



A Note About SVP's Philanthropy Curriculum

Social Venture Partners' Philanthropy Curriculum has been designed to be delivered by any experienced facilitator. While a basic understanding of the content and audience will be helpful, the facilitator does not need to have extensive expertise on the topic.

The courses were designed by the instructional design team at [Endurance Learning](#) using best practices based on research about adult learning. They don't rely heavily on presentation, focusing instead on reflection, conversation and simulations to enhance the knowledge and skills of Partners and other participants. Each course was tested by partners and staff from across the network, both in-person and online.

The content is scalable, equally effective if delivered around a table to a group of 3 or 4 or as a more formal workshop with a group of 30 or 40. If you are delivering the content as an e-workshop, we recommend a tool like [zoom.us](#), that includes features such as whiteboards, breakout rooms, chatting and polling.

While the courses were originally designed with new SVP Partners in mind, long-time Partners and staff in the pilots shared their view that all Partners will benefit from the content. In fact, community partners and individual philanthropists of all kinds can benefit, and SVP encourages wide spread dissemination of all the information herein. It is an open source document.

If you have any questions regarding SVP's Philanthropy Development Curriculum, please contact Social Venture Partners International.

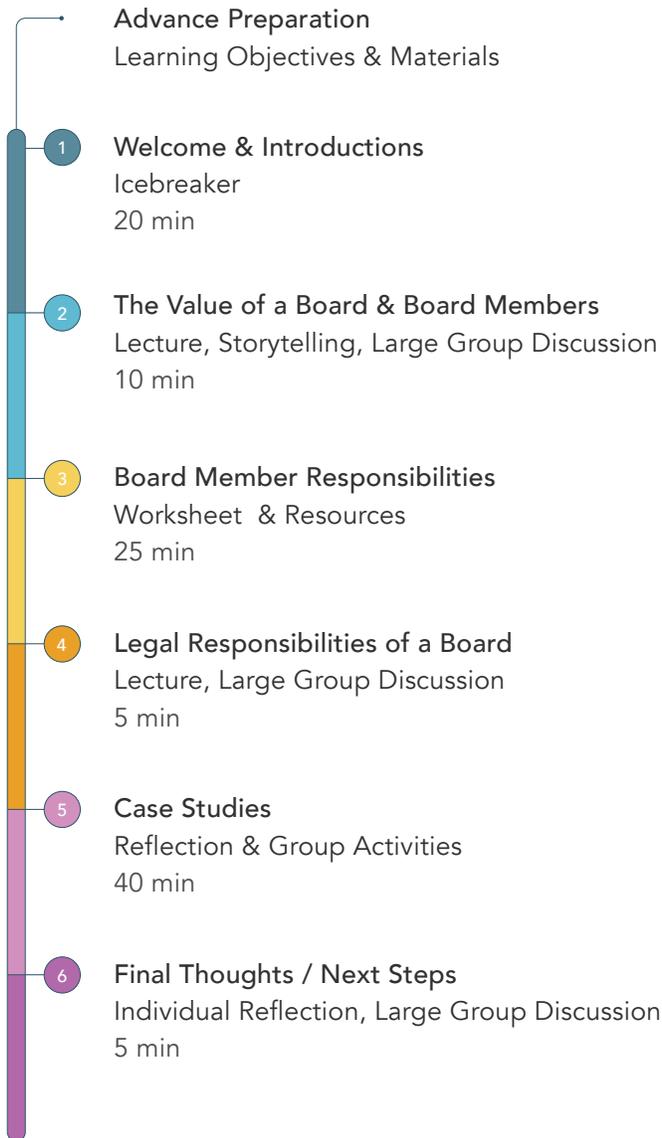


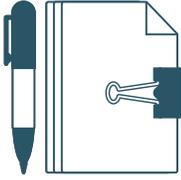


Great Boards & Valuable Board Members

Overview

Course Time: 1 Hour, 45 minutes 





Advance Preparation

Learning Objectives & Materials

Why this course?

Nonprofit boards of directors are responsible for the strategies and financial health of the organizations they serve. While it is a significant responsibility, it can also be an amazing experience, giving people the opportunity to use their talents, skills, connections and ideas to help the organization meet its mission. High-functioning boards are essential to having sustained impact, but dysfunctional boards can stymie growth and cause instability.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to...

1. Identify board member responsibilities
 2. Describe the characteristics that make for a great board member
 3. Articulate the responsibilities of a board member
 4. Discuss how board members provide value
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Materials



Handouts

- A3. Aspects of Governance
 - A3. Board Member Responsibilities Scenarios
 - A3. Board Responsibilities Worksheet
 - A3. Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards
 - A4. Legal Responsibilities of a Board
 - A5. Boards Suffering Dysfunction
 - A5. Potential Board Members
 - A5. OCAT - Board Leadership
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Advance Preparation: Learning Objectives & Materials



Other Materials

- Slide show
- Index cards
- Markers
- Flipchart
- Pens
- Handouts



Welcome & Introductions

Technique: Icebreaker

20 Minutes



- Index Cards
- Pens



Where We're headed Today

As participants enter the room, ask each them to create name tags for themselves. Once you have all (or at least most) of the participants present, welcome the participants and introduce yourself.

