



Rethink Your Board Policies

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A more inclusive board culture can unlock your organization's full potential.

Boards with diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and skills are better equipped to navigate the complex challenges facing nonprofits today. But many boards are operating with outdated policies that exclude outstanding talent. The practices below can help transform your board and drive your organization forward:

1 | Rethink Recruitment

Board members often recruit from within their networks, leading to a self-replicating network, a lack of diversity, and fresh perspectives.

Remedies:

- **Reach beyond existing networks.** An [open board search](#) can broaden the pool of candidates, attracting individuals of various ages, expertise, backgrounds, and lived experiences.

- **Consider new pipelines.** Board development programs like [National Urban Fellows](#), [African American Board Leadership Institute \(AABLI\)](#), [Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics \(LEAP\)](#), [Latinos LEAD](#), [Out Leadership's Quorum](#), and [100 Hispanic Women](#) can connect your organization with trained board candidates.
- **Mentor new members.** Mentorship or training programs help new board members feel supported and contribute effectively.
- **Onboard as a cohort.** Onboarding new board members in a cohort creates a sense of community and shared learning, which can foster more robust support systems and collaborative innovation.

2 | Rethink Giving Requirements

Board members are often expected to make significant financial contributions, excluding critical leadership and governance perspectives from individuals without financial excess.

Remedies:

- **Reframe “contributions.”** A board’s charge is to set ambitious goals and work together to achieve them. Capitalize on the unique assets each board member brings to the table and consider alternatives to monetary contributions, such as in-kind donations of services or expertise.

3 | Rethink Time Commitments

Serving on a nonprofit board requires significant time, which can limit participation from individuals with caregiving responsibilities or full-time jobs.

Remedies:

- **Consider virtual attendance or asynchronous participation.** Offering flexible meeting options helps accommodate board members with busy schedules.
- **Create different levels of board participation.** Advisory councils, task forces, and committees allow individuals to contribute at a level that fits their availability and expertise.

Nonprofit boards must evolve to support thriving organizations.

For more about board search and development, contact us at info@potrerogroup.com or (415) 937-1875.

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