

FACILITATOR GUIDE

NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION – POWERPOINT TEMPLATE

Background

Ensuring that new board members receive the information and training to prepare them for their new volunteer role is widely recognized as a good practice and is commonly referred to as “board orientation.” Tips on Board Orientation can be found in NACHC’s [Governance Guide for Health Center Boards](#) (Chapter 2) and in an article titled, [Orienting New Board Members During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). The “New Board Member Orientation – PowerPoint Template” can be customized for board orientation at your health center.

Using the PowerPoint template

The “New Board Member Orientation – PowerPoint Template” contains some slides with general information, as well as a series of slides designed to be updated with health center-specific information. The template is designed to reflect a “multi-session approach” (described below) and you can reorganize the slides to match the agenda for board orientation being offered at your center. The “Notes View” section of the template include:

- “Notes” about how to consider using or adapting the slide.
- “Potential Talking Points” about content that might be helpful.

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), many State and Regional Primary Care Associations¹ (PCAs), and other organizations make various technical assistance resources available on the [Health Center Resource Clearinghouse](#) that may further aid in board orientation.

General Orientation Components

Some common components of an orientation process are included below for ease of reference:

- **Provide the board’s “handbook”** – The handbook may include items such as:²
 - Mission, vision, and values statements
 - Organizational chart
 - A copy of the health center’s articles of incorporation and bylaws
 - A copy of the board of director role description
 - A copy of the health center’s expectations of individual board members
 - Board roster (list of all members and contact information)
 - Committee descriptions, chairs and co-chairs/vice chairs, and committee assignments

¹ To find the PCA in your state or region, visit <https://www.healthcenterinfo.org/quick-finds-governance/>.

² List adapted and updated from NACHC resource, “Developing and Maintaining Effective Health Center Boards of Directors,” written for NACHC by Marcie H. Zakheim, Esq. with Feldesman Tucker Leifer Fidell.

For a complete list, see Appendix 1 of this document. The “handbook” may be a printed document, a section on a board’s online portal, or available in another online location.

- **Hold various training sessions** – Once held in-person, the pandemic prompted a shift to virtual orientation. As it becomes safe to meet again in-person, boards may still consider a virtual component to orientation. When designing the agenda for board orientation, consider the needs of new members and the format that may work best. Below are some sample formats:
 - 1) *Multi-session approach* - A board may opt for several short virtual orientation sessions (Appendix 2 contains a sample agenda). The “New Board Member Orientation – PowerPoint Template” is designed based on this approach though it can be adapted for other approaches as needed.
 - 2) *Staggered Approach* – In response to feedback that orientation programs prior to starting board service can feel “overwhelming” or “theoretical,” some boards have started using a staggered approach. This entails offering new board members a short (e.g., half-day) virtual “introductory” session prior to their first meeting that provides them with enough information and context to make thoughtful contributions. After a few board meetings, the new members receive additional “orientation” (or “re-orientation”) and more information. Boards that have used this approach say that it benefits both the new board member and the health center as the new members are able to easily connect their experience from the meetings to their ongoing board learning (see Appendix 3 for a sample agenda).
 - 3) *Customized Approach* – Based on input from board members, one board began implementing a customized orientation approach for new board members. While new members still participate in some general sessions, the board also customizes the learning to the individual. For example, if someone comes to board service with no prior financial expertise, their orientation program would include more time on that topic.

Some boards may also opt to combine various elements of these approaches depending on the size and complexity of the health center.

Ask participants if they have a clear understanding of the information shared either through discussion at the end of the presentation or through follow up evaluations. The information received through these efforts should support your plans for future training sessions.

- **Support a mentor or board buddy program** – Assigning new board members a mentor or buddy who has served on the board for a period can be a tool for helping new members become comfortable in their board role. Some boards assign new members a buddy who will also serve on the same committee so that the mentor can serve as a resource for both board and committee work.

Often the mentor/buddy will be available to answer questions after new board member orientation, will call the new member in advance of their first meeting to answer questions, and follow up with them after the new member’s first few meetings so they can ask questions or provide additional information. Having an informal “sounding board” can be helpful to a new member especially for individuals who have never served on a board or who are new to health centers. Below are a few considerations:³

³ Considerations are adapted from a presentation at NACHC’s CHI 2017 on “Using Mentors to Engage Consumer Board Members” by Kimberly McNally, McNally & Associates.

