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Attract and Retain your Best CIL Board Members

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When you complete this module, you will be able to—

- Describe how to determine the leadership gaps in your current board and focus your recruitment on filling those gaps.
- Clarify board and staff roles and responsibilities in recruitment and orientation of new board members.
- Identify effective strategies that support an organization's board recruitment efforts.
- Describe components of an effective board member orientation plan.

Does the board have expertise in—

- Services?
- Marketing?
- Fund-raising?
- Finance?
- Law?
- Human relations?
- Technology?

Develop a matrix identifying gaps

Once you identify what areas you want on your board and who fills those, you can keep a running list of what gaps you have on the board.

Board Member	Finance	Law	Nonprofit Management	Part of underserved community
Susan B.		X		
Ralph P.	X			
John X.				X
Deb R.	X			

Use a board application form

- When you ask the board to assist in recruiting members, you need to give them an application that explains what you are looking for.
- The “too gung-ho” board member can’t imply that they are appointing a friend to the board—they are asking for the person to apply.
- If you have a great potential board member that can’t come on the board yet—either for your reasons or their own—you can keep their application to reconsider when the next opening occurs.
- This is a great place to ask the disability question.

Follow written policies or bylaws

- Have a written board recruitment policy, or identify the procedures in your bylaws, so that the process for recruiting and voting in members is drawn consistently from the policy or procedure.
- Typically no one gets to appoint a new member.
- The Executive Director should not appoint board members.

Follow written policies or bylaws, cont'd.

- The Board president should not act independently of the full board.
- A nominating committee or single board member cannot appoint board members.

What does a good board member look like?

- Willing to work hard
- Has good people skills
- Is able to articulate why they hold opinions
- Is connected to disability rights, or other important Independent Living values

What does a good board member look like?, cont'd.

- Is busy

While this last trait may be counter-intuitive, most busy people can fit one more thing on their plate, while people who aren't busy don't usually want to be, so won't be working board members.

What does a good board member look like?

cont'd. 2

- Has a visible disability?
 - Maybe. Remember that not all disabilities are apparent.
 - Just having an apparent disability is not enough. Not all people with disabilities buy into the independent living philosophy, so don't assume they fit the other criteria.
 - Get to know them before you leap to the conclusion that they will make a good board member.

What does a good board member look like?

cont'd. 3

True story—met a guy who uses a wheelchair on a flight out of my home town. Took his card, thinking he would make a great board member. A Google search, however, revealed that he is the local ADA drive by expert—hits businesses with ADA complaints without advocacy.

You CAN ask potential board members “the question”

- When I was interviewed for a board position for the local CIL the interim executive director finally said, “Come on, are you going to make me ask?” and I realized he didn’t know whether I have a disability because it isn’t visible.
- There is no discrimination at play if you are inquiring for a volunteer position rather than employment.
- You must ask to know, because many disabilities are invisible.
- Remember that the board must include more than 50% persons with *significant* disability.

Questions??

As a nonprofit, the Board of Directors is governed by...

- External (Laws)
- Internal (Bylaws and Policies and Procedures)
 - Ethical (The People)

The board of directors operates in accordance with external guidelines & bylaws and policies and responsible to constituents.

From Evaluation Standard 1 – IL Philosophy

Consumer control in management, establishment of policy and direction of center.

- More than 50% of staff must have a disability.
- More than 50% of staff in decision-making positions must have a disability.
- More than 50% of the members of the board of directors must have a *significant* disability.

How can we find leaders with disabilities?

- Have you noticed — not every person with a physical or obvious disability is interested in what centers do?
- Unless your center is a meeting place for leaders who have disabilities, you may not have an opportunity to meet these leaders.

Can a consumer become a board member?

- Yes, absolutely. And a board member can become a consumer.
- CILs represent the disability community at every level, and sometimes there is crossover.
- There is no conflict of interest unless the board member causes it by attempting to act as the board while in the role of consumer.
- Keep the roles straight and our vital community is stronger for this crossover.

