



Recruiting Board Members

Where to Look for Board Members

Promote from within. Look for involved volunteers. These individuals already demonstrate a commitment to the organization and have an intimate knowledge of the organization's strengths and weaknesses.

Board Member Swap. Pick four local organizations where you don't know anyone, but you'd like to (examples: NAACP, Japanese American Citizens League, Accountants for the Public Interest, community hospital). Ask each officer to call one of the local organizations and ask to have coffee with one of their leaders. Over coffee suggest that your two organizations recommend "retiring" board members to each other as a way of establishing organizational links and strengthening ties among communities.

Other Places to Look for Board Members

- Chamber of Commerce
- Local government offices
- Banks, local accounting firms, financial investment firms, law offices and other professional services organizations
- Houses of worship
- “Mommy/Daddy and Me” or other stay-at-home parenting support groups
- Civic clubs (e.g., Rotary International)
- Media outlets
- City or county park and recreation departments
- Retirement homes

Example Steps to Follow When Recruiting a New Board Member

1. Work with other key people to determine what positions need to be filled. Together write down each position on a separate sheet of paper. Next, put the kind of characteristics you want this person to have. For example, persistence, goal-oriented, computer skills, public speaking skills, banking/accounting skills, etc.

2. Put together a short list of your favorite candidates from the suggestions and research. Do a little research and find out if they have any history of volunteering for West Virginia University or any other organization. Find out about accomplishments they may have.

3. Determine with the support of your current board who is the best person to meet with this potential board member. Ask those who assisted in the nomination process if you can use their name when calling to set up the appointment, especially if they have a relationship with the person.

4. Make an appointment with your potential board members. Let them know exactly how much time you would like to have with them and how many people you plan to bring with you. Tell them you want to discuss West Virginia University in general and your group specifically. Set up a time and location that is convenient for them. This may be a quick lunch, breakfast or an after work meeting.

5. During your meeting, keep the conversation casual. After all, this is a volunteer position! Take the job description and have a list of meeting/events dates and locations and the estimated amount of time it will take to get the job done. It is important to paint a picture of the work involved and all the fun and satisfaction he/she will get being a part of it—be specific. While we never want to pressure anyone into a position, we do have to “sell” the opportunity to get involved.

6. Don't ask for an answer on the spot, but insist the candidate take some time to think about the position now that he/she has more information about what is involved. It is important, however, to “close the sale” and let them know you will call them in couple of days. If they decline to be on the board on the spot or during your follow up call, ask them for some referrals and add those people to your long list. Don't forget to send a thank you card.