

Building Better Boards

The Community Foundation of East Central Illinois is committed to raising the capacity of nonprofit organizations and their boards. By doing this, we feel that not only will the organizations with which we work be more effective, they will also be able to provide better service to their clients. Additionally, the donors will feel an increased level of confidence in the operation and efficacy of these organizations. Over time, a large cadre of exceptional board members will benefit our area.

To do that, the Community Foundation introduces this three-phase training program.

Application Process

Executive Directors and their boards must make a strong commitment to meeting the requirements of each phase of the formal process. Interested organizations are asked to e-mail Joan Dixon at joandixon@cfeci.org for details about the initial materials the organization will be required to provide.

Phase I – Board Building

(Timeframe: Up to 6 months from notification of award)

Objective: To increase the strength of the board through a formalized effort of recruitment, evaluation and education. This process is based on Board Source's "The Board Building Cycle," and includes:

1. Review of bylaws, financial and other documents;
2. Creation of a strategic plan by the board, clearly outlining the separate role of the Board and the staff (or a review of the current strategic plan);
3. Formation by the nonprofit board of a Governance Committee charged with the long-term development of the board;
4. Training provided by the Community Foundation on the following topics:
 - a. Board responsibilities
 - b. Development of board profile
 - c. Development of pool of potential board members
 - d. Contact of potential board members, explore interests, formal nomination of new board members
 - e. Development of protocol for board orientation
 - f. Engagement and team building
 - g. Formalizing regular opportunities for board education
 - h. Conducting individual board member self-assessments and a board self-assessment
 - i. Development and observation of board terms and officer rotation

Periodic reviews of progress will be made and at the successful conclusion of Phase I, the organization will receive a \$5,000 grant from the Community Foundation. The grant is unrestricted and can be used for future capacity building or other organizational needs.

Phase II – Unlocking the Inner Fundraiser

(Timeframe: Up to 1.5 years from notification of award)

Objective: To raise the fundraising capacity of the organization by increasing the number of campaigners and donors supporting the organization which will, in turn, increase the charitable dollars donated annually. The process focuses on:

1. The Community Foundation leads a discussion on the importance of the board's role in fundraising;
2. The organization submits a statistical data report that identifies the current status of their fundraising campaign (donors, campaigners and dollars raised annually);
3. The Community Foundation reviews will help establish a benchmark for fundraising;
4. The organization recruits a campaign committee including a campaign chairperson. The campaign committee work includes:
 - a. Setting fundraising timeline/calendar
 - b. Recruiting campaigners
 - c. Developing elevator speech, marketing materials
 - d. Developing social media presence
 - e. Annual campaigns
 - f. Major gift fundraising
5. Organization has the option to unlock the Community Foundation contribution through a capital campaign effort.

Periodic reviews of progress will be made and at the successful conclusion of Phase II, the Community Foundation will match new gifts on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to \$5,000. The use of these matched funds is unrestricted.

Phase III – Planning for Sustainability

(Timeframe: Up to 1 year from completion of Phase II)

Objective: To assist the organization establishing a plan for itself on a long-term basis and commitment to sustainability of the organization. The process requires:

1. A Community Foundation-led discussion on the importance of endowment-building;
2. When the organization raises its first \$5,000, it will use the money to establish an endowment with the Community Foundation;
3. No part of the monies raised toward the completion of the goals of Phase I or II may be counted toward Phase III.

Again, periodic reviews of progress will be made and at the successful conclusion of Phase III, the Community Foundation will match new gifts on a dollar-for-dollar basis, up to \$5,000 in an endowment established with the Community Foundation, bringing the total value of the endowment fund to \$10,000.