

Board Development: Identifying, Nurturing, Recruiting, Orienting, Educating, and Recognizing Board Members – Examples

Disclaimer: This document is not intended as legal advice. Your organizational goals, purpose, bylaws, and values should drive the creation of this document.

There are many steps to board recruitment if the goal is to recruit and retain a constellation of people with different perspectives and lived experiences who believe in the mission and are interested in board service. The lists below represent years of idea generation from Alaska nonprofit board and staff. The intent of the lists is to inspire new ideas and options for organizations to try.

To get started, we encourage you to review Foraker's Alaska Board Match website (akboardmatch.org), which is an online match tool created to help nonprofits establish more diverse, inclusive and welcoming board rooms. This site also assists in pairing Alaskans ready to serve local nonprofits in need of the right board members at the right time. You may also want to consider writing a board succession plan. Call us if we can help.

IDENTIFY: Look for the **seen** and **unseen** people:

- People with interest in mission—personal or professional (A must for criteria for all)
- Artists and culture bearers
- Business leaders – middle management
- Corporate – management (watch expectations)
- Cultural group participants
- Current donors
- High schools/service clubs
- If virtual, can you expand your geography?
- Local or statewide leadership development groups
- Members of interfaith councils
- New people to the community
- Past board members
- People going off other boards
- People leaving the government or in the government
- People who can make the time commitment
- People who work in agencies with similar interests
- People with interest in mission – personal or professional
- Staff referrals
- University staff/students – current and past
- Volunteer websites: [Bethechange907](http://Bethechange907.org) & volunteermatch.org
- Volunteers current/past
- Volunteers who serve on committees
- Your own social media and newsletter lists (be specific)

NURTURE: Focus on potential board member interests in the organization

- Put them on a board committee
- Provide ongoing communication (written/verbal)
- Send info/newsletters/potential board packet
- Create meaningful volunteer opportunities
- Take them to lunch
- Say “thank you”
- Ask for comments and advice
- Provide opportunities to interact with programs
- Invite to sit in on part of a board meeting
- Create an opportunity to meet with staff
- Invite to organization special event
- Provide opportunities to meet and talk with current board members
- Create a social or leadership event
- Collaborate with other agencies on board training
- Introduce potential board members to Foraker or other training on boards
- Buddy them up
- Share program success
- Listen

RECRUIT

- Interview based on organization values
- Issue personal letter of invitation
- Call from the board chair
- Send job description
- Invite to attend board meeting(s)
- Engage with their individual skills and expertise
- Inform about committees
- Learn about their areas of interest
- Send (good) board packet
- Create a Q&A sheet that covers issues important to board service (board names and terms, financial info, trend charts of fundraising, client growth, annual report)
- Ask for individual’s expectations
- Incorporate fun
- Share and explain media coverage
- Make a list of skills that can be attained through board service
- Invite them to participate in a program or with a problem that will focus on their expertise and explain the need for that expertise
- Offer mentoring
- Send thank you letters to potential recruits
- Encourage the board president to call potential recruits

ORIENTATION

- Provide a formal meeting or lunch with the board chair and ED
- Tour or walk through the facilities or programs
- Introduce them to key stakeholders
- Encourage committee visits
- Structure team building time
- Supply name cards and table tents for everybody at each meeting
- Build social activity and networking time
- Assign mentors for new board members
- Create opportunities to meet staff
- Participate in a volunteer activity that is important to the agency

- Revisit core values and purpose during meetings throughout the year
- Create a board directory with pictures and interesting personal information
- Invite person to participate in the organization's educational programs
- Schedule annual board retreats
- Provide a complete orientation packet and board manual with photos of existing members, mission, values, business process, ethics, conflict of interest, stories, strategic plan, budget, etc.
- Use job descriptions as a living document
- Offer a welcome party – casual, board and senior staff and key stakeholders

ON-GOING EDUCATION FOR BOARD MEMBERS

- Create a board-only access site to house information, board packets, links
- Ritualize learning experience—set time for each meeting—set topic and presenter at a prior meeting
- Share articles on board service and agency issues—paper or email
- Provide informal status report—short email, board and staff reports and reminders
- Create a training booklet
- Provide stories of success
- Set an annual retreat—include good food
- Provide mini-lessons on programs and events
- Provide board training for roles and for special interests
- Invite board members to mission-related events
- Subscribe to online resumes onboard education

RECOGNIZE

- Ensure verbal contact—phone calls
- Ensure past and present board members—let them know how they can contribute
- Ensure meaningful meetings
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Provide opportunities to represent org in the community at other organization events
- Build personal relationships—learn individual interests
- Match opportunities with interests
- Give plaques as appropriate
- Take them to coffee or lunch
- Recognize at Rotary, Chamber, etc.
- Send flowers
- Provide evaluation as a form of recognition
- Provide public acknowledgment of service (plaques in buildings, newspapers, newsletters, nominate for awards)
- Mail cards for birthdays, anniversaries, sympathy
- Send to national training
- Send to a convention
- Provide food
- Invite to functions
- Phone call or email when you find something of interest to them
- Write a story about the board in the newsletter or on the website
- Provide a surprise appreciation dinner at the meeting