

NEW BOARD MEMBER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Board Approved 08.02.2017
Amended 04.03.2019



This program provides guidance, support and a board connection for all new board members during their first year of board service by assigning seasoned board members to act as mentors. More specifically, the program focuses on:

- How to fully integrate the new board member by understanding board logistics, and
- Helping the new board member to understand how they can contribute to the board based on their leadership competencies.

The program seeks to accomplish these objectives by seeking to:

- More fully engage a new board member to feel comfortable and welcomed through a one on-one board member connection.
- Helping the new board member to fully understand Dwelling Place's strategic priorities and direction, and how best to contribute to future organizational initiatives.
- Facilitating the new board member's acclimation by learning from another board member's perspective about board culture, board meetings format, board structure and how things get done at board/committee level, and how best to contribute to board discussions.
- Providing an overview of the board membership, board roles and responsibilities, and expectations for board member meeting preparation and attendance.
- Facilitating and encouraging active board member engagement and contributions for a successful first-year experience.
- Offering recommendations for improvements in the mentoring program.

The Mentoring process will last approximately one year. It will begin soon after appointment to the board. The Board member and their protégé can determine if they would like to continue their mentoring relationship past the one-year time frame. Once a new board member is appointed, the Chairperson and CEO will identify prospective board members to serve as a mentor during the new board member's first year. Prior to the new appointee's first board meeting the Chair and CEO will conduct a half-day orientation session with new board member(s) which may cover topics such as but not limited to:

- Dwelling Place origins, history, and Conflict of Interest Policy
- Organizational Structure
- Strategic Priorities
- Board responsibilities
- Board member travel and expenses reimbursed
- How the board operates
- Consent agenda
- Key board decisions

Each mentor will receive the following:

- Welcome letter from the Chairperson
- The New Board Member Mentorship document
- Hard and digital copy of the New Board Member Orientation Packet

Successful mentoring attributes include but are not limited to:

- A demonstrated interest in helping the new board member to develop and empower them to make a meaningful contribution.
- A willingness to provide specific feedback as well as technical/operational expertise.
- A willingness to share knowledge and insights about their experience and what they have learned through board leadership.
- Skills as a good listener, observer and a problem solver
- Approachability and accessibility throughout the mentoring process.
- Willingness to connect with other mentoring board leaders to share ideas on the most effective mentoring techniques?

Mentors are expected to:

- Send "Congratulations" e-mail and include "What to Expect Before Your First Board Meeting" document with that email.
- Include link information from the Dwelling Place website, specifically noting volunteer opportunities, strategic priorities, various committees and the general learning framework.
- Incorporate some personal messaging that says something about what it was like for the mentor as a new board member –What did the mentor expect? How did the mentor learn what to do?
- Utilize the "sample" welcoming email or create their own version of this email to send to the new board member.

Prior to first board meeting mentors should:

- Contact the new board member to provide an overview of the board culture, board roles, committees, and some advice on how to ensure compliance with the Board policies.
- Help the new board member prepare for the meeting.
- Explain that the board chairperson will be in touch regarding committee appointments and will cover the work of the committees.

At the first board meeting mentors should:

- Make introductions to other board members and the Executive Committee if they have not already been introduced.
- Sit next to mentee to facilitate questions.
- Encourage feedback on board meeting evaluation forms.
- Throughout meeting, check with the new board member about their understanding of specific issues.

Following first board meeting the mentor should:

- Follow up on the meeting and answer any questions.
- Discuss committee role and expectations and how meetings are arranged.
- Highlight the need to review board action items from meeting.
- Provide feedback as to the board process and address any questions or comments from the new board member from the board discussion.
- Ask what was most interesting about the meeting?
- Ask them where they could see themselves contributing to an initiative, committee, or to other board work?

Following second meeting the mentor should:

- Follow up on the meeting and answer any questions.

- Ask what was most interesting about the meeting? Ask them where they could see themselves contributing to an initiative, committee, or to other board work?
- Ask for feedback on the mentoring experience thus far and how it might be improved.
- Complete a mentoring program evaluation form if available.

During the mentee's first year experience, he/she should keep notes about improvements that could be made to improve the mentoring experience. It may also be helpful during the course of the year for the mentor and mentee to have monthly one-on-one conversations before or after board meetings to discuss their impressions.

New Board members/Mentees are expected to:

- Review all materials prior to meetings
- Stay abreast of Board related communications
- Follow-up in a timely manner
- Fully leverage the mentor relationship
- Ask questions
- Keep notes about adaptations that could be incorporated into the mentoring program to improve the program.

The Dwelling Place Mentoring program will serve as an integral element to enhance a new board member's productivity, engagement and effectiveness. Thank you for your interest/willingness to serve in this very important role!

Sample E-Mail to New Mentor:

Date

Dear _____,

Congratulations! Thanks so much for agreeing to be a mentor for one of our new board members.

The purpose of our mentoring program is to assist new board members by creating one to one linkages between the new member and a more seasoned board member to provide enhanced opportunities to successfully develop as a board member.

As part of this mentoring process over the next several months, we encourage you to assist the new board member to understand board logistics as well as how he or she can contribute to the board based on their leadership competencies.

Some examples of ways to maximize this opportunity for the new member include:

- Sending them a congratulatory note prior to their first or second Board meeting.
- Setting up a time to chat prior to their first several board meetings.
- Encouraging them to visit and explore the Dwelling Place web site and the board portal.
- Sharing your experience as a new board member.
- Explaining to them what they can anticipate at their first board meeting.
- Asking if they have any questions for you.

On behalf of the Dwelling Place Board, I thank you for your willingness to serve as mentor. Your gifts of time, access and board expertise will greatly benefit new board members and help build a better board. Thank you for making this investment in the board's future!

Sincerely,

Dwelling Place Board Chairperson

Mentee/Protégé Information:

Name:

Title:

Institution:

Email:

Phone:

Sample E-Mail to Mentee/Protégé:

Date

Dear _____,

Congratulations! On behalf of the entire Dwelling Place Board, we're excited to welcome you as a board member.

The purpose of our mentoring program is to establish key board relationships that will provide you the opportunity to successfully develop as a board member; aid you in your professional and personal development; and enable Dwelling Place to fully develop and build our capacity.

As a way to introduce you to the board process over the next several months, it is my intent to share with you what to expect during your first board meeting, what resources will help you acclimate to the board, and ways to help you discover how you can best contribute to the board based on your leadership interests and skill sets.

Over the next several months, I would like to schedule three or four 30-minute calls or meetings to get to know you better. Here are some proposed dates/times:

In the meantime, I encourage you to review the Board Orientation Manual in some detail and visit the Dwelling Place website and board portal.

And of course, should you have any questions before our first call or meeting, don't hesitate to reach out! Again, congratulations and look forward to talking with you soon!

Sincerely,

Mentor

Signature

Mentor Contact information: