

## **Board Member Recruitment, Retention and Development**

The process for Board member selection must be specified in the bylaws or other internal governing rules. The recruitment, retention and development process is ongoing. It is important to recognize that Board member retention is only as successful as the effort that is put into new board member orientation, ongoing board training and development and recognition. The responsible Board committee (i.e. Nominating Committee, Board Development Committee) is encouraged to meet monthly to focus on all aspects of the process including recruitment, new board member information and orientation packet (i.e. organization overview, board member job description, board member application), new board member orientation, new board member mentoring program, board manual, board training (internal and external opportunities, training budget), evaluation and recognition.

New Board Member Recruitment and Orientation – Board members are recruited in a variety of ways. The least desirable is to leave the task of recruitment to the health center Executive Director. The more desirable approach begins with the development of a Board Profile Grid which identifies the skills, background, consumer/non-consumer status and demographics to be represented on the Board. Committee members identify the people and organizations to contact as part of the recruiting process. This includes working with health center staff to identify patients who may be interested in serving as consumer members. Identify the strongest candidates and, using the Board Profile Grid, prioritize the applicants based on the diversity needs of the Board. Each member of the Board committee is assigned one or more individuals to contact and is provided recruiting materials (i.e. orientation packet, application, job description). Board member candidates are subsequently interviewed by a Board member and the Executive Director and, if interested in membership, can be invited to a Board meeting to get an idea of how the organization makes decisions and delegates responsibilities.

Once an individual commits to serving on the Board, a good first step is to schedule a meeting between the new board member and key people in the organization. Provide a detailed Board Member Manual including bylaws, articles of incorporation, program descriptions, current budget, last audited financial statements, list of board members and their addresses, lists of committee and staff assignments, board minutes for the previous year and strategic plan. Consider assigning a “mentor” board member to work with the new board member through the first three to six months. The Board Chairperson should also make committee assignments for the new board member.

Board Self Evaluation – It is important to conduct a Board self evaluation prior to developing the training schedule. Both the health center and Board performance need to be evaluated. In regard to the center, the Board needs to evaluate how well the mission is being achieved (how effective are the programs, are they reaching everyone they were set up to reach, what is the quality and cost). The Board evaluation should focus on the board’s strengths and weaknesses, including areas such as: how well is the board meeting its responsibilities, how well individual board members are meeting their responsibilities, what do the meeting

minutes reveal (is the board meeting as required by the bylaws, is there a quorum at each meeting, are appropriate committee and other reports regularly provided), how is the Board's interaction with the CEO, what are the dynamics of board member interactions with each other, is time set aside for skill building and training, and, how well did the board set goals for the upcoming year).

Ongoing Board Training - The training consists of both internal and external training opportunities and includes opportunities to address weaknesses identified in the Board self-evaluation process. An annual Board of Directors' Training Schedule distributed at the Annual Board meeting and supported by the annual Board training budget, is an extremely helpful tool for Board members. The schedule can include training events provided at regular, monthly Board meetings (i.e. "mini training" on the [Health Center Program Requirements](#), how to interpret financial statements or other subjects of interest to the Board) as well as an annual Board training retreat with an outside consultant. The identification of outside workshops that are related to Board member committee assignments can be included on the schedule as well as special leadership training for current and prospective officers. Regional and national training opportunities provided through the PCA, HRSA/BPHC, NACHC and other federally qualified health center related organizations should also be included on the Training Schedule and available to Board members, within the constraints of the training budget.

Recognition – Key to successful Board performance and Board member retention is recognition, the ongoing process of recognizing work well-done and thanking Board members for their commitment and the contributions they make to the organization.