



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

Board Development

Participant's Guide

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Total Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Welcome & Introductions

In this section, we'll address Board Development, a topic that is key to the long term board effectiveness and strategic leadership of your Club.

Topic Objectives

By the end of this topic, you will be able to:

- Describe who has responsibility for board development
- Assess how your board can use the board building cycle
- Explain the value of incorporating diversity on boards

Lesson Titles

Within this topic we will cover the following lessons:

- Responsibility for Board Building
- Board Building Cycle

LESSON 1: RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOARD BUILDING

TOTAL TIME: 15 MINUTES

Practices of Exceptional Boards

Effective board development is very important. In its publication *The Source: The Twelve Principles that Power Exceptional Boards*, BoardSource indicates that how a board does its work (not just what it does) is an important aspect of creating an exceptional board. Two principles in *The Source* speak to the importance of effective board development:

- Revitalization - The principle asserts that “exceptional boards energize themselves through planned turnover, thoughtful recruitment, and inclusiveness.”
and
- Continuous Learning - The principle asserts that “Exceptional boards embrace the qualities of a continuous learning organization, evaluating their own performance and assessing the value they add to the organization.”

Both will be important themes as we discuss board development.

In the 2008 survey that BGCA and BoardSource conducted, one quote speaks to the impact of effective board development. One CPO said: “Our Club is in the midst of a focused, intensive board development process. As a team we’ve identified our challenges and are working to identify new board members, draft our board recruitment policy, adopt board commitment standards etc...We’re going from good to great...”

Responsibility for Board Development

Board development is an ongoing process that includes making sure that the right people are seated around the board table as well as making effective use of the time and other resources that board members bring to their board work.

Clearly the CVO and the CPO carry major responsibility for structuring and leading the board, but every member must play a part by understanding and carrying out their responsibilities as individuals and as a group.

However, the governance committee, which is sometimes called the board development committee, should carry major responsibility for thinking about the board's needs and its development. It might even be said that the governance committee acts as the conscience of the board in that it considers whether the board is effectively living up to its responsibilities.

Governance Committee Responsibilities

In the past many boards had a nominating committee. The governance committee's responsibilities are broader than those of a traditional nominating committee and because of this, its work is not confined to a couple of months before annual elections. If your board prefers to call it by another name, such as "board development committee" – that is just fine – but the charge of the committee should go beyond just nominations.

As with all committees, the duties should be spelled out in a clear committee charter. Briefly, here you have the major components of the governance committee's responsibilities:

Help create board roles and responsibilities

1. Review and update board roles and responsibilities – The committee should lead the board in regularly reviewing and updating the board's description of its roles and areas of responsibility and what is expected of individual board members.

Pay attention to board composition

2. Ensure effective board composition – It should lead in assessing current and anticipated needs related to board composition and determining the knowledge, attributes, skills, abilities, influence, and access to resources the board will need to carry out its strategic leadership role.

Encourage board development

It should identify potential board member candidates and explore their interest and availability for board service. It should nominate the most promising candidates. In cooperation with the CVO, the committee should also contact board members eligible for re-election to assess their interest in continuing board membership as well as their potential contribution to the board and the Club during the next term.

3. Encourage continuous board development – The committee should provide potential candidates with information needed prior to election to the board, design and oversee a process of board orientation, identify, and advocate for ongoing board education and skill development to support effective and productive serve, etc.

Assess board effectiveness

4. Initiate assessment of board effectiveness – The committee should encourage and take a lead in periodic board assessments and in individual board member assessments.

Prepare board leadership

5. Prepare for board leadership succession – Work with the CVO and the CPO to identify candidates for board leadership positions.

Board Member Job Description

Before we delve deeper into board development, I must reinforce the importance of making sure that the board has approved clear board and board member job descriptions. Without such written descriptions misperceptions may arise concerning what is needed and expected from all members of the board.

The board job description must outline the board's governance roles and responsibilities as the organization's legal trustee. The board member job description needs minimally to include knowing and supporting the mission, expectations regarding board meeting attendance, personal giving and participation in resource development, committee participation, participating in strategic planning, and avoiding conflicts of interest among the other areas outlined on the handout, Sample Boys & Girls Clubs Governing Board Member Job Description.

Ultimately the job description helps guide board development – and will help you and your board identify who you might approach to serve on the board. Being handed a job description will also help a potential recruit to determine whether this is something he or she is ready and willing to take on.

Periodic reviews and possible revisions of the job description also serve as a reminder for current board members of their responsibilities.

Sample Boys & Girls Clubs Governing Board Member Job Description

It is recommended that boards develop a board member job description and clearly communicate it to all board members, including prospective members. A sample board member job description, which translates general board duties into individual board member expectations, is included below.

Job Title: Board Member

Accountability: Board of Directors

General Function: To participate as a member of the board of directors.

Individual Board Member Duties

- Know and effectively articulate the mission, vision, core values, goals, policies, and program areas of the Club.
- Shape and uphold the mission and ensure the congruence between decisions and core values.
- Participate in the strategic planning process and in the development of a plan for the board's work to support the strategic plan.
- Identify connections to individuals, corporate leaders, foundations, etc. who might provide financial or other support for the Club.
- Complete the orientation session for new board members.
- Identify friends and associates who might be prospective board members.
- Make a personally meaningful financial contribution annually to the Club.
- Participate in Club resource development activities in a variety of ways (e.g., identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and thanking donors).
- Participate in board leadership and development activities conducted or sponsored by the local organization, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and community.
- Serve as a Club ambassador in the community.
- Participate in hiring and conducting the annual evaluation of the Club's CPO.
- Support and advise the CPO as appropriate.
- Participate actively in assessing Club performance.
- Participate in periodic board self-assessment.
- Accept responsibility for Club financial accountability (e.g., approve and oversee the budget, hire the auditor with the full board, meet with the auditors, etc.).
- Participate in establishing and enforcing Club policies.
- Avoid conflicts of interest but disclose them when potential conflicts arise.
- Chair and/or participate in at least one board committee.
- Attend board meetings regularly and attend applicable committee meetings on a regular basis. Also, attend all Club events.
- Review materials in advance of meetings. Participate in meetings actively.
- Commit time, thought, and effort to the Club.
- Maintain confidentiality of all board meetings.
- Perform all other duties that may be necessary to carry out the mission and purpose of the organization.

