

Selection and Vetting of Board Candidates

CONTEXT

The by-laws set forth the formal process by which new board members are elected, and set limits for their term of service. There is the need however, to be able to thoroughly review candidates in a fashion that allows the board to build itself in a well-planned manner that maximizes diversity, enhances fit, and fill specific needs so the board can function effectively and efficiently.

DESCRIPTION

In order for the organization to select from a pool of candidates in a fashion that builds board capacity according to its needs, a process for selecting and vetting potential candidates is necessary. This policy sets forth a process by which potential board candidates apply, are vetted, and invited to serve as a board member.

IMPLEMENTATION

The full board, or a committee empowered by the board with the task of candidate review, referred to here as the Nominating Committee, will develop a process for candidate review that includes the following elements:

1. DEFINING NEED FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS
 - a. Annually the board reviews its need for new board members, and the desired backgrounds for new members. This review should take place within two (2) months of the meeting that sets the annual budget and annual plan of work of the organization, generally Nov-Dec-Jan. This allows board candidates with specific backgrounds and skill sets to be sought out according to actual needs for the coming year, while still allowing ample time to seek out and select appropriate candidates.
2. SOLICITATION OF CANDIDATES
 - a. Based on the experiential background of the desired candidates, the nominating committee determines a best mechanism by which to solicit application for service. This may include, but is not limited to: nomination by existing board members; advertisement to the membership of board member needs; recommendation of partner organizations or individuals; postings to Facebook or other social media.
3. REVIEW OF CANDIDATES
 - a. Set a date for candidate nominations to conclude.
 - i. Each nomination should include candidate name, town/state of residence, contact information such as phone number and email address, place of employment and job title, and a brief description of how the candidate's background fills a need and/or fits the direction of the board and organization over short and long terms.
 - b. Conduct Initial Review of Candidates
 - i. The nominating committee should consider setting out criteria by which to rank candidates so the process is transparent and unbiased.
 - ii. Review is made to determine appropriateness of candidates, eliminating any that do not appropriately or immediately fit stated needs.

- iii. A list of candidates for further consideration is agreed upon.
 - c. Potential candidates are contacted and made aware of the interest in their service on the board. Candidates should be made aware why they are of interest, what they bring to the board, and why that's important to the organization. Candidates should clearly express Yes they are interested or No they are not.
 - d. For those that say Yes, follow up should occur within 2-weeks notifying them of next steps in the process, as outlined below.
4. VETTING OF CANDIDATES
- a. The nominating committee reviews all candidate materials and selects priority candidates for further consideration.
 - b. Priority candidates are requested to attend a "gathering." The type of gathering would be determined by the nominating committee based on circumstances. For instance a board meeting, a formal presentation to a group of potential board candidates, or a more social event with multiple candidates in attendance. Regardless the type of gathering, the intent is for existing board members to meet candidates and vice versa, and to be sure there is a good fit.
 - c. Each candidate that is personally engaged, whether by individual interview or group gathering type event, will be provided a copy of the "Board Member Responsibilities & Expectations" document.
 - d. Nominating committee gets feedback from board members after the gathering event, and develops a slate of recommended candidates to invite for board service. Each nominee would be assigned a term limit, designated in such way that provides balance to overall number of board members as well as background/experiential qualities.
5. INVITATION and ORIENTATION
- a. The full board agrees upon the slate of invited candidates, and assigns the task of invitation accordingly, but generally would come from the chairman/president, who would contact the candidate by phone and make the formal invitation to serve on the board.
 - b. Board member selectees will attend the next scheduled board meeting. Upon acknowledgement of having read, and agreeing to, the board member responsibilities and expectations, their term of service, and having signed a conflict of interest form, the board will approve induction onto the board via official motion and vote.
 - c. Newly appointed board members will be provided with an orientation within the first month of their term. Such orientation should include:
 - i. Provision of access to the board website and a brief introduction to website materials
 - ii. An orientation packet containing materials appropriate to building a better understanding of the organization
 - iii. An oral briefing of current budget status, overview of existing grants, annual committee goals and status, upcoming events, and any other information pertinent to increased understanding of the current functioning of the organization, its staff and its board.
6. APPRENTICESHIP
- a. Each new board member will be assigned to an existing board member, who act as their mentor for the first 6 months of service. The mentor will check in with the new board member on a monthly basis to resolve any conflict or confusion, and to encourage and assist new board members in engaging actively and effectively on the board and in committees.