Welcome to this workshop on board development. Over the next two hours, we will walk through a series of activities, discussions, and case studies that will help us dig more deeply into these topics. We'll be exposed to content designed to help you:

1. Identify board member responsibilities
2. Describe the characteristics that make for a great board member
3. Articulate the responsibilities of a board member

Because of the impact that a nonprofit board has on the way an organization functions, this may be one of the most important training modules you can take if you're going to be working in the nonprofit setting. An ineffective board can wreak havoc on the organization's ability to carry out the mission and its overall effectiveness. A great board can lay the foundation for amazing things.

Before we jump into all of this, we are going to do a quick introduction activity. You'll share your name, how long you've been a partner, and then I'd also like you to come up with a sort of elevator speech about an organization you've worked with or maybe one you support. Keep in mind that elevator speeches have a clear and brief message and should be interesting, memorable and compel people want to learn more about your organization.





Where We're headed Today

When you hear the term “elevator speech”, you may be thinking of a 20- to 30-second message, but for this introductory activity I want you to be even more concise. I want to hear about an organization you’ve worked with in the past or are currently working with, *in exactly six words*.

There are cards on your tables. Please use those cards to write six words that accurately describe your organization. You have two minutes to write your six words. Go!

As participants enter the room, ask each to create a name tag for him or herself. Once you have all (or at least most) of the participants present, welcome the participants and introduce yourself. Walk around the room in case anyone needs help with the instructions or with their speech. After two minutes, ask participants to put their pens down.

Great work. Let’s go around the room and introduce ourselves and give our speeches. Please state your name, how long you have been a partner, and give your six-word speech.

Start by introducing yourself, how long you have been a partner, and give your six-word speech. Ask for a volunteer to start, then go around the room. Examples could be:

- Providing space for effective philanthropic outcomes
- Eye on the prize: better communities

If someone has an interesting speech, be sure to ask them for more information about their organization and their speech.



Thank you, everyone, for sharing! Before we jump into the next activity, I'd like you to think of how that activity relates to boards. Why might it be important that a board member – or you – be able to describe an organization in six words?

Answers may include:

- Donors appreciate succinct descriptions.
- If you can't describe your organization simply, you don't understand it well enough.
- Communication is a great board member trait.
- You can create a compelling story without going overboard on details.

Clearly, board members play an important role in organizations. Let's talk a bit more about that.



The Value of a Board & Board Members

Technique: Lecture, Storytelling, Large Group Discussion

10 Minutes



Board Members

What value do board members provide to organizations?

Allow time for responses which may include:

- The three W's - wealth wisdom and work
- Contribute to the overall mission
- Support the ED
- Provide strategic direction



An SVP Story

There are different types of board members, and they bring value in different ways. Let's talk more about board members and their value by talking about two real board members.

Our first board member is what most would call a big picture person. He prefers to stay at the strategic level because that is his strength. His contributions include:

- When looking for a new CEO, he recommended a search firm. He used his connections to find a firm who happened to be an SVP partner and subsequently, the work was done pro bono. This idea led to a decision on a CEO which was carried out effectively and efficiently because of his contribution.
- He used his connections and background to make essential contributions to the opening of the San Antonio SVP office.



- He has been a vocal advocate of impact investing and encourages SVP to work on impact investing projects.

Another board member is a treasurer with an accounting background and has spent time as an executive director at SVP. She contributes at an execution level.

- With her special skill set, she created a two-year forecast with extensive modeling that only she could do based on her background.
- Her detail orientation enabled her to catch errors in board notes and help find any inaccurate information that may be distributed.

Debrief by asking the following questions:

- What did these board members bring to their boards?
- What are some things that you think make for “great” board members?
- What are some characteristics of board members that could lead to red flags?

Answers may include:

- They each contribute different, yet important skills.
- You need varied members to create a good board.
- Diversity in board members breeds ingenuity and innovation.

As participants answer, encourage discussion by asking them follow-up questions.

Tremendous board members come in different flavors. They move the company forward because of their commitment and dedication, but also by utilizing their strengths. The dynamics of the board members I mentioned is important because one cannot exist without the other. The big picture idea cannot make a meaningful long-term impact without someone there to execute it.

Now that we have heard about a few board members, in general, what are the characteristics of a great board member?



Write the answers you hear on the flipchart. As you hear answers, have participants expand on their answers.

For example if someone answers Influence and Affluence, you could say “When you say influence, you mean how they are connected with people who may contribute to the organization? Why is that important?”

Once the discussion is complete, transition to the slide.



Great Board Members

Great work. Let’s check to see if the answers in the room are the characteristics we came up with.

Most, if not all, answers should fit into the categories on the screen. Take a moment to compare and contrast. Once you have a brief discussion, transition into the next activity.

