

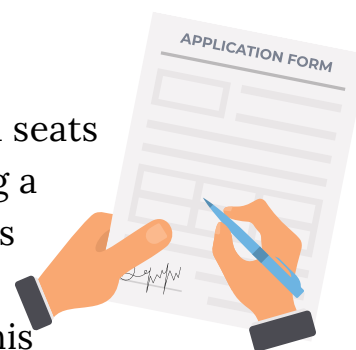
# Nonprofit Board Application

Creating a Board application form is an important step in the recruitment process for your nonprofit organization. Not everyone interested will be a good fit regardless of their shared passion for your cause or their desire to serve on your Board.

While a standardized form can't capture an individual's true spirit and suitability to serve, it is an excellent tool for collecting basic data and useful background information that can help your nominating committee winnow down the field of potential candidates.

## Benefits of Using a Board Application

Even small nonprofits with a modest number of Board seats can benefit by using an application form and following a predetermined process. Having an established process can also help minimize applications from candidates who are eager to serve, but may not be a good fit at this time regardless of their shared passion for your cause.



An application form can collect data that might otherwise be forgotten, as well as bring attention to important information useful to know sooner than later, such as what the prospect hopes to achieve by serving on the Board or if they have other affiliations that might cause a conflict of interest.

The very act of filling out an application prompts the potential member to think carefully about the commitment they are making should they be accepted. A Board commitment document should be included that informs prospects what serving on the Board entails, whether there is a specific code of conduct that must be adhered to, details about how often the Board meets and where, expectations around fundraising and volunteering, responsibilities regarding committee assignments, and how many meetings they are expected to attend during the year.

## Designing Your Application Form

The specific information you collect during the application process falls into two main categories. The first is basic personal information about the applicant. It's much like any standard job application form. The second is more specific and deals with their intent, their knowledge of your organization, and what previous nonprofit Board experience they may have.

When developing your application form aim for a balance between too simple and too detail oriented.

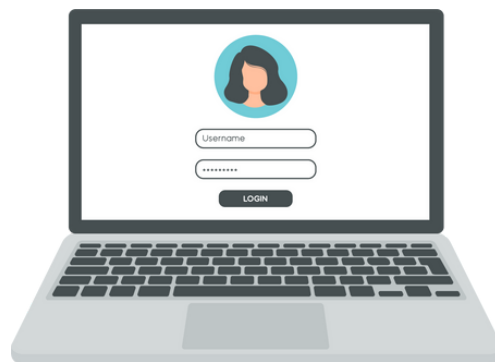
Your form can be preprinted on paper to be mailed, faxed, or scanned and emailed. It may be available to download or complete and submit online. Or you may decide to use all of those options.

These days forms are easy and free to create online using apps such as Google Forms, Jotform, Gravity Forms, Formidable Forms, or Typeform, Reasonably priced Pro versions are also available.

### Some suggestions of what to include on your form:

- **Personal information**

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Address, City, State, Zip Code
- Phone number
- Email address



- **Basic background information**

- What is their professional experience?
- Ask them to list any specific skills, expertise, or qualifications they would bring to the Board (e.g. fundraising, financial management, legal expertise, marketing, program development, etc.)
- What hobbies or special interests do they enjoy?
- What community volunteer activities have they participated in?

- **Nonprofit experience**

- What current or previous experience do they have with your organization?
- Have they served on a nonprofit Board before?
  - If yes, include space to provide details
- Why do they want to serve on your Board?
  - Encourage them to share what interests them about your mission, vision, and projects.
  - Are there any particular committees or areas of your organization they are most interested in serving on?

- **Commitment and Availability**

- Are they aware of where and how often your Board meets?
- Are they able and willing to commit to attending meetings on a regular basis?
- Are they willing to commit to serving on a Board committee?
- Are they willing to provide help and support to the organization in other ways in addition to attending committee and Board meetings?
- Are they willing to fundraise or serve as a volunteer?

