



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

# **BUILDING BETTER BOARDS**

**BOARD BUILDING CYCLE VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION**

**Participant Guide**

**YMCA OF THE USA**



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## **Introduction to the Course**

This Participant Guide, or Workbook, is for you to keep. Please use it throughout the class and refer to it if you need to refresh your memory at a later date. Although you will view the PowerPoint presentation, watch the instructor and participate in exercises during most of class time, this Participant Guide is available as a supplement to your other class materials. Use this Guide to write your own notes or additions based on class discussions and exercises. You can also use this Guide to refer to and emphasize information contained in its graphs, tables, definitions and other content.

The Participant Guide is conveniently divided into Lessons, just as the course and PowerPoint slides are. Please follow along as indicated and use it as appropriate for your needs.

## THE BOARD BUILDING CYCLE

### *Nine Steps to Finding, Recruiting, and Engaging Nonprofit Board Members*

#### **Board Development Role of a Governance Committee - *The key to success!***

- Purposeful and planned process (*sample template*)
- Commission and chart of work (*sample materials*)
- Leadership and the committee composition
- More than just a ***nominating*** function

#### **Nominating Committee or Governance Committee: *What's the difference?***

##### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

- ▽ Most established process
- ▽ By-laws driven
- ▽ Short-term resources for filling Board vacancies

##### **- ROLE -**

- ▽ Tendency to rely heavily on Staff members
- ▽ Single dimension:
  - Nomination process

##### **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

- ▽ Cutting edge process
- ▽ Needs driven
- ▽ Long-term resources for developing a Board of Directors

##### **- ROLE -**

- ▽ Tendency to involve more Board members
- ▽ Multi-dimension:
  - Identification
  - Cultivation
  - Recruitment
  - **Nomination process**
  - Training and development
  - Evaluation – individual and group

## WORK OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: *THE NINE STEPS*

### 1 IDENTIFY THE NEEDS OF THE BOARD

- Identify what and who are needed to implement strategic plan
- Consider skills, knowledge and connections
- Determine current board constituency: Inventory Profile (*template available*)
- Identify the "**gaps**"

### 2 CULTIVATE POTENTIAL MEMBERS

- Ask current board, community leaders, committee members, staff and others for recommendations
- Develop a pipeline of **12-24** potential board members . . . *create a system to track candidates*
- Connect with candidates
- Get them interested/keep them informed (**ignite passion**)

### 3 RECRUIT PROSPECTS

- Tell them **why you want** them
- Explain (walk through in detail) responsibilities and expectation . . . *job description (sample available)*
- Ask why **they might be interested**
- Invite questions, elicit interest
- Are they prepared to serve? If so, inform them you will submit their name for consideration.

### 4 ORIENT NEW BOARD MEMBERS

- **To organization** – mission, history, programs, finances, fundraising, etc.
- **To board** – member/board responsibilities, corporate/branch board, committees, etc.

#### **Orientation Materials: Recommended board manual materials**

- ✓ YMCA history & mission
- ✓ Membership/program information & statistics
- ✓ By-laws
- ✓ Board member job description/expectations
- ✓ Finance/budget information/990
- ✓ Strategic plan

- ✓ Fund development (annual, capital, special events, endowment, etc.)
- ✓ Annual report
- ✓ Committee options
- ✓ Important dates (board, committee, special events, etc.)
- ✓ Board member & staff rosters & organizational charts

**The development and education of board members is not a one-time event.**

## **5 INVOLVE ALL BOARD MEMBERS**

- Discover their interests and availabilities
- Involve in committee or task forces
- Partner with “board coach”
- Solicit feedback
- Hold everyone accountable- *board holds board accountable*
- Express appreciation for good work

## **6 EDUCATE THE BOARD**

- Provide information on mission areas
- Promote exploration of issues facing organization
- Promote education and development – board meetings, retreats, seminars, Y-USA events, and leadership opportunities
- Identify topic areas from assessments (*available from Y-USA*)
- Don't hide difficulties

## **7 EVALUATE THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

- The board as a whole
- Individual members
- Board meetings
- Committee work
- Team work with staff (*particularly the CEO/Branch Executive*)

**Board Group Assessment . . . provides board members with the opportunity to:**

- ✓ Reflect on their individual and shared responsibilities.
- ✓ Identify different perceptions and opinions among board members.
- ✓ Point to issues that need attention.
- ✓ Increase the level of board teamwork.
- ✓ Clarify mutual board and staff expectations.
- ✓ Demonstrate accountability as a serious organizational value.
- ✓ Display credibility to funders & other external audiences.