Key Board Member Competencies and Characteristics

- Has achieved recognition and status within the community.
- Is knowledgeable about the social concerns of the community.
- Has the resources (personal and/or corporate) to apply to the needs of the Boys & Girls Club.
- Is committed to youth and the Club's mission.
- Has the ability to listen, analyze, and think strategically.
- Has the ability to work well with others and demonstrates tolerance of differing points of view.
- Is willing to prepare for and regularly attend board meetings and relevant committee meetings.
- Exhibits honesty and sensitivity.

LESSON 2: THE BOARD BUILDING CYCLE

TOTAL TIME: 75 MINUTES

Board Building Cycle

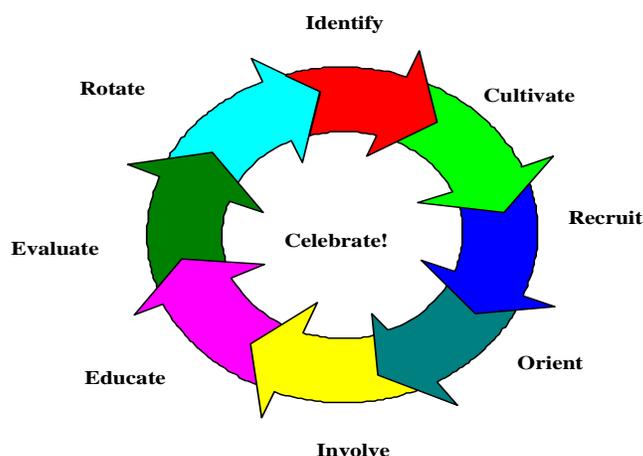
It is important to understand that board building is an ongoing, year-round activity. BoardSource has broken down the process into bite size bits so you can get your hands around this seemingly overwhelming task. This way, it's easier to know what comes next and to consider what's working (and what's not).

- Identify**
 - Thinking ahead to the challenges facing the board and the perspectives and other resources needed for effective governance, start by considering “what do we need?” Then check “what do we have?” This will identify what will need to be added.
- Cultivate**
 - Seek and ye shall find. You have to find and get to know potential board members and help them to know your organization.
- Recruit**
 - Talk about needs of the board and the organization, board roles and responsibilities. Explore interests and abilities. While “selling” board service, don't forget to listen for signs indicating whether the person will bring what the board needs and whether the person is ready for board service.
- Orient**
 - To new board members to the organization and to the board.
- Involve**
 - Through mentoring, committees/task force participation, and by encouraging members to participate actively in board discussions.
- Educate**
 - Regularly provide information about issues that have an impact on the organization and on the board. Use retreats for more in-depth exploration of issues. Seek knowledge from a variety of sources.

Basics of Board Governance: Board Development

- Evaluate** • Set goals for the board. As part of a continuous improvement process, assess the whole board and its members.
- Rotate** • Develop leadership. Plan for future succession. Consider term limits as a mechanism for rotation. Remember, nobody owns their board seat.
- Celebrate** • To help build morale and board cohesions, celebrate big victories and little ones, of the organization, the board, and its individual board members.

The Board Building Cycle



Step 1: Identify board needs (skills, knowledge, perspective, connections, etc., needed to implement the strategic plan). What do we have? What is missing? Identify sources of board members with the needed characteristics.

Step 2: Cultivate potential board members. Get them interested in your Club and keep them informed of your progress.

Step 3: Recruit prospects. Describe why a prospective member is wanted and needed. Describe expectations and responsibilities of board members, and don't minimize requirements. Invite questions, and elicit interest and preparedness to serve.

Step 4: Orient new board members to the Club (program, history, bylaws, pressing issues, finances, facilities and organization chart) and to the board (recent minutes, committees, board member responsibilities, lists of board members and key staff members).

Step 5: Involve all board members. Discover their interests and availability. Involve them in committees or task forces. Assign them a board "buddy." Solicit feedback. Hold everyone accountable. Express appreciation for work well done.

Step 6: Educate the board. Provide information concerning your mission area. Promote exploration of issues facing the Club. Don't hide difficulties.

Step 7: Evaluate the board and individual board members. Engage the board in assessing its own performance. Identify ways in which to improve. Encourage individual self-assessment.

Step 8: Rotate board members. Consider establishing and using term limits. Do not automatically re-elect for an additional term; consider both the board's needs and the board member's performance. Explore advisability of resigning with members who are not active. Develop new leadership.

Step 9: Celebrate! Recognize victories and progress, even small ones. Appreciate individual contributions to the board, the Club, and the community. Make room for humor and a good laugh.

IDENTIFY Board Needs

Step 1

Another way of looking at this is: Steps 1-4 (Identify – Orient) focus on replenishing the board. Steps 5-9 (Educate – Celebrate) focus on strengthening the board. We'll now proceed to discuss all steps in the board building cycle in greater detail.

Each board must decide for itself what characteristics and skills best suit its needs, but some general rules of thumb can guide that process.

Start by assessing the strategic needs of the board and consider the skills, knowledge, perspective, attributes, connections, and other characteristics required on the board to advance the Club's mission. The strategic plan will help guide the board in this work.

