



Growing Your Board Board Member Recruitment Strategies

In Litchfield County, affordable housing non-profits are responsible for developing and managing much of the existing affordable housing. Most of these organizations have no full-time paid staff and are run by an all-volunteer board. This makes it all the more important to recruit and retain a strong board of directors.

This document provides some tips on board member recruitment and interviewing. This can help foster a board with a diversity of talents, evenly shared task management, sustained interest and minimal burnout. For tips on on-boarding new board members, see our "On-Boarding Guide".

Assess Your Current Board

Where are the gaps in terms of experiences, knowledge, skills, and demographics? What would you like to see represented among board members? What skills or professional backgrounds would be particularly useful to further the organization's mission?

Aim for diverse board representation. Consider the things you are currently asking of board members that may be inadvertently limiting participation by certain groups (e.g., large donations, in-person meeting attendance, meetings/events during weekdays).

Aim for members with professional backgrounds and/or affiliations that can help further your mission such as:

- ▶ Real estate
- ▶ Finance
- ▶ Legal
- ▶ Advocacy/communications
- ▶ Marketing/Graphic design
- ▶ Social media/website design
- ▶ Affiliations:
Member of local PTO, local teacher, town employee, lions club, conservation organization, faith community leader, town boards and commissions

Recruit New Board Members

- ▶ Recruitment ideally happens year-round (as opposed to a short-term nominating committee) but consider putting it on your board meeting agenda at least twice a year.
- ▶ Consider inviting potential recruits to attend a board meeting to learn more about how the organization works, or to join a subcommittee of the board.
- ▶ Once you have a list of the types of professional backgrounds or affiliations that are missing on your board, email it out to board members and ask them to provide one or two ideas for people in the community that might be a good fit to meet these needs or others they identify.
- ▶ If you have an e-newsletter, consider putting your needs out in the newsletter and asking people to contact you if they'd be interested in serving.
- ▶ When you host an event or table at a community event, have a handout for folks who might be interested in volunteering including contact information, when/how often your board meets, and your mission statement. (ask LC-CHO if you'd like help preparing this).

Interview and Set Expectations

- ▶ It is not recommended that you accept everyone who expresses interest in joining the board. A formal review and interview process helps assess how seriously someone would take their board member responsibilities and how interested they are.
- ▶ Create a document (if you don't have one already or if all this isn't already on your website) that includes your organization's history, mission, current properties, current projects, annual fundraising/funding sources, and programs - to be distributed to prospective board members.
- ▶ Try to respond quickly to candidate questions or concerns and keep them updated as the process moves forward.
- ▶ Prepare to let people down gently. It's hard to tell people no if they are interested but aren't a good fit. Example gentle let downs: "We only have one opening at this time and interviewed multiple great candidates. The board selected another candidate to fill our open position at this time. We truly thank you for your interest and your time."

Example Interview Questions/Agenda

- ▶ Plan for 45 minutes
- ▶ Discuss the monthly time commitment expected from board members and when/how often your board usually meets.
- ▶ Discuss the donations/fundraising policy if you have one. (Are all board members expected to provide an annual donation and/or participate in fundraising activities? What are those activities?)
- ▶ Ask whether the candidate has any questions about the organization's mission, history, or programs.
- ▶ Ask what interests the candidate in serving on the board.
- ▶ Discuss any subcommittees or board roles you are trying to fill and see if they'd be interested in serving in any of those roles.
- ▶ Ask whether they'd be willing to share a resume or short bio that you can share with the board.

RECRUITMENT STEPS

1. Decide if the prospect is a real candidate (are they interested?)
2. Present candidate info to board
3. Decide to move forward to interview
4. Communication to candidate
5. Interview
6. Circulate information to full board
7. Board vote to approve
8. New member on-boarding process

Questions? Contact Us!

Litchfield County Center for Housing Opportunity
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