**Board Group Assessment . . . becomes a springboard for board improvement!**

- ✓ At least every two years
- ✓ Select the appropriate tool
- ✓ Determine the best process
- ✓ Contact your **Y-USA Resource Director** for support

**8 ROTATE BOARD MEMBERS**

- Term limits (*by-laws*)
- Do not automatically re-elect
- Consider board's and organization's changing needs
- Consider board member performance (*measure*)
- Develop leadership – succession planning

**9 CELEBRATE!**

- Recognize victory and progress
- Appreciate individual contributions
- Make room for humor *and fun*

**Additional Resources**

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- Y-USA Resource Director
  - CEO/CVO YMCA website: <http://www.ymcaexchange.org/back/CVO-CEO>
    - (user name: ymca password: 9622)
- YMCA of the USA Best Practices for Board leadership and Governance
- BoardSource ([www.boardsource.org](http://www.boardsource.org))
- Experienced CEOs, CVOs and other YMCA/non-profit colleagues



## **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION-SAMPLE**

### **Commission**

The Governance Committee is standing committee commissioned by the Board of Directors to strengthen the Board by evaluating the existing Board and establishing guidelines for Board Development. It mounts a year-round effort to enlist new Board members in order to ensure that a full complement of seats is filled under the Association by-laws . The committee monitors Board participation and takes necessary steps, including separating inactive and/or ineffective members, to maintain high levels of Board involvement. It also evaluates the quality of the experience of serving on the Board and acts to make improvements.

### **Composition**

The Committee is made up of members of the board members who are well acquainted with the YMCA's goals and current challenges. Committee members must be able to operate without undue influence from the status quo or a power element of the Board. The committee members should be sufficiently secure in their own professional and community positions to evaluate the Board objectively.

### **Duties**

1. Conducts evaluations of the current Board in order to identify areas of strength and weakness.
2. In light of the YMCA's goals, strengths and weaknesses of the current board, the committee will determine the characteristics that new board members must have in order to improve board performance.
3. Reviews current board members and determines whether or not they should be retained, separated or challenged to become more involved and acts to do so.
4. Identifies qualified candidates to fill vacancies on the board.
5. Recommends a slate of board officers & new board members for annual terms of service.
6. Holds all discussions of those under consideration for recruitment in strict confidence.
7. Cultivates and recruits candidates elected to fill vacancies. While recruitment and

cultivation is concentrated in one quarter of the year, it is carried out year-round.

8. Monitors the proper orientation and mentoring of new board members.
9. Ensures that consistent, ongoing training is implemented throughout the year.
10. Works to maintain high levels of involvement in Board committees, meetings, fund raising and special projects.
11. Reviews for possible change "board member expectations" annually.
12. Develops, implements a plan to recognize outstanding performance of board members.
13. Evaluates Board of Directors meetings for regular and constant improvement.
14. Annually evaluates the Board Committee structure and makes recommendations for improvement.
15. Hold (1) governance "Summit" annually.  
Regularly reports to the board the activities of the governance committee.

## 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, statistics, health policy)	
4.	Connections in the community (media, politics, health care)	
5.	Fundraising experience and willingness to participate	
6.	Ability to make a substantial 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:

## Board Governance Committee

Y-USA recommends that all Ys commission a board governance committee to give the highest possible level of leadership to the association and assure its continued viability, health and integrity.

Boards typically employ one of three committees to manage the work of the board; a **nominating committee**, **board development committee** or **board governance committee**. These committees vary considerably in scope as the chart below illustrates. On one end of the spectrum are nominating committees, convened as needed for the purpose of proposing new members to fill vacancies on the board. This is an important but relatively small part of the board's overall responsibility. Much further up the spectrum is the board development committee, which gives leadership to a systematic and year around board development process. And slightly further up the spectrum is the board governance committee, which not only concerns itself with the board development process but also acts to ensure the board is fulfilling all of its legal and ethical duties. This would include such things as the periodic review of corporate documents, making sure disclosure requirements are met, reviewing the Ys Form 990 and seeing that conflict of interest and whistleblower policies are in place and enforced.

	Nominating	Board Development	Board Governance
Regularly reviews and updates the board's job description		√	√
Establishes expectations of board members and monitors performance		√	√
Assists the board in building a long term agenda based on the strategic plan			√
Assesses current and anticipated needs for board composition	√	√	√
Develops a profile of the board as it should evolve over time	√	√	√
Identifies and presents potential board member candidates	√	√	√
Meets with potential candidates to explore interest in serving on the board	√	√	√
Nominates individuals to be elected as directors of the board	√	√	√
Annually affirms board members interest in continued service		√	√
Works with board members to identify an appropriate role for them on the board		√	√
Designs and leads a process of board orientation		√	√
Designs and implements an ongoing board education program		√	√
Leads the periodic assessment of the board's performance		√	√
Proposes changes in board structure, roles, and responsibilities		√	√

Provides counsel to the board chair on how to enhance board effectiveness		√	√
Regularly reviews the board's practices and suggests improvements as needed			√
Periodically reviews and updates the board's policy guidelines and practices			√
Leads board succession planning		√	√
Nominates board members for election as board officers		√	√