Keep in mind the ongoing need for leadership skills, community involvement, political connections, resource development abilities, shared values, and a commitment to the Club's mission. It is ideal to attract members that will make the biggest difference (e.g., community or business leader, etc.). One handy thing to keep in mind is that boards need both affluence and influence. What potential board members can be of most assistance to the Club? If you can't get the person with the most affluence and influence, at BGCA, we talk about "one degree of separation" – that is, getting the person who is one degree separated from the individual who will make the biggest difference.

Many boards are also increasingly focusing on the personal style or attributes of board members; some attributes your board may wish to consider include that of consensus builder, strategist, visionary, or good communicator.

A board matrix can assist the governance committee in determining who is needed. No matrix or tool can anticipate all of the needs of a Club board – but the committee can use this sample and develop a worksheet that suits its own needs.

Board Matrix Expertise / Skills / Personal Data

This worksheet can be adapted by the Club's board to assess its current board composition and plan for the future. The governance committee can develop an appropriate grid for the Club and then present its findings to the full board.

In considering board building, a Club is legally obligated to follow its bylaws, which may include specific criteria on board size, structure, and composition. Or the bylaws may need to be updated to incorporate and acknowledge any changes in the environment and community that have made modifications to the board structure necessary or desirable.

Remember, a Club will look for different skills and strengths from its board members depending on its stage of development and other circumstances.

	<i>Current Members</i>						<i>Prospective Members</i>					
	A	B	C	D	E	F	A	B	C	D	E	F
Age												
18 or under												
19 – 34												
35 – 50												
51 – 65												
Over 65												
Gender												
Female												
Male												
Socioeconomics/Race/Ethnicity/Disability												
Low income												
African American/Black												
Asian/Pacific Islander												
Caucasian												
Hispanic/Latino												
Native American/Indian												
Disability												
Other												
Resources												
Money to give/affluence												
Access to money												
Access to other resources												
Availability for active participation												
Other												

Basics of Board Governance: Board Development

Current Members

Prospective Members

	A	B	C	D	E	F	A	B	C	D	E	F
Community Connections												
Religious organizations												
Corporate												
Education												
Media												
Political												
Philanthropy												
Small business												
Social services												
Other												
Qualities												
Leadership skills												
Willingness to work												
Personal connection with Club mission												
Other												
Personal Style												
Consensus builder												
Good communicator												
Influencer												
Strategist												
Visionary												
Other												
Areas of Expertise												
Administration / management												
Entrepreneurship												
Financial management												
Accounting												
Banking and trusts												
Investments												
Fundraising												
Government												
International affairs												
Law												
Marketing / public relations												
Human resources												
Strategic planning												
Real estate												
Special program focus												
Technology												
Other												
Number of years (or terms) on the board												

IDENTIFY: Recruitment Plan

A governance committee should think ahead several years, taking into account who might leave the board during the next couple of years, who might be encouraged to retire, and what the most urgently needed characteristics are going to be. These factors should serve as the basis for a multiyear recruitment plan which needs annual updating based on emerging needs.

IDENTIFY: Diversity is a Basic

In identifying board members, it is also important to consider the importance and value of diversity on the board. Diversity includes, but is not limited to demographic diversity such as :

- Gender and Age
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Race/ethnicity
- Language
- Socio-economic status
- Legal status
- Disability
- Geographic base

Diversity can also be represented by differences in intellectual, financial, social and political capital in addition to such personal characteristics as analytical ability, consensus building, communication skills, etc. Diverse boards offer a number of significant benefits:

- They are in a better position to remain relevant, effective, and aware both of the needs of the community and of its resources.
- They are more likely to prevent the “group think” than are homogeneous boards.
- Diverse organizations are more likely to attract diverse donors.
- Grantmakers are increasingly focused on demographic and economic diversity.

When building a demographically diverse board, be aware that nobody wants to feel that they were invited in order to fill a quota. To avoid tokenism, ensure that all members are treated the same way, and that nobody is expected to represent an entire subsection of the population.

A survey across the Movement conducted by BGCA and BoardSource in 2008 showed that Club boards tend to have greater ethnic diversity than those found in BoardSource's Nonprofit Governance Index 2007 (a survey of nonprofit boards nationwide). However, fewer women serve on Club boards than on boards at other nonprofit organizations across the country.

For all boards, it will be increasingly important to engage members of generations X (generally defined as those born between 1965 and 1980) and Y (generally defined as those born after 1980 and also sometimes called Millennials or Gen@). There is a particular advantage to having board members from various generations as different generations come with different points of view on such issues as technology and other strategic issues.

For Club boards, younger people (both young adults & professionals, and parents of children and teens) tend to be more in touch with issues that are important to children and teens.

Step 2: CULTIVATE Prospects

Step 2 is cultivation. Cultivation is an ongoing process that requires a multiyear approach. In order to locate board candidates with the characteristics described in the recruitment plan or the board matrix, identify where such people may be found. While all board members and the CPO should be asked to identify potential board members, it will often be wise (or even necessary) to throw the net more widely. Let major donors, funders, and other supporters know what characteristics the board is looking for. Ask professionals in related fields as well as other colleagues and board members of other nonprofit groups for the names of individuals that might be interested.

Sources of potential board members

Sources of potential board members might include:

- Business leaders
- Professional associations
- Key community leaders and stakeholders
- Executive Leadership Programs [Many cities have Leadership Programs (e.g. Leadership Atlanta)]
- Advisory Council members [Note: Many Clubs use their Advisory Councils as a ‘training’ ground or ‘screening’ ground for future governing/corporate board members]
- Members of other boards
- Organizations representing various racial and ethnic groups

Keep in mind the importance of affluence and influence, leadership, as well as the “one degree of separation” principle.

Step 2: CULTIVATE Prospects (cont’d)

Cultivation means developing a pool of people for potential board membership. Cultivating people in areas that are important to the Club increases the likelihood that someone with the right qualifications will be waiting in the wings when the need arises. Cultivating board members doesn’t always lead to board membership – however, these individuals still may become donors or supporters in other ways.

As part of the cultivation process, it’s essential to cultivate relationships with those prospects that seem promising. This might include:

- Informing potential candidates about organization’s work and getting them interested in being involved as a volunteer
- Maintaining relationships through frequent communication and invitations to events

Sample Prospective Board Member Information Sheet

Name of prospective board member: _____
Title: _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Telephone: Day _____ Evening _____ Cell _____
Email: _____
Source of referral/information: _____

Special skills

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising/Resource Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing/Public Relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel/Human Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finances | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working with youth | <input type="checkbox"/> Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Professional background

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> For-profit business | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Connection with the Club? _____

Other affiliations: _____

Other board service: _____

Known levels of giving: _____

Other pertinent information: _____

Introducing Your Club to a Potential Board Candidate

All board members should feel free to share information about the organization's work, invite people to events, and so on. However, it's up to the governance committee to manage the cultivation process and it is important that all board members understand what is and is not appropriate. For example, board members shouldn't ask potential candidates if they're interested in serving on the board; the governance committee is responsible for delegating that task.

In order to stay organized, boards can keep a file of updated prospective board member information sheets.

When introducing your Club to a potential candidate:

- Prepare a brief overview of what your Club does and what positive difference it creates
- Provide a tour of the Club
- Introduce the idea of possible board service
- Be prepared to offer opportunities for getting to know more about the Club

When meeting people who might be potential candidates but who have little or no prior knowledge of the Club or its mission, be prepared with an "elevator speech." Using around 150 words, each board member should be able to provide a brief description of the Club, its mission, and the its current strategic direction.

No title on slide (contains a series of quotes)

Some of you may have found that inserting a quick mention about your own feelings about serving your Club as a board member was helpful.

The quotes on the screen are taken from the 2008 survey that BGCA conducted with BoardSource regarding governance practices in the Movement. These types of quotes would be appropriate for an elevator pitch. (All are quotes are from CVOs.)

Step 3: RECRUIT

Next comes recruitment. It is a three-step process:

- Explore the prospect's interest in board service
- Elicit possible commitment to serve at this time
- Nominate and elect

The first step in recruitment is to explore the prospect's interest. The governance committee or other board members who are appropriately matched to the prospective board member should meet with the candidate. This is the Dating Game, but it's not "speed dating." Before the meeting, review all available information about the candidate.

It is important to candidly describe the expectations and responsibilities that come with board service. It's essential not to minimize expectations. It can be helpful to share the board member job description and other important information about the organization, such as

Annual Reports

- Brochures
- Brief history or fact sheet on the Club and the Movement
- Board rosters
- Schedule of Board Meetings
- Roles and Responsibilities of the Board and of individual board members
- Schedules of committee members

Recent Press Clippings

Invite questions and listen for comments about the person's interests, other board experience, interest in serving on the board, possible reservations, etc. Do not make it sound as if their election to the board is assured. At this point you are simply exploring interest in serving on the board some time over the next couple of years. In the interim, it is possible to engage the prospect in the work of the organization before serving on the board (e.g., serving in an advisory capacity on committees or task forces). In engaging them as volunteers before joining the board, make sure they are aware of their roles and fully understand the responsibilities that they are talking on.

After meeting with a prospective board member, it is important to report back to the governance committee – sharing what you learned, including whether there are any red flags, and a general rating of the candidate. Red Flags might include, for example, prospective candidates who only seem interested in a personal agenda or padding their resume. Be aware that if the candidate did not ask questions during the meeting, they may not be a good board member as an important board member role is to ask questions.

You may also find helpful information in the revised BGCA Board Member Handbook.

Board Candidate Rating Form

Name of Candidate: _____

Name of Rater: _____

Interviewed by: _____

Date of interview: _____

On a scale of 1 – 5 (1= not acceptable, 5=great), please rate the candidate on each item listed below. Please circle relevant attributes where more than one is listed.

		Rating
1.	Proven interest in our mission	
2.	Knowledge and understanding of our work	
3.	Professional knowledge and skills needed by the board (technology, financial, etc.)	
4.	Connections in the community	
5.	Resource development experience and willingness to participate in resource development	
6.	Ability to make a financial contribution	
7.	Experience in working with people from other ethnic backgrounds	
8.	Ability to listen well	
9.	Ability to express ideas and opinions clearly	
10.	Ability to participate effectively in a conversation (neither monopolizing nor hanging back)	
11.	Sense of humor, positive presence	
12.	Ability to ask appropriate questions	
13.	Ability to participate on a regular basis in the board's work	
	TOTAL	

Other strong points:

Red flags:

Step 3: RECRUIT (cont'd)

The next steps in the recruitment process is to elicit possible commitment to serve. Before formally nominating the prospect, set up second interviews with the most promising candidates. It may be useful for the CVO, chair of the governance committee, and CPO to participate in this interview. Make candidates aware of why they are being invited (e.g., consensus builder, corporate contacts, strategic thinker, etc.), and discuss expectations again (including those associated with financial contributions and resource development). Be sure that it is clear why candidates would want to serve on the board and what they think they can contribute to the work of the board. Finally, ask whether they are prepared to have their name placed in nomination. Small Clubs may want to have only one meeting and combine the purposes of what we're calling the 1st and 2nd interview here.

