BOARDSMANSHP

Inclusive and Accessible

Membership

Decision Making

Success

People First of California, Inc.
1225 8th Street, Suite 210   Sacramento, CA 95814    916-552-6625   www.peoplefirstca.org
INTRODUCTION

From our Executive Director

Today self-advocates in California have the opportunity to serve on local, state, and national boards. We are making a difference on policies that affect us and creating opportunities for people to have a voice.

Joe Meadours
Executive Director, People First of California

“To be an advocate for all, training will encourage Self-Advocates to realize what they can contribute, what they need to be a participating board member, and how to provide their unique perspectives and concerns.”

Michael Cooke
President

People First of California Board of Directors 2007

This guide was made possible by a generous grant from the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities. 2008
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How To Use This Workbook</td>
<td>Page 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Boards And Committees</td>
<td>Pages 4-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodations</td>
<td>Pages 9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THINK: What’s Important To Me</td>
<td>Pages 11-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAN: Choosing the Organization</td>
<td>Pages 14-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DO: Our Agreement</td>
<td>Page 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

By completing the steps in this workbook, you will learn what it means to be a decision maker or advisor for an organization. You will know what is important to you when joining a Board of Directors or Committee.

This book will help you:

THINK
What kind of Board of Directors or Committee you want to join

PLAN
How to get information that helps you make a decision

DO
Decide if the Board or Committee is right for you
WHAT IS A BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

A Board of Directors is a group of people who make decisions about what an organization does and how it is managed. Board members write policies that are rules and regulations to guide the organization.

Members are selected to represent different groups from the community.

The Board decides:

1. Who runs the organization
2. How the organization will operate
3. How much money will be spent
4. What the organization does for the community
5. Who is selected to be on the Board
A Board is led by officers. They have required jobs that help the Board run smoothly and carry out its mission. All Boards must have at least two officers. Each officer has responsibilities.

**THE PRESIDENT** leads the Board and its activities. He/she runs the Board in a business-like manner and follows all laws. The President leads the meetings and chairs the Board’s Executive Committee.

**THE VICE PRESIDENT** is the backup for the Board President. The Vice President is often assigned additional duties such as chairing special committees. He/she leads the meeting when the president is not there.
WHO LEADS THE ORGANIZATION?

**THE SECRETARY** makes sure Board business is documented with minutes of meetings and all important decisions. He/she ensures records of the Board are up to date.

**THE TREASURER** makes sure financial records are complete. He/she provides timely reports to the Board and ensures an audit [official review] of the organization's finances is done.

**WHAT IS AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR?**

The Board hires an Executive Director to run the organization. The Executive Director carries out the Board policies so the organization meets its goals.

The Executive Director hires employees to do the work.
A COMMITTEE is a group directed by the Board to carry out work and projects then report back to the Board.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE carries out the Board’s responsibilities and makes decisions when the full Board cannot meet. Board officers are members of the Executive Committee.

A STANDING COMMITTEE is an ongoing group that meets regularly. Standing Committees include Executive, Finance, and Nominating.

AN AD HOC COMMITTEE is a group asked by the Board to work on a project or gather information for a limited time.
WHAT IS A MEMBER’S JOB?

Members are responsible for making sure the organization follows the law and its budget. Members must be informed about community needs and the organization's services.

MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Prepare for meetings and complete assignments
- Understand and follow the bylaws
  [rules that explain how a board runs]
- Stay informed about important issues that affect the organization
- Keep important information confidential
  [discussed only with members at meetings, never with anyone outside the meeting]
- Give opinions on issues
- Work as a team member
- Understand and practice meeting rules
WHAT ARE ACCOMMODATIONS?

Accommodations are different ways to make places and meetings accessible so members can be comfortable and be included in important activities.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY are devices [tools] that allow a member to participate fully in meetings. Examples include a computer, tape recorder, hearing device.

ROOMS AND BUILDINGS are easy to get around so members can choose where to sit and use the restrooms comfortably.
WHAT ARE ACCOMMODATIONS?

ADAPTED MATERIALS make information easily understood by all members. Adaptations can include using plain language, colors, large print, fewer words per page, pictures and summaries of important action and information.

A FACILITATOR is a person who helps a member with Board or Committee responsibilities. Duties can include: adapting meeting materials, following the meeting agenda, preparing before meetings, and arranging transportation.

A MEETING MENTOR is a member of the Board or Committee who gives support to another member before and during the meeting.
WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME?