## BOARD PROFILE WORKSHEET

Expertise/Skills/Personal Data

- **Number each Board member’s name on your Board Roster. Keep that list confidential.**
- **For each Board member, check the appropriate boxes that correspond to the member’s profile. Complete the profile for every Board member currently serving on your Board. (More than 20 members – copy the form and renumber)**

### Current Board Member Profile

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
<b>Age</b>																					
Under 18																					
19 – 34																					
35 – 50																					
51 – 65																					
Over 65																					
<b>Gender</b>																					
Male																					
Female																					
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>																					
African American/Black																					
Asian/Pacific Islander																					
Caucasian																					
Hispanic/Latino																					
Native American/Indian																					
Other																					
_____																					
_____																					

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
<b>Resources</b>																					
Money to give																					
Access to \$\$ resources																					
Access to other resources (foundations, corporate support)																					
Availability for active participation (solicitation visits, grant writing)																					
<b>Community Connections</b>																					
Religious organizations																					
Corporate																					
Education																					
Media																					
Political																					
Philanthropy																					
Small business																					
Social services																					
Other																					
Other																					
Other																					
<b>Qualities</b>																					
Leadership skills/Motivator																					
Willingness to work/ Availability																					
Personal connection with the organization's mission																					
Other																					
<b>Personal Style</b>																					
Consensus builder																					
Good communicator																					
Strategist																					

Visionary																				
Bridge builder																				
Other																				
<b>Areas of Expertise</b>																				
Administration/Management																				
Entrepreneurship																				
Financial Management																				
Accounting																				
Investments																				
Fundraising																				
Government																				
Law																				
Marketing, Public relations																				
Human resources																				
Strategic planning																				
Architect, engineer																				
Real Estate																				
Representative of clients																				
Special program focus (e.g., education, health, public policy, social services)																				
Technology																				
Other																				
Other																				
Other																				
<b>Number of years (or terms) on the board</b>																				



**(YMCA Name)**

**Governance Committee  
Annual Action Plan and Assessment**

Read each statement and check the box which most accurately applies as follows:  
**A** – Always/Yes    **F** – Frequently    **S** – Sometimes    **N** – Never/No

Date	Action	Who's Responsible	Comments	A	F	S	N
	1. Create Governance Committee (GC).	CVO & CEO	Must be approved by board. Develop committee commission, committee chair and member job descriptions.				
	2. Staff leadership prepared.	CVO	CEO serves as staff liaison as board development is a primary responsibility.				
	3. Recruit Governance Committee Chair.	CVO & CEO	Identify skills needed. Consideration should be given to incoming or past CVO of board.				
	4. Draft committee commission & chart of work.	CVO, GC Chair & CEO	To be finalized by GC. Commission to be approved by board. Chart of work is shared with board for general information and support.				
	5. Identify and recruit GC members).	GC Chair, CVO & CEO	Identify skills/diversity needed for potential members before beginning recruitment process. Consideration should be given to current board members as well as non-board members.				
	6. Share committee commission with GC and approve *chart of work.	GC Chair	First GC meeting.				
Launch date	7. *Conduct group board assessment. When group assessments are	All board members GC, CEO &	Group assessment should be conducted every 2-3 years. Function of the GC. Recommend having Y-USA Resource Director				

Board Building Cycle Volunteer Orientation

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Date share results	conducted, review results and create action plan for improvement.	Y-USA Resource Director	administer and facilitate process. Chart of work to be revised dependent on assessment results.				
Date	Action	Who's Responsible	Comments	A	F	S	N
	8. GC regularly reports to and involves board.	GC Chair	If chair is absent, assistant chair should provide report/updates.				
	9. Participate in ROI email training (Recruiting, Orienting and Involving YMCA Board Members).	GC Chair, CEO & interested committee members	Training is conducted every other month (beginning in January) by Y-USA. Information focuses specifically on best practices for board development. For more information contact your Y-USA Resource Director or go to exchange site to sign up. Consider doing earlier in process if possible to educate leadership & committee.				
	10. Develop or revise as necessary the board member *job description/expectations.	GC & CEO	Must be approved by board. Expectations should be revised annually to support work of the board.				
	11. Evaluate current individual members' skills and performance against board member expectations.	GC & CEO	Use assessment form to document results. Will also help identify gaps in skills & resources needed to accomplish board goals. Process should be conducted annually. Individual members can be invited to complete a self-assessment as well.				