As a final step, conduct the nomination and election process. Once the governance committee has identified a group of viable and interested candidates, it is time to determine the final slate of nominees to be presented to the board. The CPO will usually participate in the deliberations and have a voice, but not necessarily a determining voice, in the selection of nominees. Some organizations seek to have more than one candidate for each open position; in others, the board prefers to be presented with just one nominee per position. If the bylaws stipulate one way or the other, the bylaws must be followed.

Finally, the governance committee presents the slate of candidates to the board. In order to prepare the board for voting, distribute information about the names on the slate to the board prior to election. It might be appropriate to mark this as confidential in order to avoid awkwardness should a candidate not be elected.

Inform candidates that their names have been placed in nomination; let them know when the election will take place and when they will be notified of the outcome.

Also let them know when orientation for new board members will take place so that they may be prepared in case they are elected.

It is not appropriate to have nominees present in the board room during the election since board members should feel free to raise questions about a nominee or to share recent information that might be relevant. To avoid possible awkwardness, any discussion of nominees should be conducted in executive session prior to the formal election which should be held in open meeting, whether by voice vote or by written ballot, and the results recorded in the minutes.

For boards with current board members up for re-election, having those members in the board room during the vote might introduce some confusion and tension. It might be wise for boards to develop a written policy for these circumstances or to request candidates to leave the room during election. As soon as the board has elected its new members, the CVO should contact the newly-elected to welcome them. This may be done by phone, but to emphasize the importance of the role they are accepting, the candidates should be informed in writing about their election to the board and asked to indicate their acceptance in writing.

Step 4: ORIENT

Orientation actually begins during the recruitment process. The formal orientation process builds on this.

Conduct a new board member orientation as soon as possible after the election. An orientation session can be tailored to fit varying amounts of time, usually from an hour or two to half a day.

Some boards prefer to break the orientation into two or more sessions each focusing on an important aspect of what new members need to know.

Subjects to be covered include the roles and responsibilities of the board and its members, the Club's mission and programs, its strategic plan, finances, resource development initiatives, and the structure of the board and staff.

The orientation should touch on financial statements and the most recent audit, explain liability and insurance coverage, and reiterate the time commitment involved. Make the orientation session interactive.

Provide new board members with a board member handbook prior to the board orientation session. Consider assigning board mentors to each of the new members to help answer questions and provide a friendly transition onto the board. New board members will benefit from having a "go to" person when questions and concerns arise regarding the board. Provide a written description of what mentor and mentee should be able to expect from each other.

Take time to communicate information about the culture of the board, such as seating arrangements, how members dress for meetings, and food and beverage service, if any.

Several months into the term of a new board member, it is a good idea to schedule a follow-up session to respond to questions, now that they have become more familiar with the organization. Board members might wonder about the history of leadership changes or the organization's relationship to other institutions. This is also a good opportunity to ask new members for feedback on the board's operation. New members often have valuable feedback that may contribute to board improvement.

Orientation Tips and Tools

Tips

- Be honest
- Don't overwhelm
- Include full board or at least some other board members
- Make orientation interactive
- Assign a mentor

Tools

- Orientation meeting
- Board handbook
- Site visit/facilities tour

Suggested Content for Board of Directors Handbook

A. The board

1. Board member listing
2. Board member bios
3. Board member terms
4. Board statement of responsibilities
5. Board member responsibilities
6. Committee and task force job descriptions

B. Historical references for the Club

1. Brief written history and/or fact sheet
2. Articles of incorporation
3. IRS determination letter
4. Listing of past board members
5. History of the Movement

C. Bylaws

D. Strategic framework

1. Mission and vision statement
2. Strategic framework or plan
3. Current annual operating plan

E. Minutes from recent board meetings

F. Finances

1. Prior year annual report
2. Prior year audit report
3. Chart of financial growth (sales, membership, programs, etc.)
4. Current annual budget
5. IRS Form 990
6. Banking resolutions
7. Investment policy

G. Policies pertaining to the board

1. Policy on potential conflicts of interest
2. Policy on confidentiality
3. Insurance policy coverage
4. Legal liability coverage
5. Travel/meeting expense reimbursement
6. Accreditation documents (if applicable)
7. Others

H. Staff

1. Staff listing
2. Organization/team chart

I. Resource development

1. Case statement
2. Current funding list
3. Sample grant proposal
4. Sponsorship policy
5. Gift acceptance policy
6. Resource development plan
7. Stewardship plan

J. Club information

1. Annual calendar
2. Programs list
3. Current brochure(s)
4. Web site information

K. Procedures to update board handbook

Board Orientation Chart

Information	Issues	Presentation Options
ABOUT THE CLUB		
Program	Offer new board members a feel for the work of the Club — what it does, whom it serves, what difference it makes — to get them emotionally and intellectually connected and motivated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour of facilities • Observation of/participation in program activities • Presentation by program participant • Video, slides, film presentation • Verbal presentations • Written materials
Finances	Help new board members become informed about where money comes from, how it is spent, and the state of the Club's financial health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation by CPO, chief financial officer, or treasurer • Background materials (most recent audit, budget, financials), graphically presented if possible
History	Provide sufficient knowledge about the past so that the present makes sense. Also, help new board members see their own participation as part of the Club's ongoing story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories told by "old timers" • Pictures • Written materials • Training materials from BGCA as appropriate
Strategic Direction	Present a framework for new board members to participate effectively. Clarify the mission, vision, organizational values, and goals that inform Club actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation/discussion led by the CPO or CVO • Copy of strategic plan (or other documents, especially mission statement, if no plan is available)
Organizational Structure	Help new board members understand who does what and what the lines of accountability are.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the bylaws, IRS Determination Letter • Organizational chart • Introductions to key staff members
ABOUT THE BOARD		
Board Roles	Assure that new board members understand the roles of the board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation/discussion, preferably with the whole board involved • Written materials
Board Member Responsibilities	Assure that new board members understand their own responsibilities as board members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation/discussion • Signed agreement (job description), including conflict-of-interest and ethical statements
Board Operations	Help new board members understand how the board operates so that they may participate effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board manual • Board mentors • Committee lists, with committee charges and member lists • Meeting schedule
Board Members	Facilitate new board member integration with the other members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of board members • Board member biographical data • Time set aside for social interaction

Board Member Orientation Checklist

The governance committee should develop a checklist, similar to the following, to be used by new board members to indicate what they are responsible for learning during their first three months on the board and when they have completed the learning.

