



Scouting America  
Toolkit for Increasing  
Community Representation on  
Boards  
*2025 Update*



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# Inclusion Vision and Mission



## Our Vision

To provide an opportunity for all youth to gain the competitive edge that Scouting delivers through life-changing programs and experiences that build character and ethical leadership skills and prepare them to live lives of purpose and impact.

## Our Mission

Scouting America promotes a culture where every youth, volunteer, and employee feels a sense of belonging and builds communities where every person feels respected and valued. Leading by example and encouraging each other to live by the values expressed by the Scout Oath and Scout Law, we welcome families of all backgrounds to help prepare young people to serve as successful members and leaders of our nation's increasingly diverse communities.



# Benefits of Community Representation on Boards

- Leads to better decisions.
  - Different perspectives help to identify a full range of opportunities and risks.
  - Boards that embrace the strategic value of community representation are better structured for success.
  - Identification of diverse facets can be helpful in planning, budgeting and membership.
- Increases ability to be responsive to the community and members.
  - The organization can access more resources in the community through connections with potential collaborative partners, policy makers and donors.
- Contributes to increased governance board sustainability.
  - Boards that are not representative of the communities they serve risk becoming stagnant.
- Supports fundraising and marketing/outreach more effectively.
  - Each board member represents another potential network, with new resources and connections.
- Builds social capital and cohesion among community populations.
  - Organizations with boards representative of their communities are better positioned to respond to a range of external influences and can provide new opportunities and skills for community groups.
  - Boards and leadership that represent their communities help organizations in building a culture of inclusion.
- Demonstrates an organization's commitment to representation (beyond simply verbalizing its importance).



# Benchmarking: For Council Boards

- Build community representation into the fabric of the organization.
  - Ensure diversity and inclusivity of opinions and experiences.
  - Commit to transparency, power-sharing and accountability.
  - Prioritize representation in hiring, promotions and volunteers.
  - Utilize Workforce Resource Groups.
- Career Growth and Leadership Development.
  - Invest in reskilling and development support.
- Employer Education and Inclusive Design.
  - Train on skills and competencies.
  - Develop solutions that fit everyone (i.e., accessibility, language, safety).
- Supplier Diversity.
  - Boost competitiveness, encompass social value and create stronger communities.
- Criticality of Board Involvement and Influence.
  - Increase involvement in education, oversight, monitoring and support for the organization's welcoming strategy.
  - Data-driven focus as more regulations and reporting will be required for boards.



# Getting Started

- Think about this process as a marathon, not a sprint.
- Change will not happen overnight.
- The recommendations included in this presentation are tried-and-true best practices that have resulted in positive changes.
  - Diversification helps tap into and understand the vast variety of communities and in doing so gain trust to help expand and diversify membership.
- Each board must begin to incorporate these principles/guidelines as soon as possible.
- In order to continue to grow and better serve all youth, it's important to evolve, along with the world.
  - Gen Z (born 1997 – 2012) – identifies as:
    - 50.9% White
    - 25.0% Hispanic
    - 13.8% Black
    - 5.3% Asian
    - 5.0% Other
    - 20.8% LGBTQ+
    - 10% Special Needs
  - Gen Alpha (born 2013 on) – data not confirmed; trending growth in all diversity populations.





# Recommended Key Steps for Actioning

This toolkit contains recommended approaches to diversify your council, including actionable information on how to establish commitments on community representation, develop recruitment, selection and measurement strategies, and more. If we want to remain relevant to the next generation, we need to evolve to enable attraction, engagement and retention of our ever-growing diverse youth population.

**Each council has the ability to customize approach as they deem most effective.**

**We feel strongly that focus on community representation is essential to empower us to continue to grow our membership and impact and remain relevant for another 100+ years.**



# Where to Begin/Key Steps to Take

1. Secure a commitment to community representation on boards.
2. Create a board composition strategy.
3. Develop a strategic recruitment plan.
4. Adopt an inclusive selection approach.
5. Establish formalized succession plans.
6. Increase community representation.
7. Track and measure progress.