Volunteer Board and Committee members share their abilities and experiences to help make the organization the best it can be. It is important to know why you want to be on a Board or Committee before applying.

WHAT IS MY MISSION?

(Check what is true for you)

☐ Be a decision maker [advocate for change]

☐ Share my thoughts, ideas, and feelings

☐ Help improve the organization

☐ Teach other self-advocates about leadership

☐ Make a difference
Using the points you checked on page 11, write what YOU want to accomplish as a Board or Committee member. This is called a Mission Statement.

**Example of a Mission Statement:**

“I want to make a difference by sharing my ideas and feelings about improving the organization.”

My mission statement for volunteering as a Board or Committee member is:
### WHAT ORGANIZATION IS FOR ME?

- **Community Service**  
  (Agencies that provide services and programs)

- **Regional Center**  
  (Case management and coordination)

- **Advocacy Group**  
  (Area Board, Protection & Advocacy, State Council)

- **People First**

- **Community and Civic Organization**  
  (Red Cross, housing/shelters, recreation, local groups)

- **Environmental and Animal Protection Service**  
  (Recycling, community service, zoo, animal shelters)

- **Other_______________________________**
Good boardmanship means being prepared. Some members may want assistance with meetings and support with assignments. It is important to know what help you may need to complete your responsibilities.

### BEFORE THE MEETING

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Review and understand meeting materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Plan transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Organize materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Other ________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DURING THE MEETING

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Adapted materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Assistive technology, sign language interpreter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Other ________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### AFTER THE MEETING

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Review important information and things to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Organize paperwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Follow up with assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Other ________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Name of Organization: ________________________
Address: ___________________________________
Phone____________________________________

I will talk to:      NAME PHONE

Executive Director____________________________
President/Chair_____________________________
Board Member _____________________________

DATE TIME

Appointment ________________________________
### WHAT QUESTIONS WILL I ASK?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What kind of organization is this?</td>
<td>□ Service Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Regional Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Advocacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Community Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Environmental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Animals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Other _________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who benefits from your service?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Service Provider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Regional Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Advocacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Community Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Environmental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Animals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Other _________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Is there an opening on the Board of Directors or a Committee?**

**How long is a member's term?**

**How often does the Board or Committee meet?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a member, are there extra duties I would have to do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What support can the organization provide?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are supports paid by the organization?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there membership fees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you near public transportation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you located in a safe place for night meetings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help at events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public speaking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapted material</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting mentor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT QUALIFIES ME TO BE A MEMBER?

My experience with this kind of organization.

My experience on Boards and Committees.

Why joining this organization is important to me.

My mission statement
I agree to:

☐ Fulfill member responsibilities
☐ Share my opinions and ideas at meetings
☐ Complete the assignments
☐ Other __________________________

Signature ____________________________

Date _______________________________

The organization agrees:

Provide:
☐ Meeting Mentor
☐ Facilitator
☐ Adapted materials
☐ Transportation
☐ Other __________________________

Signature ____________________________

Date _______________________________
GOOD IDEAS

- **Be a professional**
  Present yourself as neat, clean, and well groomed.

- **Be prepared**
  Meet with your facilitator to review for the meeting.

- **Be organized**
  Arrange transportation so you are on time.

- **Be an active participant**
  Share your thoughts and make informed decisions.

- **Be responsible**
  Follow up with homework after the meeting.

THINK AS A LEADER
BOARDSMANSHIP RESOURCES

Thank you to those who gave time and expertise to develop this tool. It will open doors for self-advocates to become active members of Boards and Committees.

People First of California Boardsmanship Project Team

Joe Meadours       Executive Director
Mike Everson       PFCA Administrator
Robin Rhodes       Executive Support Staff
Linda Thompson, MSRC Project Coordinator
Liz Lyons          Southern California Self-Advocate Leader
Marinda Reed       Protection and Advocacy, Inc.
Jennifer Allen     Capitol People First

Concept and Development

Board Resource Center (www.brcenter.org)          Mark Starford, Charlene Jones & Donna Aikins
People First of California, Inc.  1225 8th Street, Suite 210  Sacramento, CA 95814  916-552-6625  www.peoplefirstca.org

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


Empowering People To Be On Boards; Information About Being a Member of a Board or Advisory Committee (1995). B. Benson, et al. Developmental Disabilities Board Area 3. (916) 324-7426