Information	Activities	When Completed
Program	Tour of facilities Attend presentation by CPO, key staff Review written materials	_____ _____ _____
Finances	Presentation by CPO, chief financial officer or treasurer Review of recent financials Learn how to read and understand financial statement	_____ _____ _____
History	Read written materials or participate in training as appropriate	_____
Strategic Direction	Review of strategic plan	_____
Organizational Structure	Review of bylaws Review of organizational chart Introduction to key staff members	_____ _____ _____
Board Roles	Review of written materials Discussion with CVO or whole board	_____ _____
Board Member Responsibilities	Signed letter of agreement Signed conflict-of-interest policy	_____ _____
Board Operations	Review of board manual Meeting with CVO Accept committee or task force assignment Attend board meetings	_____ _____ _____ _____

Step 5: INVOLVE

The next steps of the Board Building Cycle is involvement of members. To keep members involved:

Keep Meetings Focused on Strategic Issues

- To keep board members engaged, board meetings need to involve their participation. Meetings should be structured in such a way that board members feel that their time is well spent, which means focusing on strategic issues rather than on “administrivia” and listening to reports. Time must be set aside for questions and discussion and making sure that a few people do not dominate in board interactions. Keeping board members engaged also means having a productive committee and task force structure so that everyone’s time, talent, and interests can be effectively used.

Provide opportunities for active participation at board meetings

- Ensure that meetings are focused on strategic issues and that members have an opportunity to engage in strategic level discussions is an important way to involve members. Make use of small group discussion in preparation for full board discussion.

Solicit Feedback

- New board members should be encouraged to ask questions, offer opinions, and provide feedback. Do they think the orientation covered everything they needed to know? Do they feel as though their skills are being used to the best advantage? Do they have ample opportunity to discuss important issues? What have they found most rewarding about their board experience so far?

Hold Board Retreat

- Occasional retreats, if they are carefully planned and scheduled to include as many board members as possible, can bring everyone together to focus on particular topics that never seem to get on the agendas of regular board meetings — strategic planning, leadership training, self-assessments, and team-building.

Step 5: INVOLVE (cont'd)

- Another important reason for having a board retreat is to give board members the chance to get to know each other better on a personal level. Retreats allow the board to interact more informally than time allows at traditional meetings creating opportunities to explore similarities and differences between members.

Getting new board members actively involved early on can build on the momentum of the orientation and tap into their initial enthusiasm. Board members — new and long-standing members — need to be engaged with important work on the board in order to have a stake in it. That work can take any number of forms. Committees and task forces can be excellent vehicles for engaging board members in the work of the board. Giving board members a specific job to do — whether on a standing committee that meets throughout the year or on a task force with a short-term project — can mean the difference between their feeling connected to a worthwhile endeavor and being a detached spectator who may gradually withdraw.

Not all board members have to contribute in the same way. Specific board member expertise may also be called on by the CPO outside of board meetings.

Barriers to Keeping Board Members Involved

- The board is too large. Some members do not feel needed.
- The board is too small. Members feel overwhelmed or suffer from insufficient stimulation or limited perspectives.
- The executive committee is too active. If it meets too often, the rest of the board may feel like a rubber stamp or disengaged.
- Members received insufficient or ineffective orientation.
- Agendas are weak. They lack substance, are too long or too routine. Members fail to see the relevance of board meeting topics to Club performance.
- Members do not feel well used or important. They decide that they have better things to do.
- There is little or no opportunity for discussion. Members feel bored or frustrated.
- A few members monopolize discussions, take up disproportional amounts of air-time, and carry disproportional weight in decisions.
- The board lacks social glue. Members have little in common except board service and do not have opportunities to get to know each other.
- Status differences get in the way of team development.
- Members lack passion for the mission.
- Board participation has become routine after many years of service.

Step 6: EDUCATE

Don't make assumptions about what board members are interested in based on their profession. A CPA may not want to be the Treasurer but may rather serve on the governance committee. Discover interests and capabilities to match individual with the right task force or committee.

Step 6 is educate. It is important to create regular opportunities for board education. Some form of education should be on the agenda of nearly every board meeting. It might be a presentation by an outside consultant or staff expert on developments in the organization's mission area. Speakers might come from a similar organization in another part of town. Someone from a Club across the country might talk about trends. A funder might make a presentation about how to measure and improve outcomes. A government official could provide an update on some pending legislative issue. Most boards can benefit from special workshops on resource development or financial issues.

Solicit suggestions from the board on topics they need to know more about.

Also, seek out educational opportunities, i.e. workshops, field trips, outside presenters.

Other topics for ongoing education might include:

- Information concerning your mission, programs, community
 - Trends in the nonprofit sector and board governance
 - Major issues facing the Club
 - How to build a stronger board

Club boards should also be encouraged to participate in meetings of regional councils and in national BGCA events.