*"When a nonprofit board reflects the diversity of the community served, the organization will be better able to access resources in the community.."*

**– NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NONPROFITS**





# 1. Secure a Commitment to Community Representation

- Share the benefits of community representation on boards (slide 4).
- Assess the current level of representation on boards.
- Implement a standardized process to regularly examine the level of community representation on the board.
- Evaluate how your board's representation compares <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/> to the demographics of:
  - Your current membership base and data for the available youth population within your geographic area.
  - Your volunteer base.
  - The current and future workforce.
- Discuss the implications for future growth and diversification. <https://boardsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/5-Questions-for-board-diversity.pdf> (The 5 questions are highly relevant)
- Identify a growth strategy:
  - Where are key opportunities based upon your population and the available population?
  - How can you continue to engage and provide opportunities for your current and future base?
- Establish well-defined board community representation goals. <http://www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org/setting-goals-more-diverse-and-inclusive-board>
  - Types of representation, including, but not limited to, gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, abilities, professional skills, experience, etc.
- Align all on our “why.”
  - Why do we want to create change? How are we serving the community? Why do we want to grow representation on our boards?
  - What is our “elevator speech” to attract new board members? <https://donorbox.org/nonprofit-blog/nonprofit-elevator-pitch>



## 2. Create a Board Composition Strategy

- Establish goals for community representation on boards, including having representation from all types of diverse populations. <http://www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org/setting-goals-more-diverse-and-inclusive-board>
  - Develop short and long-term board composition strategies.
- Create a matrix of current expertise and representation. <https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/what-board-composition-matrix-why-useful/>
  - Assess, “who is not in the room”: Consider demographics, including abilities, identities, professions, expertise, etc.
  - Include information on:
    - Expertise.      - Specific areas/needs for representation.      - Term limits and /or any other relevant info if/as applicable.
    - Board refreshment strategies.
      - Augmenting the board. (Should a position(s) be added to enable inclusion of key expertise, experience, etc.)
      - Implementing new term limits. <https://www.onboardmeetings.com/blog/board-term-limits/>
      - Succession planning (see slide 15).
- Communicate community representation goals to advance awareness, promotion and collaboration.
- Consider having board members sign a pledge aligning to actively participate in achieving the desired board composition strategy to ensure/reinforce their commitment to their communities.



# 3. Develop a Strategic Recruitment Plan

- Ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities. <https://www.propelnonprofits.org/resources/board-roles-responsibilities/#>
  - Make certain there is a role for everyone on the board to play.
- Appraise and refine qualifications.
  - What are our non-negotiable attributes? <https://www.glueup.com/blog/select-nonprofit-board>
    - Exs: Access to resources, motivated to contribute, willing to leverage personal networks, etc.
  - Identify what other qualifications are essential, and areas where we lack representation.
    - Exs: Digital or legal expertise, clergy, etc.; does the board reflect the communities it represents?
  - Ensure requirements are not too restrictive.
    - Be open to those earlier in their careers who can bring a fresh perspective and unique skillsets.
    - Consider waiving donation requirements.
    - Prioritize inclusion of those who want to be engaged and who will provide valuable perspectives when decisions are made.



# 3. Develop a Strategic Recruitment Plan

- Develop strategic partnerships.
  - Types of organizations include:
    - Ethnic, gender and abilities diversity organizations and professional networks, as well as with religious organizations. (Examples: [Ellevate Network](#), [Black and Brown Founders](#), [Hispanic Women in Leadership](#), [LGBT Meeting Professionals Association](#)), <https://nul.org/>, <https://apa1906.net/>)
    - Leading area corporations. - Community groups. - Share resources across national to widen the pool/net.
    - Ask partnering or neighboring organizations who have more diversity within their organization about their strategies for board recruitment.
  - Approach
    - Ask/offer, “what can we do to help” (without expecting anything in return) (*also see page 11*)
    - Partner with local councils to see who they know/what community groups they partner with.
- Optimize inclusivity of branding.
  - Ensure our branding is welcoming and showcases representation of our diverse communities.
  - Prioritize community representation on council sites to empower prospective Scouts and volunteers to envision themselves in Scouting.
  - Understand and promote our value proposition.
  - Increase the visibility of our board and our inclusion mission and vision.
    - Engage board members with units – have them share their backgrounds at “Town Halls” and promote more collaboration and transparency between the board and councils.



# 3. Develop a Strategic Recruitment Plan

- Employ a diverse search approach.
  - Use social media.
    - Post online: examples – [boardmemberconnect.com](http://boardmemberconnect.com), [philanthropynewsdigest.org](http://philanthropynewsdigest.org), [idealist.org](http://idealist.org), [createthegood.org](http://createthegood.org), [diversityjobboard.com](http://diversityjobboard.com), [ffwd.org/job-board](http://ffwd.org/job-board), LinkedIn and Indeed.
    - Blast your social media accounts with the open position and ask your employees and members to also share.
  - Participate in events.
    - Identify events that attract the type of people you're looking to recruit.
    - Participate in key community events and start providing value, before having authentic, in-person conversations about why their involvement is critical.
    - Host a one-hour webinar or seminar on the business case for diversity and invite well-connected people. Ask each person for a minimum of one referral.
  - Request referrals.
    - Request of board members – ensure diversity in community representation vs. perpetuating current state.
    - When extending outreach to key groups/individuals, if they are unable to participate, ask them for referrals.
  - Tap into our scouting enthusiasts.
    - Who are those who are hugely involved, engaged and invested?
  - Extend outreach. [https://successfulnonprofits.com/board\\_recruitment\\_templates/](https://successfulnonprofits.com/board_recruitment_templates/)



