



**National Youth Leadership Network**

*The national voice for young leaders with disabilities*

# **Governing Board and Committee Chair Training Manual and Checklist**



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Training Manual and Checklist**

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## Preparing for the meeting

- What is the purpose of a Board and Committee training meeting?
- What activities should be addressed at a Board and Committee meeting that cannot be done over the phone?
- Task list prior to the Board meeting and training events:
  - Send out all information that will be covered at the meeting (agenda and documents)
  - Contact individuals on one-on-one level to address any questions
  - Promote interaction between facilitator<sup>1</sup> and the Board
  - Ask what other things could be done to improve the interaction between Board and facilitator
  - Identify key outcomes for the meeting—what goals need to be reached before closing the meeting?

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<sup>1</sup> A facilitator would be someone who would conduct the meeting. This person would collaborate with the President of the Board and the Executive Director to determine the needs of the Board members, the goals to cover throughout the meeting, and what the outcomes of the meeting should be. The person filling this role could be a contracted facilitator, a mentor, or even a previous board member.

## **I. What is Power and What is a Leader?**

*Interactive exercise to focus on "Power" and "Leadership" - led by facilitator*

Sample Activity:

- Ask group as a whole to name some people they think are powerful
- Ask them what "power" means to them
- Share the presentation about the definitions of power
- Talk about people who have shown power and who have taken action
- Define power and action; talk about how their contribution is affecting others' lives and the Disability Movement; talk about how people's interests affect how they act
- Share how NYLN can support them in doing this

## II. Presentation on Leadership Strategies

*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

- Discuss why people serve on the Governing Board or a committee or want to be apart of an organization.  
*Ask for ideas from group first: ask the team to share what they want to get out of this experience and what they feel they can contribute - led by facilitator*

*What strategies can be used to make sure that all individuals are full contributing to this process?*

*- e.g. Round Robin statements from each individual, so individuals are not missed*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Keeping informed about NYLN programs and activities
- Strengthening NYLN through their involvement
- Supporting issues that affect young people with disabilities everywhere
- Helping generate new and innovative ideas
- Helping NYLN grow
- Networking with other interested and active young people
- Identifying the purpose of the board and the purpose of the committees

- Discuss trust.

*Ask for ideas from group first: ask the team to share their thoughts about trust and how they see trust playing a role in working together - led by facilitator*

*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

- The facilitator would identify current situations within the Board that could exemplify the importance of trust and how Board members can establish and maintain trust with one another

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Feeling able to rely on a person
- Cooperating with and experiencing teamwork with a group
- Taking thoughtful risks
- Experiencing believable communication
- What do you do when you do not trust some one?
- Trust as the foundation for:
  - Effective communication
  - Involvement of Board/committee members
  - Motivation of Board/committee members
  - **Voluntary** contribution of "extra effort" by Board/committee members

□ Discuss qualities of a leader.

*Ask for ideas from the large group first - led by facilitator*

*Break into small groups for conversation – led by facilitator*

*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Showing respect
- Sharing creativity
- Noticing opportunities with enough time to plan
- Moving ahead at the right moment
- Accepting and planning for limitations
- Understanding each person's strengths and possible limitations
- Knowing how to use different strategies for different purposes
- Settling conflicts among members

- Discuss what a leader does.

*Ask for ideas from group first - led by facilitator*

*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Taking leadership and carrying out the strategic plan
- Understanding your responsibility
- Responding to the day-to-day needs of members, the public and staff
- Responding to the challenges that develop
- Evaluating ongoing organizational efforts – board and staff
- Conducting regular “reality checks” – for example, how things are working, if people have suggestions, if people have frustrations, etc.

- Discuss how to know if you are a leader.

*Ask for ideas from group first - led by facilitator*

*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Personal strengths and limitations
- Steps that have to be taken to perform a task, with supports included if necessary
- Time commitment and pressures
- What you are willing to give?
- What you are not willing to give?
- How to manage your time so you can be a leader for the organization and still have a personal life

□ Discuss the different talents needed to comprise good organizational leadership.

*Ask for ideas from group first - led by facilitator*

*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Who are the Strategists? (These are people with good planning and problem-solving skills. They are interested in developing a strategy and staying on top of things until they are completed.)
- Who are the Analysts, "Wonks," and "Nerds"? (These are people who can do background research on an issue. They like to research all sides and angles to things. They are also people who are good at statistics.)
- Who are the Information Specialists? (These are people who are good with words. This could include writing or speaking.)
- Who are the Editors? (These are people with a really good eye for publications and other written materials. They can take written materials, speeches, etc. and make sure they use good grammar, spelling, and punctuation.)
- Who are the Visionaries? (These are people who are essential in the planning and brain-storming stages. They listen to everything others say and come up with new and different ideas and how to move to the "next level.")
- Who are the Detailers / Workers? (These are people who are good at organizing tasks and completing them on time. These people take delegation well.)
- Who are the Take-charge People? (These are people who are good at "giving orders" in a friendly way. They are sure that tasks are completed. People find it naturally easy to follow these people.)