- Mentor Role – A mentor can help a new board member learn about the board and how it operates. They can help provide some of the overarching context for board discussions, provide support, and help the mentee set expectations.
- Mentee Role – A mentee is ideally committed to learning more about their role on the board, respects the mentor’s suggestions, and appreciates the mentorship relationship.
- Determine parameters for the relationship – It can be helpful to determine the goals of the relationship, how often to meet (e.g., once a month), how meetings will be scheduled, and create a process for checking in on the relationship.

Additional tips on Board Orientation can be found in NACHC’s [Governance Guide for Health Center Boards](#) (Chapter 2) and in an article titled, [Orienting New Board Members During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

Acknowledgements and Additional Information

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For additional resources from NACHC, please visit <https://www.healthcenterinfo.org/quick-finds-governance/>.

Appendix 1: Sample Topics for Board Orientation Handbook

- Mission, vision, and values statements
- Organizational chart
- A copy of the health center's articles of incorporation and bylaws
- A copy of the board of directors role description
- A copy of the health center's expectations of individual board members
- Board roster (list of all members and contact information)
- Committee job descriptions, chairs and co-chairs/vice chairs, and committee assignments
- Current board and committee meeting calendars
- Copy of the strategic plan
- A copy of the health center's conflict of interest policy and annual disclosure form
- Copies of relevant statutes, regulations and guidance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and key state agencies – such as, Section 330, Health Center Program Compliance Manual
- A copy of minutes from the board meetings from the last six months to one year
- A copy of the budgets
- A copy of the most recently submitted Section 330 Service Area Competition application or look-alike designation application (as applicable), as well as other relevant submissions to HRSA since submission of the last application
- A copy of the last set of audited financial statements
- A copy of the current Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement plan and sample Quality Dashboards (if relevant)
- Information on the health center's corporate compliance program and risk management plans
- As applicable, a copy of the current board work plan and/or a board culture statement
- Any other information that the board feels is appropriate

Source: [Governance Guide for Health Center Boards](#)

Appendix 2: Sample Multi-Session Board Orientation

Below is a sample agenda for a multi-session virtual board orientation.

Session 1: Welcome and Health Center Overview

1. Welcome / Getting to Know Each Other
2. Health Center History and History of the Movement
3. Current Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Plan
4. Health Center Overview
5. General Overview of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Health Center Program
6. Questions and Answers

Session 2: Board Roles and Culture

1. Board Duties
 - a. Overall Responsibilities
 - i. Board Roles
 - ii. Requirements from the HRSA Health Center Program regarding the role of the board
 - b. Board Member Legal Duties
2. Committees and Officer Roles
3. Board and Committee Meeting Dates
4. Board Culture and Practices
5. Audit and Financial Position
6. Quality Oversight and Data
7. Questions and Answers

Session 3: Learning More about Healthcare and COVID-19

1. COVID-19 and Impact on the Health Center – Overview for New Board Members
2. Additional Issues Impacting the Center's Internal and External Environment
3. Questions and Answers

Source: [Orienting New Board Members During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Appendix 3: Sample Staggered Board Orientation

Session 1: Prior to First Board Meeting

1. Welcome / Getting to Know Each Other
2. Health Center History and Current Vision, Mission
3. Health Center Overview
 - a. Welcome from the CEO
 - b. Services, Locations, Hours
 - c. Organizational Chart
4. General Overview of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Health Center Program
5. Board Duties
 - a. Overall Responsibilities
 - b. Board Member Legal Duties
8. Board Meetings and Committees
 - a. Committee Overview
 - b. Board and Committee Meeting Dates
9. Board Culture and Practices
10. What to Expect – Financial Overview, Quality Data, High-level impacts of COVID-19 and Recent Key Decisions
11. Questions and Answers

Session 2: After the Second Board Meeting

1. Continuing to Get to Know One Another
2. Answering Your Questions
3. Strategic Plan Overview
4. Board Duties – Deeper Dive
 - a. Board Roles
 - b. Requirements from the HRSA Health Center Program regarding the role of the board
5. Audit and Financial Position
6. Quality Oversight and Data
7. Questions and Answers

Session 3: After the Third Board Meeting

1. Checking In: How is it going? Do participants have a clear understanding of the material that's been presented so far?
2. Answering Your Questions
3. Deeper Dive: COVID-19 and Impact on the Health Center
4. Additional Issues Impacting the Center's Internal and External Environment
5. Questions and Answers

Source: [Orienting New Board Members During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)