



Nonprofit Association
of Washington

Boards in Gear

Composition and Development

Speakers: Lianna Olds, Deputy Director of Partnerships at Nonprofit Association of Washington, & Allison Mountjoy, Board Member of Mujer Al Volante and Look, Listen & Learn

00:00:00 Video description: In the center of the screen is a grey circle with the Nonprofit Association of Washington logo mark. One by one, five sections appear to form a ring around the logo mark. Each section represents a chapter and is a different color: purple, orange, green, red, and teal. Text that reads "3 Composition & Development" appears on the green section. The sectioned ring begins to spin around the center and the video zooms in on the Composition & Development section and then fades to white.

00:00:08 Video description: A video fades in of an African-American female with dark skin and dark hair. She is wearing grey and white plaid blazer. In the background is a yellow wall with a few pictures hanging on it, and in the corner are a few tea cups on a table. In the bottom left corner of the video a white banner with the sectioned ring spinning on it appears with the speaker's name and organization, "Lianna Olds, Nonprofit Association of Washington." At the bottom of the screen is a green banner.

00:00:08 Lianna: Welcome to the Boards in Gear video series. We're here to talk about Board Composition and Development. When a board is thinking about composition and development, they can better provide organizational oversight needed to achieve the nonprofit's mission and steward valuable resources. Strong board composition makes certain the ideal people are in place with the experiences and skills needed to respond to new opportunities and challenges. The board needs enough people serving to fulfill responsibilities, which include clear leadership with officer positions. In Washington, the required officer positions are President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Also, intentional board development can create space for community members served by the organization to bring their unique insights and experiences to the board. From board culture to recruitment, selection, and orientation of new board members to ongoing learning

Commented [JC1]: Very minor, I took the Oxford comma out as Look, Listen & Learn does not use one in their name. (If we missed it in Allison's lower third in the video, I'm not worried about it at all. 😊)

opportunities, there are many things to think about related to composition and development.

00:01:09 Visual description: *The video fades to black and returns side by side with a second video frame. Lianna is on the left. On the right is a video a light skinned white woman with short brown hair. She is wearing a white and green top. In the background are white and blue walls and a peace lily and a succulent. Under the video a white banner with the sectioned ring spinning on it appears with the speakers name and organization, "Allison Mountjoy, Mujer Al Volante and Look, Listen & Learn."*

00:01:09 Lianna: Allison Mountjoy and serves as a board member at Mujer Al Volante and Look, Listen and Learn TV. She is joining me to share some of her experiences with board composition and development. What is your approach to identifying the right people to join the boards that you've served on?

00:01: 26 Allison: That is a great question and I think just as important as picking great staff members to join your organization, you need to pick really great board members to join your organization's board of directors. Personally, I like to start with people that I know who have a good connection to the mission through personal and or learned experience. So learned experience could be other boards they've served on, it could be their professional work, could be a lot of different things. But knowing that that I'm starting with somebody who I have a personal connection to that I know is connected to the mission. That being said, I prefer warm a warm lead or someone that I know can be I can be personally introduced to. So it doesn't have to be somebody that I directly know, but maybe it's a friend of a friend. I prefer that rather than a sort of like headhunter approach of looking through organizational staff pages or LinkedIn. I think that that generally results in a, a better connection and a better read on whether someone's going to be a good match.

Now, saying all that I'm also the type of person that can get into a really passionate conversation with a stranger at the grocery store and then see their potential as a board member. So it kind of depends on your own personality too. For me, fit and commitment are probably the most important qualities I look for. But I also do like to map out our board and organizational needs before I start sort of trying to generate leads. And then when I do approach perspective board members, I usually

think through four key elements. And as I, I thought in preparation for talking with you today, I really thought about these four elements as skills, motivation, connections, and capacity. So those are the kind of the four things that I look for when I'm talking to someone about being a prospective board member.

