

On Board

*Engaging the Full Potential of
Community Foundation Directors*



Engaged board members

are active learners, involved supporters and capable ambassadors — and they can make all the difference to an emerging community foundation.

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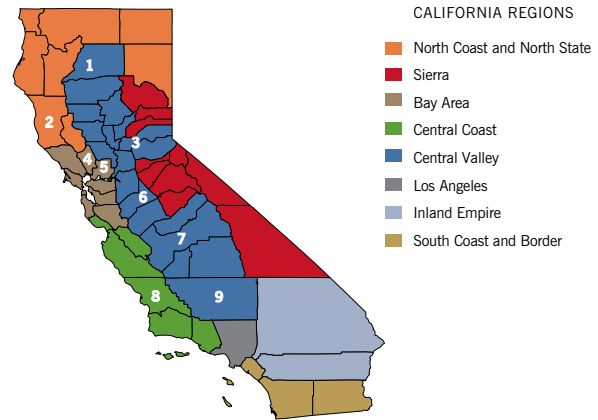
More at www.irvine.org/communityfoundations

Video on engaging your board

Customizable tools

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

The content in this paper has been developed through the experiences of a group of participants in The James Irvine Foundation *Community Foundations Initiative II*.



Community Foundations Initiative II Sites

- 1 Shasta Regional Community Foundation
Redding, California
- 2 The Community Foundation of Mendocino County
Ukiah, California
- 3 Placer Community Foundation
Auburn, California
- 4 Napa Valley Community Foundation
Napa, California
- 5 Solano Community Foundation
Fairfield, California
- 6 Stanislaus Community Foundation
Modesto, California
- 7 Fresno Regional Foundation
Fresno, California
- 8 San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation
San Luis Obispo, California
- 9 Kern Community Foundation
Bakersfield, California

Additional Inputs

Leaders of the following community foundations and associations vetted this paper and contributed inputs prior to publication.

- Barry Community Foundation (MI)
- Blue Mountain Community Foundation (WA)
- Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties (FL)
- Community Foundation of Broward (FL)
- Community Foundation of South Jersey (NJ)
- Grand Haven Area Community Foundation (MI)
- Greater Everett Community Foundation (WA)
- Iowa Council of Foundations
- La Crosse Community Foundation (WI)
- Parkersburg Area Community Foundation (WV)

Foreword

A board full of individuals who are prepared, present and willing to give of themselves can elevate the performance of any philanthropy. And few organizations have greater incentive to fully tap the potential of their boards than community foundations, most of which are poised for rapid growth but challenged by limited experience and resources.

From 2005 to 2011, The James Irvine Foundation worked closely with a set of California's youngest and smallest community foundations through our *Community Foundations Initiative II*, investing \$12 million to accelerate their growth and leadership potential. Through this work, participating community foundations gained special perspective on why an engaged board is essential to achieving their missions and how to build boards that are ready to learn, support and best represent the community foundations they've agreed to serve. Indeed, helping community foundations bring out the best in their board members, individually and collectively, has been one of the more enduring areas of value gained from this work.

In 2011, we shared a framework for creating an active, effective corps of board ambassadors in our publication, "[Reaching Out](#)." We are pleased to complement that publication with additional lessons, advice and practices from the small and highly effective community foundations we have been privileged to support.

In this report, FSG, the initiative evaluator, presents information and tools that are relevant for community foundations of all sizes, within and beyond California — inspiring greater levels of board contribution and providing practical means for achieving an elevated level of board engagement. We share this report along with five other reports we've released as part of the Community Foundations Series in the hopes of building stronger, smarter and more effective community foundations that will have meaningful contributions to make as part of our overall mission to expand opportunity for Californians.



James E. Canales

President and Chief Executive Officer
The James Irvine Foundation
April 2012

Context

Community Foundations Initiative II

The James Irvine Foundation launched its *Community Foundations Initiative II* in 2005. This six-year effort involved a \$12 million investment to accelerate the growth and leadership of a set of small and young community foundations in rural areas of California. The initiative provided three types of support:

- Direct grants for core operating support and self-identified projects to build infrastructure
- Regranting funds for Youth or Arts programs to help develop grantmaking capability
- A strong program of technical assistance as well as a learning community to help community foundations gain from each other's successes and challenges; this included twice-yearly convenings of board and staff leaders from all participating community foundations

The cohort of seven community foundations participating in the initiative between 2005 and 2011 grew their collective assets 12 percent annually (going from \$73 million to \$131 million), compared to 7 percent for their peer group nationally. They increased their collective annual grantmaking by about \$4 million over this period (not counting Irvine regrant dollars). And they have made important progress as leaders who initiate action to address unmet needs in their communities.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS SERIES

This initiative has generated a significant body of knowledge that can benefit the larger field of community foundations, and that holds particular relevance for the youngest and smallest members of the field. This information is captured and shared through the Irvine Community Foundations Series.

