

Strategies for Diversifying Board Membership



OVERVIEW

FISA Foundation believes that promoting equity and inclusion for women, girls, and people with disabilities as well as people of color, will strengthen our community and its institutions. We also know that organizations led by individuals with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and lived experiences lead to more equitable decision-making and stronger governance.¹

As an organization that values and strives for board diversity itself, we know this work must be thoughtful and deliberate. It is the responsibility of every member of a nonprofit board to commit to inclusion in a deep and systematic way for diverse perspectives to be truly welcomed and heard within an organization. Only with a high level of care and responsibility will a diverse board thrive. We hope the strategies and resources that follow will be a helpful tool in those efforts.

ACTION STEPS TO DIVERSIFY NONPROFIT BOARDS



1. Prep board on diversity and inclusion

Identify person or task force to oversee process of diversification
Educate board on diversity and inclusion
Answer this question: Why do we need to be more diverse?



2. Identify Gaps

Fill out a board development grid to take stock of gaps in diversity
Consider many kinds of diversity based on client demographics
(ex. Race, gender, disability status, age, education, experience)



3. Create a Plan

Create a statement with the board's definition of inclusiveness, how diversity will impact the ability to fulfill mission, and how you plan to implement your commitment (include: strategies, goals, objectives, tasks, and a timeline)



4. Search In-Network

Prioritize needed skill-sets, value diversity
Look to clients and former clients as potential board members
Seek to reflect the communities you serve



5. Expand your Network

Prioritize needed skill-sets, value diversity
Identify "connectors" who can refer potential board members
Seek emerging leaders looking for a volunteer opportunity



6. Welcome New Board Members

Emphasize important skills new members bring to the group
Plan for needs of members (accommodate people with disabilities)
Include them meaningfully as a part of the team, not a token

NETWORKS AND RESOURCES IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA TO IDENTIFY AND RECRUIT DIVERSE CANDIDATES

BOARD DEVELOPMENT/MATCHING PROGRAMS

Center for Race and Gender Equity (CRGE)

YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh

CRGE works with agencies and organizations to identify key areas that must be addressed when implementing a diversity and inclusion framework. Areas include: leadership, recruitment, retention, professional development, and community engagement. Services are provided using fee structures appropriate to each organization. Inquire below for more information.

Contact: Chaz Kellem | ckellem@ywcapgh.org

Covestro Institute for Engagement

Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at RMU

The BoardsWork! program provides governance-focused support to nonprofit boards at a subsidized cost of \$250/year for nonprofits with an annual budget of less than \$1 million and \$500/year for nonprofits with budgets over \$1 million. Participation for nonprofits includes an in-depth governance assessment, customized board retreat, and 1-2 trained board member matches annually. BoardsWork! also offers governance support and management classes, discounted for members.

Contact: Jennifer Pease | pease@rmu.edu

Leadership Pittsburgh Inc.

Leadership Pittsburgh is a multi-disciplinary leadership enrichment and networking organization in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Its Leadership OnBoard program places Leadership Development Initiative Graduates on nonprofit boards for 1 board year (with no fiduciary responsibility). Leadership Pittsburgh then facilitates board matches between interested program graduates and non-profits (with full fiduciary responsibility). All services are at no cost to the nonprofit.

Leadership OnBoard Contact: info@lpinc.org

Board Matching Contact: aradhna@lpinc.org

Leadership Portfolio Program (LPP)

The Johnson Institute, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA), University of Pittsburgh LPP is a leadership development program for highly talented graduate students at GSPIA. As part of the program, students serve on an interested nonprofit board of directors for at least 1 year.

Contact: Lydia Frances McShane | lfmcshane@pitt.edu

READING AND RESEARCH

[What do leaders need to understand about diversity?](#)

[Beyond Political Correctness: Building a Diverse Board](#)

[Successful Strategies to Diversity your Board](#)

EMERGING LEADER LISTS

Pittsburgh Magazine: "40 Under 40"

Pittsburgh Business Times: "Fast Trackers"

The Incline: "Who's Next" Series

GENDER DIVERSITY

Balancing the Scales Initiative

YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh, Center for Race and Gender Equity (CRGE)

Balancing the Scales offers annual workshops and networking opportunities to promote diverse women's leadership in Pittsburgh.

Contact: Chaz Kellem | ckellem@ywcapgh.org

Women in Leadership

Coro Pittsburgh

Women in Leadership, a program of Coro Pittsburgh, is a 10-month training program for women to refine personal and professional leadership and connect with women from diverse backgrounds. Coro Pittsburgh advertises nonprofit board positions to current participants and alumnae of the Women in Leadership program (and to other program participants and alumnae if relevant). Coro Pittsburgh offers off-site contracting on leadership development for staff and board members of nonprofits priced on a sliding scale.

Contact: Jennifer Holliman

| jholliman@coropittsburgh.org

RACIAL DIVERSITY

The African American Leadership Association

AALA is a membership-based organization composed of many skilled professionals in the greater Pittsburgh area. AALA provides board training and experience to interested members (guided by a mentor). AALA consultants also work with nonprofits to improve board dynamics and grant-funding possibilities. AALA shares board openings with interested members.

Contact: Darcel Madkins | info@aalapgh.org

Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA), Pittsburgh

ALPFA is a long-standing business organization committed to expanding opportunities for Latino leadership. ALPFA Pittsburgh advertises nonprofit board positions to its members.

Contact: president@pittsburgh.alpfa.org

The New Pittsburgh Courier

Recommended reading. Emerging leaders are often featured here.

<https://newpittsburghcourieronline.com/>

National Black MBA Association, Pittsburgh

NBMBA Pittsburgh has a mission of creating economic and intellectual wealth in the African-American community. The chapter currently has over 300 members including: business students, entrepreneurs, and distinguished leaders in business, education, and other sectors of the community. NBMBA will share board opportunities with their members.

Contact: Kyshira Moffett |

kyshira.moffett@nbmbaapgh.org

Vibrant Pittsburgh

Vibrant Pittsburgh is an economic development nonprofit that seeks to support initiatives to welcome and retain diverse talent and serve as the region's central resource, spokesperson and convener on workforce diversity and inclusion issues. It directs nonprofits seeking to diversity board membership to [The 2016 Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World \(GDIB\)](#).

DIVERSITY THAT INCLUDES DISABILITY

Board Diversity Includes Disability: A Webinar Series

[This series of webinars](#) is available online along with other resources upon request to support organizations seeking to include individuals with disabilities as board members.

Contact (Pittsburgh): Guy Caruso |

guy@temple.edu

Employee Resource Groups

We recommend you ask board members to consider their own corporations' employee resource groups. Many of these groups support equity and inclusion and often include groups for people with disabilities. They may also have groups for African Americans, women, and other marginalized people.

ⁱ Board Source. (2017). *Leading with Intent: 2017 National Index of Nonprofit Board Practices*. p.12. Accessed at goo.gl/R7moEw
Harris, E. (2014). The Impact of Board Diversity and Expertise on Nonprofit Performance. *Nonprofit Leadership and Management* 25(2): 113-130.

Lee, L., Marshall, R., Rallis, D. & Moscardi, M. (2015). *Women on Boards: Global Trends in Gender Diversity on Corporate Boards*. MSCI ESG Research Inc. Accessed at goo.gl/6sKTb4

If you know of additional diversity and inclusion resources that should be included here, please email info@fisafoundation.org