There are many factors in building a great board full of great board members. Most of them fit into the five categories you see on the screen. Let’s talk about the responsibilities of great board members.



Board Member Responsibilities

Technique: Worksheet & Resources

25 Minutes



- A3. Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards
- A3. Aspects of Governance
- A3. Board Responsibilities Worksheet



Hand out A3.Ten Basic Responsibilities of a Board Member and A3. Modes of Governance.

I am passing around two handouts: the first is a summary of the most important responsibilities of a board member based on the book *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards* by Richard T. Ingram. The second describes what we'll call "modes of governance." This is based on the book *Governance as Leadership* by Chait, Ryan and Taylor.

As they review, pass out A3. Board Responsibilities Worksheet.



Board Responsibilities

After you have reviewed the handouts, please complete the worksheet based upon experiences you may have had working with a nonprofit board of directors. If you do not have board experience, please let me know. I have a few board scenarios I can share for this activity.

Pass out board profiles to anyone who requests one. Allow participants five minutes to fill out the worksheet.



Pass out board profiles to anyone who requests one. Allow participants five minutes to fill out the worksheet.

Compare what you filled out on your worksheet with other people at your tables.

- How do your answers differ?
- Does anyone have similar boards?

After 10 minutes, bring the group back together for a large group debrief.

How were the opportunities and challenges different based upon the first three answers on your worksheet?

Allow participants to discuss how responsibilities and modes affected the board. Be sure to let people discuss insights, frustrations, and give each other advice.

Modes and responsibilities have an affect on how boards function. Let's talk about some responsibilities not covered on your handout.



Legal Responsibilities of a Board

Technique: Lecture, Large Group Discussion

5 Minutes



- A4. Legal Responsibilities of a Board



Legal Responsibilities of a Board

Federal responsibilities are primarily based on the US 990 form from the IRS. Beyond that, responsibilities are similar to the fiduciary responsibilities we see in the for-profit world. I am handing out a guide that explains the specific duties expected of all boards and board members. These duties are:

- Duty of Care
- Duty of Obedience
- Duty of Loyalty

What does this mean?

On a flipchart, record answers from the room. After the discussion, pass out A4. Legal Responsibilities of a Board.

Thanks for the discussion. I am passing around a handout with the definition for these three terms. Let's see how we did.

Now that we have the definition, how do these responsibilities factor in to how board members conduct themselves?



On a flipchart, write answers for answers in the room. After the discussion, pass out A4. Legal Responsibilities of a Board.

We have discussed the value, roles, and responsibilities of board members. Now, let's take some time to look at a few real boards and see how some of the information we have discussed so far affects boards in some case studies.



Case Studies

Technique: Reflection & Group Activities

40 Minutes



- A5. Boards Suffering Dysfunction
- A5. OCAT - Board Leadership
- A5. Potential Board Members



Pass out A5. Boards Suffering Dysfunction.

The worksheet I am passing around contains three scenarios based on real boards suffering dysfunction. On the sheet, I want you to identify what is strong and what is wrong with each board. Please feel free to use the materials you have from other activities to work through this activity.

Allow several minutes to work on the worksheet. Once everyone is finishing, pass out A5. Board Leadership OCAT. This is one portion of the greater Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool, a tool we use to measure capacity building at organizations. While this is the tool used for this activity, affiliates may use other capacity building tools. This tool is used in the activity to take a closer look at board development from a capacity building perspective.

Now that we have taken a few minutes to identify what is going on in general, let's look at this board from a capacity building perspective. I am passing around one portion of the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool. In your groups, write in comments about each board next to each category.

Allow five minutes to fill in the OCAT. Once everyone is finishing, pass out A5. Potential Board Members.



Sometimes (but not always) problems on a board are the result of a missing link, missing expertise and/or the need for a fresh perspective. In your groups, review each case study and identify if additional Board members would be helpful. Add 0-2 members to each board to help with the conflict. Members should not serve on more than one board.

Allow three minutes to add members to their board. After three minutes, start a large group debrief.

Where did you add board members?

Which ones did you add?

Beyond adding other board members, what actions would you take to help with this board?

Make sure to give each group enough time to explain how they worked through this activity.

Great work with your boards! Let's reflect on what we accomplished today.



Final Thoughts / Next Steps

Technique: Individual Reflection, Large Group Discussion

5 Minutes



Final Thoughts

Today we talked about the value of great board members, learned about board responsibilities and roles, looked at a few case studies and used the skills we learned to make recommendations to develop the board, and took a quick look at the Board Leadership portion of the OCAT. Now that you are familiar with the basics of board development, I encourage you to use the resources you received today as you continue to hone your skills on board development. A lot of great information can be found on the Board Source website including a couple of books we recommend: Ten Basic Responsibilities of a Board Member and Generative Governance. As you work with boards, it will be beneficial to have those resources available to guide you in board development. You may even want to join Board Source through your SVP affiliate. Go to the SVP website to find out more!

Thanks!

