌚ Seniors
- ⌚ Youth
- ⌚ African-Americans
- ⌚ Asian-Americans
- ⌚ Hispanic/Latino Americans
- ⌚ Native Americans
- ⌚ Religious Community
- ⌚ Business/Labor
- ⌚ City/County Government
- ⌚ Collaborating Organizations
- ⌚ Education
- ⌚ Media
- ⌚ Persons with Disabilities
- ⌚ Community Volunteers
- ⌚ Different Geographic Areas
- ⌚ Funding Community
- ⌚ Old Guard in Community
- ⌚ Newcomers
- ⌚ Military

FUNDRAISING

- Special Events Management
- Clout/Connections
- Foundations
- Corporations
- Small Businesses
- Endowment Funds
- Personal Wealth
- Ability to Secure Donated Goods
- Ability to Ask for Donations
- Ability to Make Personal Contribution
- Self-Generated Revenue
- Planning of Fundraising Effort
- Capital Campaign
- Investments

PROGRAM EXPERTISE

- Volunteer Management
- Youth Involvement
- Business Partnerships
- Technical Assistance
- Education and Training
- Subject Area Knowledge