2007



Growing Smarter
Achieving Sustainability in Emerging Community Foundations

2011



The Four Ps of Marketing
A Road Map to Greater Visibility for Community Foundations

2011



Reaching Out
Board Ambassadors for Growth in Community Foundations

2012



On Board
Engaging the Full Potential of Community Foundation Directors

2012



Learning to Lead
The Journey to Community Leadership for Emerging Community Foundations

2012



Sizing Up
Strategies for Staffing Emerging Community Foundations

Visit www.irvine.org/communityfoundations to download these publications, view videos, read additional case studies and access customizable tools.

Introduction: Raising the Bar

A community foundation's board can be its greatest asset, creating a vision for impact and propelling progress toward new levels of capacity, visibility and assets. For emerging community foundations — younger and smaller foundations poised for rapid growth — an engaged board can spell the difference between mediocre performance and spectacular achievement.

As they stretch to address competing priorities with constrained resources, community foundations have special motivation to fully tap their boards' potential. Doing so isn't always easy. Board members come with different strengths, interests and availabilities. This report aims to help executives and board members take their community foundations to the next level by bringing out their best performance, individually and collectively.

VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

This report features insights shared by community foundation board and staff members listed here.

The Community Foundation of Mendocino County

Claire Ellis, former Board Chair
Jim Mayfield, Board Chair
Susanne Norgard, Executive Director

Fresno Regional Foundation

Dan DeSantis, CEO
Bill Lucido, former Board Chair

Kern Community Foundation

Judi McCarthy, former Board Chair
Jeff Pickering, President
Steve Sanders, Board Member

Napa Valley Community Foundation

Kris Jaeger, Board Chair
Terence Mulligan, President

Placer Community Foundation

Jeff Birkholz, Board Chair
Veronica Blake, CEO
Ruth Burgess, Board Member

San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation

Wendy Brown, former Board Member
Barry VanderKelen, Executive Director

Shasta Regional Community Foundation

Kathy Anderson, former CEO
Kerry Caranci, former Interim Executive Director
Beth Freeman, Director of Community Programs
Ann Kaster, former Board Member

en·gage·ment, *n.*

Emotional involvement, intellectual interest, receptivity and responsiveness, meaningful action, connection and commitment.

What's the Difference for an Emerging Organization?

All community foundations must combine everyday work with higher-order needs, such as planning and pursuing priorities. Emerging community foundations need to manage this mix of responsibilities and opportunities with a tiny staff and a limited base of supporters. And they must do so while gaining fundamental experience and making choices that will ultimately shape them as mature organizations. Engaged board members can help accelerate progress while navigating the pitfalls of the growing years.

SMALL COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS NEED BIG BOARD IMPACT

There are many arenas in which newer or smaller community foundations can go farther faster with engaged board members. Here are four that head the list.

Identity. While a community foundation can start out with general notions about what it is and what it does, a healthy, growing organization must eventually define and present a clearer, more nuanced picture of its unique strengths and distinctive roles in service of its particular community.

Strategy. As it grows and matures, a community foundation must make numerous decisions related to direction and priorities. Along the way it must readily adapt to changing needs and opportunities — and learn what works and what doesn't.

Workload. A very small staff can do only so much. Younger community foundations must also enlist the talent and time of others to make things work and not hamper the ability to grow.

Visibility. An emerging community foundation is often the “best kept secret in town,” and can't pursue its potential until it gets the word out with key audiences, especially prospective donors.

A fully engaged board member might have a lot more work in an emerging community foundation than in a more mature foundation. — Judi McCarthy

In the beginning, we were figuring out who we were and what we could do, and we just needed board members with skill sets. Now, the board has learned to understand the nuance, and has moved from a donor focus to being all about the complete picture of our community needs, and how to make choices without overextending. — Kathy Anderson

WHAT ARE THE HALLMARKS OF “ENGAGED” BOARD MEMBERS?

Board members who excel in emerging community foundations share three characteristics. The best are active learners, involved supporters and capable ambassadors.

Active learners. Engaged board members are able to embrace learning opportunities and new ideas, process information and challenges, be reflective, solve problems and shape the growth of the community foundation based on what they are learning over time. They commit energy to deepening their knowledge about the structure and potential of the foundation. They understand needs as well as opportunities to strengthen the organization and advance its mission.

Engaged board members are willing to spend the time to become educated. — Wendy Brown

We want independent thinkers who take the time to learn about their community, not people who will just say “yes” to everything. — Jeff Birkholz

They know the foundation’s history and how it operates, and want to play an active role. They understand their strengths and limitations, and are willing to commit their time and energy. — Dan DeSantis

I think of every person sitting around the table... ready to discuss and have their voice and opinion heard. We want everyone to feel empowered, passionate and confident in talking about how to make the community a better place. — Kris Jaeger

Involved supporters. Engaged board members feel ownership for the community foundation’s ability to survive and thrive. They are prepared and willing to contribute in many ways. They are physically and mentally present at all board meetings and retreats, take part in real dialogue with fellow board members and foundation leadership, and make financial contributions to the foundation.