# 4. Adopt an Inclusive Selection Approach

- Use the board composition strategy to guide selection based upon priority needs (see slide 10).
- Establish approach.
  - Will an application be used to first vet candidates?  
<https://managementhelp.org/boards/staffing/applications.htm>
  - Who will be key to meet with candidates?
    - Ensure diverse representation among selection committee members.
- Have all Committee members complete the Unconscious Bias assessment (see slide 16).
- Based upon needs, evaluate candidates who can best support the go-forward vision.
- Use a standardized interview format to ensure fair and impartial evaluations.  
<https://www.sidecarglobal.com/organizational-culture/essential-interview-questions-for-board-of-directors/#>
- Identify and develop strategies to overcome barriers to outreach.
- Communicate decisioning.
  - Announce new board member and introduce to other board members.
  - Activate onboarding (see slide 16).



# 5. Establish Formalized Succession Plans

- Assess potential vacancies.
  - Identify current board members with impending term limits and those planning or considering retirement.
  - Consider how to address unexpected vacancies.
  - Establish how to manage if a member(s) need to be removed.
  - Determine how long positions will be able to be open without negative impact.
- Recruit talented individuals for future transitions.
  - Prioritize diversity in experience and demographics in alignment with the board composition strategy.
  - Identify those who would be an asset LT and those who could fill in ST.
    - Ensure compliance with bylaws.
- Obtain candid feedback from those leaving the board via use of an exit interview or survey.  
[https://www.nonprofitnext.org/sites/default/files/resource\\_library/Exit\\_interviews\\_for\\_Outgoing\\_Board\\_Members\\_rf.pdf](https://www.nonprofitnext.org/sites/default/files/resource_library/Exit_interviews_for_Outgoing_Board_Members_rf.pdf); <https://www.sidecarglobal.com/engage/before-they-get-away-board-member-exit-interviews/#>
- Incorporate community representation goals into the board's consideration of composition, succession planning, board refreshment, and the board evaluation process.

Resource: <https://boardable.com/blog/board-succession-planning/>

Information on Scouting America Council bylaws: <https://www.scouting.org/council-support/council-management-support/council-bylaws/>



# 6. Increase Inclusivity

- Education
  - Educate board members on Unconscious Bias (use GoCulture assessment): [Click here to create an account.](#) Complete a brief assessment; follow prompts to begin the learning path and access the program at any time at: <https://app.goculture.com>.
  - Ensure board members understand the importance of making others feel welcomed.
  - Develop a robust onboarding plan: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/board-orientation>
    - Whenever possible, onboard cohorts – so board members have their own “group” upon joining to increase engagement and their sense of belonging.
  - Mentorship – pair a new board member with an experienced board member to help acclimate and mentor them to increase speed to understanding and sense of belonging:  
<https://www.starboardleadership.com/board-chair-companion/board-mentors-a-strategy-for-engaging-new-board-members/>
  - Identify a Board Ambassador – someone with strong community relationships and skilled in being welcoming, as well as who can play a pivotal role in welcoming and onboarding new board member(s) and promoting inclusivity among existing board members.





# 6. Increase Inclusivity

- Priorities
  - Be intentional and authentic.
  - Incorporate networking as part of the board meetings to foster increased collaboration.
    - Investing in social time for the board to get to know and trust one another is reported to lead to deeper engagement, heightened trust, and higher satisfaction levels for board members.\*
  - Prioritize respectful communications and ensuring everyone has a chance to share their thoughts/idea/opinions and that all are listened to and considered. <https://boardable.com/blog/run-a-board-meeting/#discussions>
  - Engage your board members. <https://boardable.com/wp-content/uploads/boardable-ebook-the-board-engagement-playbook-7-tenets-for-success.pdf>
  - Provide flexibility in:
    - Timing of meetings.
    - Format of meetings (location, virtual, etc.).
    - Ability to donate \$\$.
  - Identify opportunities to utilize individuals' native languages to welcome those who do not speak English/speak it as a second language.
    - Hire bilingual admins for councils to enable communication with those who do not speak English/for whom it is challenging.
    - If/when possible, translate materials to increase inclusivity.



