

The Board Building Cycle: Nine Steps to Success

BoardSource offers nonprofit leaders the following nine steps as an ongoing board building cycle that will help your organization create a robust and high performing board.

Step 1: Identify board needs. 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 organization 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.

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

Step 5: Activate all board members. Discover their interests and availability. Involve them in committees or task forces.

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

Step 7: Rotate board members. Establish and use term limits. Do not automatically re-elect for an additional term; consider the board's needs and the board member's performance.

Step 8: 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 9: Celebrate! Recognize victories and progress, even small ones. Appreciate individual contributions to the board, the organization, and the community.

