



Promising Practices in Governance

Mentoring New Board Members

Purpose:

- To integrate new board members and facilitate development of relationships.
- To deepen orientation to the work of the board and enhance learning.

Process:

An experienced board member agrees to serve for one year.

Commitment:

1. In the week prior to the board meeting, after board agenda and materials have been received, the mentor sets up in-person or telephone contact with the new board member:
 - Review reports to help the new board member understand what they are saying
 - Clarify the meaning of acronyms or industry jargon
 - Identify key issues the board will address
 - Address questions

This conversation helps the new board member become engaged in the meeting even before it starts.

2. During the meeting, the mentor uses breaks to encourage questions and reflection.
3. At the end of the meeting, or sometime shortly after, the mentor initiates a brief conversation to review the meeting and answer questions.
4. The mentor or the new board member share with the board chair, CEO or governance committee any suggestions for making the orientation process clearer for new board members.
5. The relationship concludes at the end of a year.