- Who are the Cheerleaders? (These are people you want to represent your organization. They have natural energy no matter what they are talking about. These are the people who can “sell” NYLN.)
- Who are the Policy Experts? (These are people who are comfortable contacting and working with policy-makers.)
- Who are the Networkers? (These are people who have a wide personal network. They are skilled in meeting people and finding connections among organizations or people.)

### III. NYLN-Specific Information for Leadership and Staff

- Review NYLN structure and leadership responsibilities.  
*Handouts and Discussion – led by leadership and staff*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Duties and responsibilities of an Officer
- Duties and responsibilities of a Committee Chair
- Duties and responsibilities of a Governing Board Member
- Turnover/Term limits
- Membership structure
- How Network members become involved at the committee or leadership level

- Review NYLN Governing Board roles in relationship to staff.  
*Handouts and Discussion – led by leadership and staff (Appendix 1)*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Clarify the roles of Board and staff in:
  - Decision-making
  - Policy & procedure development and implementation
  - Fiscal stability of the organization (whether the organization has enough money to carry out its responsibilities)
  - Legal and ethical issues
  - Carrying out the daily work of the organization
  - Relating to funders and outside policy makers
- Teamwork
- Oversight of the organization vs. micro-management (keeping things on track but not being too strict)

- Review NYLN staff roles in relationship to the Governing Board.  
*Handouts and Discussion – led by leadership and staff*

## IV. How to Run a Committee

- Discuss strategies for recruiting committee members.

*Ask for ideas from group first - led by facilitator*

*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- What skills you need on your committee?
- Who is interested
- Who would be good
- How to share information by word of mouth
- How to include people in similar organizations
- How to hold open meetings
- How to outreach with newsletters, e-mails, Metadot

## V. Caring for Committee Members

Discuss ways to build a positive working Governing Board or Committee.

*Ask for ideas from group first - led by facilitator*

*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Don't play the blame game
- Talk about communication that is verbal and nonverbal
- Don't surprise a board member, committee member or staff
- Follow through with your tasks
- Share credit for accomplishments and ideas
- Help others succeed

## VI. Establishing Committee Goals and Activities

- Discuss how to establish committee goals and activities.  
*Ask for ideas from group and discuss current committee goals and activities - led by facilitator, leadership and/or staff*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Review each committee's purpose/mission
- Review each committee's strategic plan
- Review how a committee can carry out these tasks
- Make an annual calendar of activities
- Be sure that committees know what they are responsible for
- Be sure that committees know how they will carry out their responsibilities
- Use a timeline/know it's purpose/stick to it
- Access and use staff support
- Work with other committee chairs
- Find and use resources

## VII. Calling and Conducting a Meeting

- Discuss how to call a meeting/conference call to get the most participation.

*Ask for ideas from group first - led by facilitator*  
*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Pick a time and send notice or make calls
- Ask for ideas for the agenda
- Be sure the accommodations are met for committee members
- Get information to members before the meeting
- Include an agenda and the purpose for the meeting
- Send a reminder with time and place or call-in number

- Discuss how to lead a meeting/conference call.

*Ask for ideas from group first - led by facilitator*  
*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Begin and end the meeting on time
- Talk about the rules of meetings
  - One person talks at a time
  - Raise your hand or ask the chair before you speak
  - Follow the agenda
  - Bring up new topics only at the appropriate time
  - Keep comments short and to the point
  - Make sure everyone is listening before speaking
  - Speak to the entire group
  - Repeat what you said if you think it wasn't heard or understood
  - Summarize your statement at the end
  - Let others comment (if they agree and if they disagree)
  - Don't hesitate to comment yourself

- Ask different members to lead the discussion on different agenda items
- As chair, keep a low profile while taking charge of the direction of the meeting
- Ask questions or bring up ideas
- Summarize what has been said to be sure that things make sense
- Control discussion that appears to be going nowhere
- Don't argue with the individual who has the floor
- If topics are still on your list at the end of the meeting time, schedule them for the next meeting
- ALWAYS thank members for their participation

*Possible role play on meeting participation – pick a topic & model good and bad meeting participation and the right and wrong ways for the leader to run the discussion.*

Discuss rules for brainstorming.

*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Let all ideas be shared
- Remind your team that the goal is to get a lot of ideas
- Build on the ideas of others
- Every person and every idea has equal worth
- Choose the top ideas as a group

*Break into groups, assign real topic(s) the group is interested in as future goals or projects, brainstorm and report back.*

## VIII. What To Do Between Meetings

- Discuss follow-up and follow-through.  
*Ask for ideas from group first - led by facilitator*  
*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Follow through and follow up on everything you committed to as chair
  - Follow up with members on topics they are interested in
  - Assign tasks to interested members
  - Check in with **all** members between meetings
- 
- Discuss delegation.
    - Common excuses for not delegating and how to get over them
    - What to delegate
    - How to delegate
    - How to get tasks done
    - How to provide feedback



## IX. Leadership Strategies

- Discuss working with people with different styles.

