



## **Northeast Institute for Quality Community Action**

### **Community Action Agency Board Mentor Policy Template.**

#### **Rationale.**

Joining the Board of a local Community Action Agency (CAA) offers a unique opportunity to address the needs of low income community residents through policy advocacy and the design and delivery of essential service programs. For new Board members the scope and complexity of CAA legal mandates, financing and service operations can be confusing and intimidating. To help new Board members become more comfortable and confident in carrying out their responsibilities agencies may wish to offer a mentor to help provide information and support for up to twelve months. Helping Board members exercise their planning and oversight responsibilities as quickly as possible improves the overall effectiveness and productivity of the agency's Board.

#### **Goal.**

To design and implement a XXX CAA Board Peer Mentoring Program which will promote the understanding, comfort and productivity of newly elected Board members.

#### **Program Design.**

The Chair of the agency's Board should either create an ad hoc Committee or assign an existing Standing Committee (e.g., Governance or Nominating) with the responsibility of developing and recommending an agency Board Peer Mentoring Program for adoption and implementation. This template has been prepared to help guide the planning of an agency Mentoring program. The needs of individual agencies can and should dictate the final design of a program. One approach is to develop a more structured, formalized program while another is more informal. Whatever approach is decided upon, the final decision to accept a mentor always is the prerogative of the Board member.

### **Board Peer Mentors.**

- 1. Recruitment:** Board members with at least X years of experience are eligible to volunteer to serve as Peer Mentors. Board members interested in becoming Mentors should inform the Board Chair or a designee.
- 2. Orientation:** Board members volunteering to serve as Mentors will complete a Mentor Profile form (Appendix) and submit it to the Board Chair or designee. A description of the Mentoring Program along with a Mentor Job Description (Appendix) will be provided the Board volunteer. The Chair or the designee will meet with the Mentor applicant to answer questions and confirm interest and commitment.
- 3. Roles and Responsibilities:** The Mentor's role is to offer information and support to help newly elected Board members become productive as quickly as possible. Mentor responsibilities may include:
  - ✓ Reviewing agency history, services, budget, area served organizational structure and "alphabet soup" shorthand of titles, etc.
  - ✓ Informally introducing the member to other Board members and senior staff prior to or following Board meetings
  - ✓ Offering to review advance information sent to the Board to assure receipt and understanding.
  - ✓ Explaining major issues, questions and challenges facing the agency.
  - ✓ Clarifying governance procedures and policies.
  - ✓ Answering questions and offering help to assure member meeting attendance.
  - ✓ Explaining Committees and encouraging member participation.
  - ✓ Encouraging participation in available Board trainings.
- 4. Commitment:** To provide up to XX hours of support for a new Board member for up to 12 months.

### **Board Mentees.**

- 1. Recruitment:** All new Board members will be informed of the agency's Board Peer Mentoring Program at their agency Orientation Meeting. Information describing the Program will be included in the Board Manual distributed to all new members. New Board members may request assignment of a Mentor at the Orientation meeting or by contacting the Board Chair or designee at any time during the first X months of their service.
- 2. Orientation:** If the new Board member has any questions about the Mentor Program which remain following the Orientation meeting she/he may contact the Board Chair or designee for more information. Mentee's will complete and submit a brief Profile

Form (Appendix) to the Chair/ designee which will identify information needs, questions, etc. and contact information/preferences.

**Mentor Matching.**

The Board Chair or designee will, following review of submitted Mentor and Mentee Profile information, partner a Mentor to each new Board member requesting support. The Chair/designee will inform both parties of the match and request the Mentor to immediately contact the assigned Mentee.

Either party may, at any time, terminate the match and inform the Board Chair/designee of their decision.

**Evaluation.**

At the conclusion of the match both the Mentor and Mentee will be provided an Evaluation Form with a request to complete the form and submit it to the Board Chair/designee. Evaluations will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine if improvements can be implemented in the Peer Mentor Program.

**APPENDIX**

**BOARD PEER MENTOR**  
**POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**QUALIFICATIONS:** Minimum of X years Board service without unexplained absences. Willingness to commit to up to XX hours of Mentor support during an assignment(s) lasting no more than 12 months. Sound knowledge and understanding of agency background, policies and services. Effective communication and interpersonal skills.

**SUPPORT CONTACT:** Board Chairperson or designee.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Share knowledge and information about the agency.
- Introduce new member to other Board members and senior staff.
- Offer to arrange a tour of agency facilities.
- Review Board governance policies (e.g., Conflict-of-Interest) and business procedures.
- Review Board Committees and opportunities for service based on member interest.
- Discuss issues and challenges facing the agency.
- Assist in meeting attendance as needed.
- Assure agency communications are being received by the new member.
- Respond to questions as needed.
- Complete Mentor evaluation at the conclusion of the assignment.

**BOARD PEER MENTOR PROFILE**

**Name:**

**Contact Information:**

- **Address:**
- **Phone (Home):** **Cell:**
- **Email Address:**
- **Preferred Method of Communication:**

**# Years of Service on the Board:**

**Tripartite Sector Representative: Public ( ); Low Income/Community ( ); Private ( )**

**Past/Current Committee Assignments:**

**Areas of Knowledge/Experience/Expertise:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**I have reviewed the commitments required to serve as a Board Peer Mentor and confirm my interest in serving as needed an appropriate.**

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**Signature**

**Date**

**MENTOR REQUEST FORM**

**Name of Director Requesting Mentor:**

**Contact Information:**

- **Address:**
- **Phone (Home):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Cell:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Email Address:**
- **Preferred Method of Communication:**
- **Best Time to Communicate:**

**Other Agency Board Service? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Please describe:**

**Areas of Interest/Experience and Expertise:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Tripartite Sector Representative: Public ( ) Low Income/Community ( ) Private ( )**

**Questions – Challenges:**

- **Access to transportation.**
- **Language.**
- **Accessibility.**
- **Childcare Arrangements**
- **Additional Agency Information.**
- **Meetings schedules.**
- **Board leadership – Senior Staff – Board policies.**
- **Board Committees**
- **Strategic Goals.**
- **Current Issues/Challenges being addressed by the Board.**
- **Other Questions/Needs:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

**Date**