

Board Orientation

Often overlooked and imperative to the success of a board of directors is the board member orientation process.

The board chair conducts an annual orientation session and is the speaker for most of the topics below. However, the board may elect to have an outside person come in to help review the roles and responsibilities of the board and management, as well as board governance and operating guidelines. It is a good idea for all new and current board members to participate in this orientation session.

Sample board orientation schedule:

1. Overview of agenda
2. Overview of organization (Executive Director)
3. Overview of board manual
4. Roles and responsibilities of board members
5. Board job descriptions
6. Overview of board structure and operations
7. Strategic plan review (accomplishments)
8. Calendar for the upcoming year—training/programs for board meetings
9. Evaluate the meeting

Items 1 through 8 should be compiled in a board member manual. The following page outlines the contents of the manual in more detail.

Sample Table of Contents for a Board Manual

1. General Board Information
 - Listing of Board Members
 - Terms of Board Members
 - Board Member Job Descriptions
 - Board Committees, Committee Descriptions and Structure
2. Legal/Historical Documents
 - Articles of Incorporation
 - Tax exempt status letter
 - Bylaws
 - Agreements and Contracts
 - History
3. Organizational Planning Documents
 - Mission, Vision, and Value Statements
 - Strategic Plan
4. Board Policies
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Board Attendance Policy
 - Insurance Policy Coverage
 - Grievance Procedures
 - Robert's Rules of Order
 - Code of Ethics
5. Finances
 - Yearly Budget
 - Most Recent Audited Financials
 - Financial Statements and Reports
6. Organizational Information
 - Organizational Chart
 - Staff Listings
7. Other Possible Information
 - Promotional Materials
 - Fundraising Plans
 - Personnel Policies and Procedures