- **Additional Considerations**

- You may want to request that applications include at least two professional references or personal references from individuals who can speak to your qualifications and character.
- You may want to ask if they'd be willing to accept an invitation to join the Board to complete the term of a previous member.
- Do provide space for the applicant to sign and date the form. Include a Commitment Form (see example) or statement such as:
  - By signing below, I acknowledge that I am interested in serving on the board of [Your Nonprofit's Name] and certify that the information provided in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge.
- You may also want to include a statement that all information will be kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of evaluating Board candidates.

# Your Recruitment Process

Recruitment of new Board members is a multi-step process. It should consist of more than just issuing an invite to someone you think might be interested or having potential members complete an application form.

## **Simplified roadmap of the recruitment process steps:**

1. Determine what personal and professional qualities would be useful for an incoming Board member to have. In other words, what skills or experience might a new member bring that would help fill any specific gaps in the makeup of your current Board?
2. Create accurate titles and descriptions of Board openings so potential candidates will have an accurate picture of what their responsibilities as a new Board member would be. For example, “We’re looking for a Board member with marketing experience.”
3. Reach out to qualified prospects in a variety of ways. Current Board members and active volunteers may share recommendations. But you may also want to consider placing an ad in your local media or creating a listing on LinkedIn or sending out a press release that happens to mention Board openings.
4. Interview prospects. Use an application form to streamline the process of gathering information comparing candidates, and deciding which ones to invite to interview.
5. Create a short list if you have multiple qualified candidates and limited seats to fill. This is often handled by the nominating committee.
6. Provide a formal orientation for the new member to help assimilate them to their new position and responsibilities more quickly.

While every Board member should be on the lookout for potential new Board members, it’s often best to have the actual invitation to join a board handled by specifically designated board members or via your nominating committee.

How effective is your nonprofit’s recruitment process? What changes or additions will you consider to improve it?

# BOARD MEMBER JOB DESCRIPTION AND COMMITMENT FORM

## [YOUR NONPROFIT NAME]

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Members of the [Your Nonprofit Name] Board of Directors work with the Executive Director and Staff to provide expertise and guidance to the organization. Board members efforts are focused on matters which will have the greatest impact on the organization and on the policies related to accountability, quality of service and long-term stability.

Serving on the [Your Nonprofit Name] Board of Directors involves a legal, spiritual and moral commitment. Board members are accountable in three areas: responsible governance, principles of commitment, and financial responsibility.

A board member shows responsible governance as follows:

- Reads and has knowledge of the organization Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, and pursues first-hand knowledge about the organization's services
- Ensures effective strategic planning and reviews organizational reports and activities to identify potential issues threatening the health of the [Your Nonprofit Name]
- Avoids self-dealing and conflicts of interest

A board member acts on principles of commitment as follows:

- Regularly attends all board and committee meetings and calls the board/committee chair or director when they cannot attend
- Keeps informed of general organizational activities
- Reads monthly minutes and reports
- Maintains confidentiality in all Board matters
- Cares for the organization, its staff, and clients
- Has long-term vision for the organization

A board member accepts fiduciary responsibility as follows:

- Acts to ensure the long-term financial stability and viability of the organization such as: oversight of investments, real estate, and income and expenses
- Pursues financial partners for the organization

Board member responsibilities:

- Serve a 3-year term of office. Can serve one additional term for a total of 6 years
- Serve on at least 1 standing committee
- Volunteer at events/activities throughout the year
- Attend board meetings (in person, phone or video conference), normally held every two months (5/6 attendance required)
- Attend the required Board retreat when scheduled, along with Board trainings
- Be a community ambassador for [Your Nonprofit Name] and its mission.
- Support the [Your Nonprofit Name]'s financial goals through assisting in fundraising activities or personal financial contributions to "give or get" \$5,000 per year in donations.

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Signature

Date

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Board Chair

Date