

Learning Labs: Governance Session Schedule and Key Takeaways

April 26 (Thursday)
9:00 am- 12:00 noon

Session 1 – Structure and Oversight (Board Structure)

Instructor: Elizabeth Perez, Legal Director at Lawyers Alliance for New York

Key Takeaways:

1. Identify governance standards, best practices, and decision making fundamentals that are key markers of legal compliance and good governance.
2. Understand key fiduciary obligations of the board (including the role of an audit committee and conflicts of interest policy), and how the role of the board may change as the organization evolves.
3. Identify specific governance structure improvements, and the path for implementing changes identified.

Pre-work: Reading -

<https://www.charitiesnys.com/pdfs/Right%20From%20the%20Start%20Final.pdf>

In-Session Exercise: Case studies involving board decision making process and challenges.

Homework: TBD

May 4 (Friday)
9:00 am- 12:00 noon

Session 2 – Diversifying Board Cultivation and Recruitment

Instructor: Fiona Kanagasingam, Director of Consulting at Community Resource Exchange

Key Takeaways:

1. Increased understanding of the relevance of board diversity and community representation as priorities in Board cultivation
2. Strategies for facilitating generative Board conversations that create the will for change on Board diversity and community representation
3. Increased mindfulness of common pitfalls (e.g., tokenism) in diversifying Boards
4. Tools and techniques for key decision-makers, including ED and Board to advance diversity in Board cultivation

Pre-work: <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2017/09/14/declining-diversity-nonprofit-boards/> (participants should download the accompanying slides too)

In-Session Exercise: Assessment of where the organization's Board practice is, and identification of opportunities needed

Homework: TBD

May 16 (Wednesday)
9:00 am- 12:00 noon

Session 3 – Board Retention and Value

Instructor: Michael Davidson, Board Coach

Key Takeaways:

1. Understanding how to structure the board to provide board members with the rewards that motivate engagement
2. Techniques for managing the work of board committees
3. Practices to manage the distinction between the governance responsibility of the board and the implementation responsibility of management
4. Strategies for maximizing board engagement at board meetings

Pre-work: Participants will be sent an electronic board assessment survey based on the NPEA standards of excellence in Governance

In-Session Exercise: TBD

Homework: TBD

May 31 (Thursday)

2:00 pm- 5:00 pm

Session 4 – Fundraising and Ambassadorship

Instructor: Gregory Cohen, Associate Director at Cause Effective

Key Takeaways:

1. Group commits to a process where the board establishes its own fundraising goals as a subset of the organization's goals.
2. Creation of a board fundraising committee that functions with a peer-to-peer dynamic.
3. The board is mindful of its fundraising networks and dynamics and reflects it in recruiting; the board should be thinking in a strategic way about how to advance the financial interests of the organization while diversifying income and identifying new markets.

Pre-work: TBD

In-Session Exercise: TBD

Homework: TBD

June 14 (Thursday)

2:00 pm- 5:00 pm

Session 5 – Evaluating Performance

Instructor: Rob Acton, Principal & Founder at Cause Strategy Partners

Key Takeaways:

1. Understanding what the main categories of evaluation should be.
 - Understanding of what to do with the information gathered – how to make an action plan for board improvement.
2. Templates for process and actual forms for helping board members track their individual performance and contributions throughout the year.
3. Sensitizing participants to the fact that evaluation of program effectiveness is a board responsibility and how best to navigate this.
4. Understanding of CEO evaluation as a broader, holistic process than just a once-a-year conversation.
 - What are the organization's goals for the year, what are the CEO's goals for the year, what are the best ways to maintain ongoing conversation between the board and the CEO, and the actual performance review process.

Pre-work: TBD

In-Session Exercise: TBD

Homework: TBD

June 18 (Monday)

2:00 pm- 5:00 pm

Session 6 – Planning for the Future

Instructor: Bonnie Mazza, Principal at Mazza Strategy Inc.

Key Takeaways:

1. Understand the main components of board strategic planning for the organization
2. How to engage the board in evaluation of organizational capacity and developments in the field
3. Identify necessary steps and gaps in succession planning for the board and CEO

Pre-work: Participants will be sent an electronic survey on strategic planning, evaluation of organizational capacity, and succession planning.

In-Session Exercise: TBD

Homework: TBD

Following Session 6 there will be a celebration hosted at NPCC offices.
