

## **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. When the executive director is hired, that person 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 newly forming CASA/GAL 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 nominating committee to determine their interest and suitability and to explain the responsibilities and expectations of CASA/GAL board members. Friendship with a committee member should not assure a position on the board. 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/GAL organization 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/GAL organization 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. Bringing in a consultant from United Way, the local community college or another nonprofit to provide the training is usually a good idea.

## **Considerations in Selecting Board Members**

A major goal in selecting board members for the CASA/GAL organization is the 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/GAL organization, but who are also free of potential bias or conflict resulting from their employment or other organizations with which they are affiliated. CASA/GAL organization planning committees often specifically recruit people with these connections, believing that the program will benefit from their other affiliations. While this can be very helpful in the planning stages, once a governing board is established, it is wise to avoid using individuals from organizations where real or perceived conflict of interest may develop. A CASA/GAL organization 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
- Parents / Clients
- City / County Government
- Collaborating Organizations
- Education
- Media
- Persons with Disabilities
- Community Volunteers
- Downtown Area
- Outlying Geographic Areas
- Funding Community
- Old Guard in Community
- Newcomers
- Military

## **FUNDRAISING**

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

## **PROGRAM EXPERTISE**

- Business Partnerships
- Technical Assistance
- New Program Development
- Education and Training
- Subject Area Knowledge