Significant disability

Significant disability is defined as: For purposes of title VII, the term "individual with a significant disability" means an individual with a severe physical or mental impairment whose ability to function independently in the family or community or whose ability to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment is substantially limited; and for whom the delivery of independent living services will improve the ability to function, continue functioning, or move towards functioning independently in the family or community or to continue in employment, respectively.

Conflicts of Interest

- Safeguards against employee, board member or volunteer participating in any administrative decision likely to benefit that person or immediate family or business interests.
- Safeguards against any person using position for a purpose that is, or gives the appearance of being, motivated by a desire for a private financial gain for that person or others.

TIP: Typically these are written policies that the employee, board member or volunteer acknowledge with a signature; then they are filed and can be reviewed.

Who is most likely to find good board members?

- You have to be out in the community to identify and suggest good board members.
- While it is great if the board recruits more board members, that approach doesn't always produce the board members you need.

Who is most likely to find good board members?, cont'd.

- Reality – the Executive Director is often the person who attends the most meetings in the community and is most likely to meet emerging leaders.

Remember the application? Either the Executive Director or a board member or even staff can hand an application to a potential board member, to be considered by board.

Have a clear process

- We suggest that the nominating committee receive, review, and comment on all applications.
- If the individual appears to be a good candidate, a meeting would be useful. Some centers bring the candidate to the center to meet the Executive Director and see the CIL in action.
- Make sure the candidate's questions are answered.
- Invite candidate to observe a board meeting.
- The board votes following the completion of all these steps.

Where are the potential board members?

- Still at University — just starting their career.
- Serving on other boards and councils.
- Volunteering beside you at a health fair, church event, youth activity, or other community work.
- In the local business community that you buy from.

A model for board recruitment

RICV in Fresno developed the Community Leadership Academy and training manual called Leaders without Limits

- To provide training in the disability community to be board members of non-profits, members of government councils, commissions and boards.
- To assist emerging leaders to increase leadership and civic engagement among people with disability.

A model for board recruitment, cont'd.

What better way to meet people with disabilities who desire to be community leaders? And you can offer a position on your board to the best in the class!

<http://www.nationalcla.org/>

Now you have a new board member

- On an individual basis how will you provide orientation?
- Appoint a mentor?

Now you have a new board member, cont'd.

- Provide them with all the background information needed—often in 3-ring binder that can expand.
 1. List of board members, officers, committees, and contact information.
 2. List of staff that will interact with the board and their responsibilities.
 3. A description of what the board responsibilities are.
 4. Background on the history and philosophy of the CIL.
 5. Annual reports or annual financial statement or both.
 6. Minutes and packets for past few months of board meetings.

Staff/Board Development and Training

What is required in regulations now:

- The CIL includes personnel who are specialists in the development and provision of IL services and in the development and support of centers.
- Board development is directed at improving the skills of CIL board members so they can fulfill their duties.
- Board members receive information from the center they serve so it can set priorities for unserved/underserved, minority groups, and urban and rural populations.

Train Full Board and Committees on Roles and Responsibilities

- The board has a duty of care to the organization and to the taxpayers funding it.
- What active committees does your board have?
- What is the relationship between the board and committees?
- Are the by-laws reviewed, kept up to date, and followed?
- Are financial reports received and reviewed month by month?
- Is the performance of the Executive Director reviewed at least annually?

Does the board understand—

- Its responsibilities and role?
- Its legal responsibilities and potential liabilities?
- The need to develop future board members?
- The responsibilities for attendance at regularly scheduled meetings?

Does the organization provide the board with—

- Orientation for new members?
- Regular training in-services?
- An outline of board operations and procedures?
- Written materials for consideration when making decisions.

Questions??

Wrap Up, Evaluation, and Contact Information

Please click the link below to complete an evaluation of this program:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2057558/CIL-NET-Webinar-Evaluation-April-22-2015>

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