# 7. Track and Measure Progress

- Plan the evaluation process. <https://managementhelp.org/boards/evaluating-board.htm>
- Determine evaluation topics. <https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/board-evaluations/>
  - Examples: board community representation, engagement, collaboration, impact, etc.
- Identify who will lead the process.
- Create a tool to collect critical information.
- Analyze evaluation results to identify what's working well and where there are areas of opportunity.
- Create an action plan and collaborate on implementation.
- Establish milestones and how success will be measured. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/measuring-what-matters-in-nonprofits#>
- Report results upline.
- Determine how and where results will be shared more broadly, as well as frequency for sharing updates.



# Recap

- Why is this so important?
  - To support our mission of preparing young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.
  - To help realize our vision of partnering with all families and communities to maximize youth participation in and benefits from Scouting.
  - To empower more youth to “be prepared” to serve as successful members of and leaders in our communities, nation, society and the world.
- Q&A
- Follow Ups





# Appendix



# Sample Board Evaluation Questions

- How well do you understand the board's role in our organization?
- How effective are board meetings?
- How would you describe the dynamics of the board in meetings?
- How well do you understand the role of the committees?
- How well has the board identified the skills it needs to face future challenges?
- How well informed are board members about the sector in which BSA works?
- How diverse is the board?
- Does the board dedicate enough time to discussing risk?
- Does the board dedicate enough time to discussing strategy?
- How strong is the relationship between the board and management?
- How strong is the relationship between the board and the CEO?
- How effective is the chair?
- How effectively does the chair encourage an atmosphere of collaboration and trust?
- Does every board member have the opportunity to share their thoughts and have their opinions listened to and considered?
- How effectively does the chair manage dissent in the boardroom?



# Resources

- Tools for nonprofit boards
- Gen Z demographics
- Diversity census data
- Implications for growth and diversification
- Goal setting
- Elevator speech
- Board composition matrix
- Board term limits
- Board roles and responsibilities
- Standardized interview procedures
- Diversity organizations
- Social media postings
- Recruitment templates
- Candidate application
- Standardized interview procedures

- <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/diversity-nonprofit-boards>
- <https://www.axios.com/2022/02/17/lgbtq-generation-z-gallup>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation\\_Z\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation_Z_in_the_United_States)
- <https://data.census.gov/cedsci>
- <https://boardsource.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/5-Questions-for-board-diversity-2.pdf>
- <http://www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org/setting-goals-more-diverse-and-inclusive-board>
- <https://blog.joangarry.com/nonprofit-elevator-pitch-1/>
- <https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/what-board-composition-matrix-why-useful/>
- <https://www.onboardmeetings.com/blog/board-term-limits/>
- <https://www.propelnonprofits.org/resources/board-roles-responsibilities/#>
- <https://www.glueup.com/blog/select-nonprofit-board>
- [Ellevest Network](#), [Black and Brown Founders](#), [Hispanic Women in Leadership](#), [LGBT Meeting Professionals Association](#)), <https://nul.org/>, <https://apa1906.net/>)
- [boardmemberconnect.com](#), [philanthropynewsdigest.org](#), [idealist.org](#), [createthegood.org](#), [diversityjobboard.com](#), [ffwd.org/job-board](#)
- [https://successfulnonprofits.com/board\\_recruitment\\_templates/](https://successfulnonprofits.com/board_recruitment_templates/)
- <https://managementhelp.org/boards/staffing/applications.htm>
- <https://www.sidecarglobal.com/organizational-culture/essential-interview-questions-for-board-of-directors/#>



# Resources (cont.)

- Exit interviews
  - Unconscious bias assessment
  - Onboarding
  - Mentorship
  - Respectful communications
  - Engagement
  - Evaluation
  - Establishing milestones and success metrics
- [https://www.nonprofitnext.org/sites/default/files/resource\\_library/Exit\\_interviews\\_for\\_Outgoing\\_Board\\_Members\\_rf.pdf](https://www.nonprofitnext.org/sites/default/files/resource_library/Exit_interviews_for_Outgoing_Board_Members_rf.pdf);<https://www.sidecarglobal.com/engage/before-they-get-away-board-member-exit-interviews/#>
  - <https://app.goculture.com>.
  - <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/board-orientation>
  - <https://www.starboardleadership.com/board-chair-companion/board-mentors-a-strategy-for-engaging-new-board-members/>
  - <https://boardable.com/blog/run-a-board-meeting/#discussions>
  - <https://boardable.com/wp-content/uploads/boardable-ebook-the-board-engagement-playbook-7-tenets-for-success.pdf>
  - <https://managementhelp.org/boards/evaluating-board.htm>
  - <https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/board-evaluations/>
  - <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/measuring-what-matters-in-nonprofits#>