Step 6: EDUCATE (cont'd)

Education can leverage technology. For example:

- Teleconferencing can bring together groups of board members for discussions between meetings, but it is not always a good idea to use this medium for conducting larger meetings. Distance learning programs via the Internet or satellite technologies can be used for board orientations and leadership training, however the cost can sometimes be prohibitive.
- E-mail, particularly for boards that are spread out over long distances, may be the most cost-effective way of staying in touch between meetings. Even for the technologically uninitiated, learning how to use e-mail is easy and can greatly speedup a board's ability to communicate and provide quick feedback on issues. However, important or lengthy board discussions should not be relegated to e-mail communication but rather reserved for face-to-face meetings. The board should also establish a policy on what kinds of topics and decisions the board should address online.
- Listservs and chat technology are online vehicles for engaging in issue-oriented conversations and can benefit an organization's membership as well assist board. While this technology may be slower in achieving responses, it can also allow for more information sharing.
- Websites can engage board members and help keep them apprised of an organization's programmatic accomplishments. In addition, some organizations designate special password-protected areas of their websites for specific communication to board members, making information available to the board when it is needed. This site may include links and information on the community or industry, new developments or regulations affecting the nonprofit sector, or internal documents for the board's review.

Step 7: EVALUATE

Changes happen so quickly that if boards don't keep learning, they won't be able to make good decisions. But while new technologies can provide opportunities for learning and for the exchange of ideas and information, it can never replace relationships that the board develops in face-to-face interactions.

Wise boards take time for regular checkups to discover ways to strengthen their performance.

Conduct a full scale board assessment every two to three years and consider administering self-assessments to individual board members seeking re-election. To help promote the board's continuous development, take time to reflect on the board's performance and that of individual members.

We deal more with the issue of board and individual board member assessment in other topics, so I will not spend much time on it here.

Probably the simplest form of evaluation takes place at the end of regular board meetings. Some boards ask members to jot down points of praise and criticism at the end of each meeting; others do so less frequently. Board members may make comments on an index card or they may be given a questionnaire to fill out. Some might simply express their opinions verbally. Generally, feedback relates to whether the meetings are run efficiently and use the board member's time wisely. Are the meetings well organized? Are members sent background material in advance? Do the meetings begin and end promptly? Is everyone's voice heard, or do a few members dominate the discussions? Are the issues discussed and debated, or does the CVO make all the decisions and simply deliver a report?

Board Meeting Evaluation

Here is a brief example of an easily administered meeting evaluation tool. The advantage of using a questionnaire is that responses can be compiled and reported as an appendix to the minutes and referred to in terms of where the board needs to improve its meetings.

Sample Board Meeting Evaluation

To assist the board in making effective and efficient use of board meeting time, please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and leave it on the table before you depart.

		OK	Needs Improvement	Suggestions for Improvement
1.	The agenda focused on issues of long-term importance and was supported by the necessary documents.			
2.	The meeting materials were circulated in sufficient time prior to the meeting.			
3.	All board members were prepared to discuss materials sent in advance.			
4.	Reports were clear and contained needed information.			
5.	The board avoided getting into administrative/management details.			
6.	A diversity of opinions were expressed and issues were dealt with in a respectful manner.			
7.	The CVO guided the meeting effectively.			
8.	Members participated responsibly.			
9.	Next steps were identified and responsibility assigned.			
10.	A substantial majority of board members were present.			
11.	The meeting began and ended on time.			
12.	The meeting room was conducive to work.			
13.	I am glad I attended the meeting. It was a worthwhile use of my time.			

Step 8: ROTATE Board Members

To keep board members from burning out during their tenure on the board, allow ample opportunity for change. For example, offer them the chance to serve on different committees, or temporarily suspend their participation on a standing committee to serve on a task force.

An important responsibility of the CVO is to nurture emerging leaders so that there are viable candidates in line for succession when the time comes. Some organizations use the position of chair-elect to ensure an orderly and regular change in the CVO position.

Board member re-election should be based on the needs of the board, which may change over time.

Over the long term, boards ought to ensure fresh perspectives by the regular infusion of new people. This can be done as a matter of board practice, board policy, or bylaws requirements. Of course, putting new people on the board generally implies that there is an opening. For many boards, openings may happen infrequently and only when someone resigns or chooses not to serve an additional term. Without the structure of setting term limits, it is easy to fall into the habit of keeping a long-time member on the board, even if that person is not able to provide what the board needs.

Term limits are a helpful tool for renewal. Terms of three years are common, and two consecutive terms of continuous service are often stated as the limit of service. In most cases, board members who reach their term limit can be elected again after at least one year off the board. However, this option should be exercised with care so as not to defeat the purpose of term limits.

There are many reasons to use term limits. They force the board to continually consider what characteristics are needed on the board at a particular time and prevent the board from settling for what it already has, whether those characteristics are the ones most needed.

Step 8: ROTATE Board Members (cont'd)

They help to continually refresh the board and maintain a balance between continuity and turnover. Term limits can ease the transition from a homogeneous board to a more diverse and inclusive one and thus, in some cases, keep the board in closer touch with its constituents and with the community in which the organization operates. Term limits also provide a painless way to rotate members off the board who have been ineffective, inactive, or troublesome, relieving the governance committee or CVO of the awkward duty of telling them it is time to go.

Though quite common, term limits can be controversial because they pit continuity of board member service, institutional memory, and expertise against the need for new blood and different perspectives. For some organizations, term limits can cause the board to lose valuable board members with hard-to-replace expertise or other helpful resources.

Just because a board member has rotated off the board doesn't mean their affiliation or engagement with the Club should end. Create opportunities for existing board members to stay involved. Occasional honorary or emeritus status can be a great way to honor a particularly important outgoing board member. Develop a description of what the role entails.

Past members can also become members of board committees or advisory councils. As a reminder:

- The role of the governing board of directors (or "corporate board") is to govern the Club and serve as its accountable body. The board helps create the vision, mission, values, and policies for the organization and makes sure that they are properly implemented. Also, hiring and evaluating the CPO and financial oversight are key responsibilities of a nonprofit governing board.

