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**BOARD ORIENTATION**

Getting the best performance from your board means instituting a culture of learning so that board members are open to new ideas and constantly asking questions about their own role in the organization. This begins with a productive board orientation. The board orientation is an opportunity for new board members to become familiar with the culture, customs and traditions of the board. A successful board orientation should end with the new members feeling:

* Well-informed about their role and responsibilities as board members
* Familiar with the other members of the board and their roles
* Knowledgeable about the operations and finances of the organization
* Appreciated and valued by the organization
* Ready to contribute immediately

**ORIENTATION RESOURCES**

You should begin every orientation by preparing a binder of resources for your new members to quickly and efficiently give them the information they need to effectively contribute. This should include:

* Brief history of the organization
* Schedule of upcoming board meetings and events
* Outline of board member roles and duties
* Staff organizational chart and list of current board members
* List of board committees, including purpose and members of each
* Approved budget and most recent financials
* Minutes from recent board meetings
* Agenda for first board meeting
* A copy of the organization’s by-laws

The orientation itself should be short and sweet--give your new board members enough info to make them feel comfortable and ready to contribute, but don’t drown them in information. Allow them some time to get to know each other, and hold a brief question-and-answer session with returning board members; if you have one, you may want to show a video about the organization. Your overall goal should be for the new members to walk out of the orientation well-informed, confident, and excited to be a part of the organization’s leadership.