00:03:19 Lianna: I also kind of wonder about lived experience because I know that a lot of organizations have now also moved to making sure there's space for like members of the community and how that also kind of fits in with that rubric that you're building.

00:03:37 Allison: Yeah, I think that's a really important piece of it. And, and actually kind of where I see that fits in for most or most people as they're looking for new board members, see it fit in as connections and skills. So we see it as both. We see it as connection to community. So if you if for instance, you are serving a specific community, you want to know that like you have board members who are able to also represent that community.

00:04:05 Lianna: And then what role do you think development, like professional development, of the board kind of plays also in that retention piece?

00:04:14 Allison: Yeah, I think, you know, similarly, learning helps keep us motivated. It helps us, you know, it keeps us a little hungry, I think, like to continue doing new things. And it helps us when we develop our skills to develop the organization as well. And I think that's sort of the professional development piece. I also think as a board member, I've seen other board members who maybe they knew what the organization did a year and a half ago, but a year and a half in they're not up to date with what's happening. So it's not just professional development, it's also learning from the organization. What's changing, what's evolving? What does the day to day look like? So continuing to have that curiosity about the organization because it's growing, it's changing I mean, if you're doing your job right as a board member, you're supporting that and you need to be involved in it.

00:05:09 Video description: *The side by side videos fade to black and the screen returns to the video of Lianna.*

00:05:09 Lianna: Through purposeful actions, a board can create a welcoming environment that supports all board members participation in meaningful service. Your board should have a clearly documented process to recruit, select, and orient new board members. To make sure the ideal people are in place and that they have access to the right information to best serve the organization. Recruitment and selection of new board members should focus on individuals with a strong commitment to your nonprofit's mission and overall success of an organization. Creating a board matrix that lists current board members skills, experiences, connections, areas of interest, personal demographics, board terms, and more can help you develop an outreach and recruitment plan. As you think about board composition and development, this is a good time to make sure you have up-to-date board members and officer position descriptions that clearly describe the roles, responsibilities, term lengths, time commitments, and so on. Also, you want to make sure board members do not have any undocumented conflicts of interest that would affect the nonprofit's well-being. Lastly, strong boards reflect on their own practices, celebrate achievements, and create plans around identified areas of growth. Consider completing an annual board evaluation, and develop a learning plan that addresses your board's prioritized needs. Intentional efforts around composition and development can make a big difference on any board, so we invite you to join us in our next video on Board Operations.

00:04:20 Video description: *The video fades to white. In the center of the screen is a grey circle with the Nonprofit Association of Washington logo mark. One by one, five sections appear to form a ring around the logo mark. Each section is a different color and has text with the name of a chapter of Boards in Gear: "1 Connection to Cause" on the purple section; "2 Responsibilities" on the orange section; "3 Composition & Development" on the green section; "4 Board Operation" on the red section; "5 Fundraising" on the teal section. In the center, the text "Boards in Gear" appears. The sectioned ring begins to spin around the center and fades out. The screen changes to the Nonprofit Association of Washington logo, the shape of the state of Washington made of colorful shapes with the words "Nonprofit Association of Washington" underneath. Below, text reads "In partnership with" and under this text is the Washington Secretary of State, Corporations and Charities Division logo, a circular image of George Washington with the words "Secretary of State, State of Washington" around the circle next to text*

that reads "Washington Secretary of State", two lines, and text that reads "Corporations and Charities Division." At the bottom is a purple banner that reads "nonprofitwa.org/learn."

00:04:29 Video description: The logos disappear, and text appears that reads "We greatly appreciate the contributions of the speakers in this video series. Lianna Olds, Njuguna Gishuru, Kimberly Hollins, Allison Mountjoy, Johanna Martinez, Regina Elmi."

00:04:35 Video description: The screen fades to black. Text that reads "3 Choices Creative Communications" appears on the screen above a logo of an eye. Under the eye, text reads "3greatchoices.com."