- An advisory council usually functions like any committee of the board. Some large Clubs with sites in different locations may establish unit advisory councils for each site. Such unit advisory councils have increased in number as Clubs have expanded or merged. They work closely with unit directors. Some Clubs establish advisory councils to assist with specific duties such as fundraising or keeping in touch with particular constituencies. Advisory council members have no legal responsibilities; they have no vested right to serve; and they have no immunity from removal. It is wise to limit the council's actions to making recommendations and providing background information for board decisions.

To avoid misunderstandings, the board needs to clarify the new role of former board members:

- Determine tenure. Advisory councils may set terms and renew them periodically. Emeritus positions may be for life.
- Articulate attendance requirements. Committee members are expected to attend meetings regularly.
- Clarify the fundraising relationship. As friends of the organization, honorary board members may be solicited for gifts and/or asked to solicit gifts.

Unless specifically provided in the bylaws, honorary board members and outside committee members do not have voting rights. While this changes their role in decision-making, it does not preclude their participation in discussions. Remember, only voting members' presence counts toward a quorum. Nonvoting members do not have the same liabilities as voting members. When discussing confidential matters or in executive sessions, it may be necessary to exclude nonvoting members.

Step 8: ROTATE Board Members (cont'd)

Another important component of rotation is to be proactive in dealing with problematic board members. Perhaps the most common reason for wanting to remove a board member is nonattendance or inactivity.

But occasionally, a board member needs to be removed because he or she is preventing the board from doing its work. In some cases, a conflict of interest or unethical behavior may be grounds to remove an individual from the board. In other cases, a board member's behavior may become so obstructive that the board is prevented from functioning effectively. More frequently, the behavior of a problem board member discourages others from participating, and the board may find that other members attend less frequently or find reasons to resign.

The CVO or the governance committee should assume leadership in dealing with problematic board members. Sometimes a friendly conversation can clear up misunderstandings or false assumptions that may have arisen. Other times it may be necessary to ask an ineffective or difficult board member to step down. This is not an easy task. However, sometimes board members are aware of their inadequate performance but don't quite know how to handle the idea of resigning. They may feel that resigning implies that they don't care. They may actually feel relieved when the CVO suggests that resigning would be the honorable and generous thing to do. Such conversations ought to be conducted in private, either face to face or over the phone.

Term limits provide a non-confrontational way to ease ineffective board members off the board, while allowing terrific board members to be invited back after one or more years.

Organization bylaws should describe a process by which a board member can be removed by vote, if necessary. For example, missing three successive meetings may be reason for automatic removal from the board.

Board Member Renewal Exercise

Step 9: CELEBRATE!

Some of the common board problems include:

- Waning attendance
- Inactive committees
- Rubber stamping

Finally, the last step of the cycle is celebrate. There are plenty of challenges and even what may feel like drudgery in board service. To keep up the board's spirits and to strengthen board member morale, take time to celebrate.

- Make room for humor and a good laugh
- Recognize victories and progress — even small ones
- Celebrate organizational and individual accomplishments
- Appreciate individual contributions — to the board, organization, and community
- Invite significant others of board members to a special event
- Recognize board members at the Annual meeting
- Nominate board members for awards

Board volunteers serving Boys & Girls Clubs generally participate for unselfish reasons. However, proper recognition of their efforts on behalf of youth is desirable and may encourage continued and even greater service.

The following Boys & Girls Clubs of America National Service Recognition Awards are available for presentation to eligible board members:

- **NATIONAL SERVICE TO YOUTH AWARD** for board volunteers who have served member Clubs for a total of five years or more. May be presented at five-year intervals thereafter.
- **NATIONAL BOYS & GIRLS CLUB BRONZE MEDALLION** for board volunteers who have rendered unusually devoted service to a Boys & Girls Club over a considerable period of time.

- **NATIONAL SILVER MEDALLION** to a board member for outstanding service to a local Club and the Boys & Girls Club Movement in an area or region.
- **JEREMIAH MILBANK NATIONAL GOLD MEDALLION** to any individual for service to the Movement of national significance.

For more information, reference the BGCA Board Member's Handbook.

What Would You Do?

About five years ago, the Boys & Girls Club of Shady Grove experienced some major challenges. The economic climate in the community changed drastically. The area had long relied on a primary industry that was no longer profitable. To make matters worse, the board only had five members. The board opted to undertake a capital campaign. Not surprisingly, it was not a success, and the Club was in jeopardy.

Despite the Club's challenges, the chief volunteer officer (CVO) was passionate about the mission and wanted to do the right thing. The Club was still supported financially by a large foundation and had a few key donors, so the CVO assembled the organization's donors to discuss what the Club should do next. Many of the resulting ideas focused on strengthening the board. During this process, the chief professional officer (CPO) resigned.

Put yourself in the position of the CVO and the other board members. What would you do next?

The board hired a local retired school official as its new CPO. The CPO and CVO worked together to identify over twenty potential board members who were invited to learn more about the Club. Despite the change in the economy, there were still a number of significant businesses located in the area. Amongst the twenty invitees were leaders in the business community and those with the ability to make a difference from a financial standpoint. Potential board members were educated about the roles of the board, and eventually the board invited eighteen of the twenty to join the board. Those ultimately selected had a “can do” attitude. The new, expanded board continued its education and has now in the middle of a successful capital campaign. The Club has also expanded from a single location into a multi-unit structure.

**Possible Next Steps:
Board Building Ideas that Might Serve Your Board**

Step	Idea #1	Idea #2
1. Identify		
2. Cultivate		
3. Recruit		
4. Orient		
5. Involve		
6. Educate		
7. Evaluate		
8. Rotate		
9. Celebrate		