*Ask for ideas from group first - led by facilitator*

*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Check out who's in the group
- Learn about their style
- Know about members' support needs
- Pay attention to how you say something, not just what you say
- Look for non-verbal cues (people's actions) as well as what is said out loud
- Let people have their own opinions
- Don't pretend to agree when you don't
- Look for common ground or ways to bring your team's ideas together
- Include everyone, even the team members who are quiet

- Discuss communications.

*Power Point and Discussion - led by facilitator, leadership and staff*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- What happens when people don't communicate well
- How to resolve differences
- How to keep everyone informed – *interactive discussion and brainstorming*
- How to use Metadot – *interactive training*

- Discuss supports and accommodations.

*Ask for ideas from group first - led by facilitator*

*Discussion - led by facilitator, leadership and staff*

The discussion would include the following topics:

- Overall access to all NYLN activities and materials – Use the Accessibility Checklist

## X. Developing and Implementing a Strategic Plan

Discuss, develop and/or update the strategic plan.

In general:

- Show where the organization is going over the next one to three years and how it's going to get there
- Focus on changes in the organization and its environment, and how this affects the future of the organization
- Strategic planning includes:
  - Taking a look at what's going on outside the organization and how it might affect the organization
  - Taking a look at what's going on inside the organization, including its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (a SWOT scan)
  - Establishing or re-committing to the mission statement, the vision of the organization, and values of the organization
  - Establishing goals to accomplish over the next one to three years
  - Identifying how the goals will be reached (strategies, objectives, responsibilities and timelines)
  - Identifying who (what person or what team) is responsible for each task
  - Making a list for each committee to fulfill their responsibilities
    - Develop a to-do list for each task
    - Monitoring the progress
- The planning *process* is very important to fulfill the goal
- The planning process is never done
- The planning process is an on-going cycle
  - It should be updated at each leadership training
  - It should be reported on at every Governing Board meeting

## XI. Board and Staff Responsibility Checklist

*Handout and Discussion – led by facilitator and/or leadership and staff*

Activity	Responsibility
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### PLANNING:

Oversee the process of planning	Staff
Provide input to long-range goals	Board and Staff
Approve long-range goals	Board
Recommend annual objectives	Staff
Approve annual objectives	Board
Report on completion of goals and objectives	Staff
Monitor achievement of goals and objectives	Board and Staff

### PROGRAMMING:

Assess the needs of the Network and partners	Staff and Board
Train volunteer leaders	Board and Staff
Oversee evaluation of products, services and programs	Board and Staff
Maintain program records; prepare program reports	Staff
Prepare and recommend budget	Staff
Finalize and approve budget	Board
Oversee spending during the year	Staff

Coordinate fundraising and grant applications	Board and Staff
Approve spending that goes outside the authorized budget	Board
Insure annual audit of organization accounts	Board

**PERSONNEL:**

Employ Executive Director	Board
Direct and oversee work of other staff	Director
Hire and discharge staff members	Director
Recommendation to add or omit staff members	Director
Decision to add or omit staff members	Board
Settle disagreements among staff members	Staff
Settle disagreements among the Board	Board President

**PUBLIC RELATIONS:**

Market the organization to the public	Board and Staff
Write news releases	Board and Staff
Provide links to other organizations	Board and Staff

## BOARD COMMITTEES:

Appoint committee members	Board
Call committee chair to urge him/her into action	Board
Promote attendance at Board/committee meetings	Board and Staff
Recruit new Board members	Board
Plan agenda for Board meetings	Board and Staff
Take minutes at Board meetings	Board
Plan and propose committee organization	Board and Staff
Prepare materials and proposals for Board and Committees	Staff
Sign legal documents	Board and Staff
Carry out Board and committee tasks	Board and Staff
Settle disagreements within committees	Board
Settle disagreements among staff	Staff

## **XII. Governing Board and Committee Chair Training Checklist**

### **A. Leadership Strategies**

- Why do people serve on the Governing Board or a committee?
- How do you create trust?
- What are the qualities of a leader?
- What does a leader do?
- How do you know if you are a leader?
- What different talents are needed to make a good organization?

### **B. NYLN-Specific Information for Leadership and Staff**

- Review NYLN structure and leadership responsibilities
- Review NYLN Governing Board roles in relationship to staff
- Review NYLN staff roles in relationship to Governing Board

### **C. How to Run a Committee**

- Recruit committee members
- Talk about how the Governing Board and Committees work
- Set committee goals and activities
- Schedule a meeting/conference call to get the most participation
- Discuss rules for brainstorming
- Discuss follow-up and follow-through
- Discuss delegation/assigning or taking on responsibilities

### **D. Leadership Strategies**

- Talk about working with people with different styles
- Discuss communication styles
- Discuss supports and accommodations

### **E. Developing and Implementing a Strategic Plan**

- Discuss, develop and/or update the strategic plan