	12. Conduct personal visit with ALL board members to confirm their understanding of and commitment to new board member responsibilities (as needed/if revised).	GC Chair & CEO	Purpose is to gain recommitment or agreement to step down from board. Consider discussing potential of serving on a committee if full board participation is not possible.				
	13. Review/Revise By-laws (as necessary).	CEO & Sub-Committee	By-laws tool kit available from Y-USA to assist with process. Could be done by sub-committee or Executive Committee. Recommended reviewing every couple of years.				
Date	Action	Who's Responsible	Comments	A	F	S	N
	14. Review strategic plan for skills & resources needed from board members.	GC & CEO	Compare skills/resources of current members with needed skills/resources to accomplish goals. Identify what's missing in order to target the cultivation & recruitment of new board members.				
	15. Create committee structure to support strategic plan.	Executive Committee & CEO	To be approved by board. Structure should change as the strategic plan changes in order to support work.				
	16. Create/maintain on-going cultivation list and process for potential board members.	GC & CEO	Gain involvement from entire board to identify and cultivate potential members. Recommended to have 12-24 names of potential members in the pipeline. Use cultivation form/process to institutional work.				
	17. Agree on recruitment process of potential new board members including timeline.	GC & CEO	Process includes developing necessary materials (i.e. nomination form, profile form, etc.), timeline and interview outline.				

	18. Conduct interviews with potential members.	GC & CEO	The GC members or CVO, along with the CEO should conduct interview. The board member job description/expectations need to be reviewed in detail with all potential candidates. Date of new board member orientation should be provided during interview. At this stage, you are interviewing, not inviting people to join.				
	19. Review all applications of potential members in an effort to decide who will be recommended for membership.	GC & CEO	Discussion focused on recommendation of best candidates to achieve board work. All new members must be approved by the board.				
	20. GC submits nomination of members to board for approval.	GC Chair	Need to follow procedures as outlined in By-laws.				
	21. Make personal phone calls to newly elected members once approved.	GC Chair	Purpose is to welcome and confirm participation on board as well as confirm attendance at new board member orientation.				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who's Responsible</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>
	22. Partner new member with a board coach (a current experienced, effective member).	GC Chair & CEO	Sample job description for board coach is available.				
	23. Conduct orientation for all new members prior to their first board meeting.	GC	Sample materials, including an agenda, are available. Consider involving full board if orientation not provided previously.				
	24. Complete assignments of new members to committees.	GC Chair	Ask new board members for committee preference. Initial conversation should have taken place during interview process.				

	25. Create succession plan for board & committee leadership.	Executive Committee & CEO	Use "Depth Chart" to track/record candidates. Potential of being a sensitive discussion. May need to remain confidential.				
	26. Develop on-going plan for board development/education for all members.	GC & CEO	A schedule should be developed based on the group board assessment results and critical issues facing the board, YMCA and communities served.				

**Sample materials for every step of the board development process are available from your Y-USA Resource Director or by going to <http://www.ymcaexchange.org/back/CVO-CEO/> (user name: ymca, password: 9622).**

\* In some situations, a group assessment might be conducted at the beginning of the process to support the creation of the need for the Governance Committee and its work.

## PROSPECTIVE BOARD MEMBER REFERRAL FORM - PART A

### CONFIDENTIAL

Please complete this form so we can follow up with you about the individual you recommend as a prospective board member. Provide us with as much relevant information as you have about each candidate. Please return this sheet and the accompanying, Prospective Board Member Referral Form to the chair of the Board Development Committee.

A member of the Board Development Committee may contact you to ask for suggestions about the best approach in cultivating and recruiting the individual(s) you have listed below.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the best time to reach you: \_\_\_\_\_

### Prospective Board Member Referral Form - Part B

#### - CONFIDENTIAL -

Name of Prospective Board Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide information about this individual and his/her organizational affiliation, if appropriate, including:

Professional skills: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Interest in the YMCA: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional YMCA contacts who know the prospect: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

Other affiliations with individuals, corporations, foundations, organizations:

\_\_\_\_\_

Other board experience: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Known levels of giving: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal characteristics and skills: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please include the reasons why you believe this person would be a good board member. Use other paper if necessary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

People whom you suggest might meet, cultivate, and recruit this prospective board member and their relationship to the candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

From what you know about this individual, can you recommend dates and places for a cultivation meeting?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If this individual were asked to serve on our board, what amount would you suggest that he/she be asked to consider donating as his/her Annual Campaign gift?    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## PROSPECTIVE BOARD MEMBER INFORMATION SHEET

Name of prospective board member: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Source of referral/information: \_\_\_\_\_

### Special skills

- Fundraising                       Marketing/Public Relations  
 Personnel/Human Resources    Technology  
 Finances                               Legal  
 Business                               Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Professional background

- For-profit business                 Nonprofit organization  
 Government                         Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Education

- Some high school  
 High school graduate             Some graduate coursework  
 Some college                         Graduate degree  
 Undergraduate college degree    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other affiliations: \_\_\_\_\_

Other board service: \_\_\_\_\_

Known levels of giving: \_\_\_\_\_

Other pertinent information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_