Engaged board members not only understand the strategic plan, but were involved in creating it. They understand their role, and are executing on it. — Jeff Birkholz

We could take a hard line as volunteers, and say that processing the mailings for our funds or planning donor cultivation events is the staff’s responsibility, but we know how constrained the staff is, so we occasionally take those responsibilities off their hands. Board members are fully capable of doing those things! — Judi McCarthy

They are engaged in committee work. They own a portion of the program, and have made it theirs. — Wendy Brown

We ask that all board members make a meaningful annual contribution to the Board of Directors Fund. From day one, we’ve had 100 percent participation, with donations ranging from \$100 to \$7,000. — Barry VanderKelen

Seven or eight years ago, the board was dysfunctional — every time we met, a different board showed up. Engaged board members are prepared for board meetings, read the materials and should be willing to assume active leadership roles on the board. — Ann Kaster

Capable ambassadors. Engaged board members know it is vital to increase the credibility and reach of their organization. They understand what the community foundation is and can comfortably express its value in a way that helps it gain stature. Board ambassadors find creative ways to make the community foundation part of their day, and create opportunities for others to learn about and come into contact with the organization. In particular, they make it easy for prospective donors to be introduced to their community foundation.

Engaged board members are confident in being able to talk about their organization. — Wendy Brown

There was a workshop on fund development that was a turning point for the board — they now see themselves as the foundation representatives in their community. — Claire Ellis

When I open my portfolio, the foundation business cards are first, before my own business cards. I have a foundation brochure pile on my desk. I use social media to really talk about the foundation and the grants we've made. It makes it part of my daily thought process. — Jim Mayfield



am·bas·sa·dor, n.

Official envoy, diplomatic agent, authorized representative, messenger.



Ambassadorship is one of the most important — yet often overlooked — roles of community foundation board members.

For more on the board ambassadorship role, see *Reaching Out: Board Ambassadors for Growth in Community Foundations*.

This report contains examples, tips and tools to help every board member succeed at making connections and increasing community foundation assets.

Visit www.irvine.org/communityfoundations to download this publication.



At first, I thought it meant that board members have to do everything — be part of all the committees, etc. I've come to find out that different board members have different strengths. Fully engaged does not mean that every member is fully engaged with every process, but rather is engaged in one or two or three fully.
— Bill Lucido

WAYS BOARD MEMBERS CAN HELP

Not every board member can do it all. Each community foundation board needs multiple roles and offers multiple opportunities for any individual member to engage. Here are vital roles board members play in community foundations today.

The strategist thinks about the big picture, and helps others see what the foundation could accomplish in the future.

The giver feels strongly about the foundation's work, and makes major financial contributions to support it.

The connector has a broad network, and uses it to forge relationships to support the foundation's work.

The issue expert feels passionately about a topic or community need, is deeply knowledgeable about it, and shares that knowledge with the board.

The functional expert has a critical skill or knowledge base, such as finance or website development, that is used to help support the foundation's operations.

The historian keeps track of why the board made the decisions it did, and helps keep current work aligned with the foundation's strategic plan.



Going to a New Level of Engagement

There is no such thing as a perfectly engaged board. At any given time a portion of a board will be less active than the most engaged members. Board members have differing skills and strengths, levels of understanding and confidence, and availability. Schedules busy with work, family or other community commitments may periodically limit participation levels.

The experience of many community foundations indicates that new board members may need up to a year and a half before they feel able to be strong contributors. Steve Sanders of Kern Community Foundation expresses this reality as follows: “The learning process that a board goes through is especially important for a community foundation because it is a complex model. It’s not your typical nonprofit organization that many people may be used to serving.” Given this learning curve, and the effort required to make a difference, the reality is that some board members may never reach their full potential.

In spite of these challenges, community foundation board members, board chairs and executive directors have many ways to advance the performance of each member and the board as a whole. Following are suggestions for strengthening the board as a group, bringing out the best in individual board members and making board meetings high-octane vehicles for engagement. A concluding section addresses four community foundation situations that can open doors to board engagement.

BUILDING GROUP STRENGTH

1. **Provide learning opportunities** that are regular and substantive. This can include exposure to other community foundation board members and outside training as well as in-house education.

Off-site convenings and workshops that we go to can be good opportunities — we sent one member to a board members' boot camp, and it got her so engaged and excited. — Bill Lucido

My first Irvine convening with other community foundation board members changed everything — I had the opportunity to learn so much from them. Anytime you are able to get a board member in front of their peers, it stimulates engagement. — Judi McCarthy

I keep a binder of ideas, of whatever strikes me as something interesting for my board members to be thinking about. — Veronica Blake

2. **Create a learning culture** by building knowledge-sharing time into the board meeting structure. This includes ensuring that meetings are long enough to permit active participation by a range of members.

We embedded the culture of learning in our work — it just feels right. We always question whether what we did could have been done better. — Veronica Blake

We now have board agenda sections focused on connections, a teachable moment and recognition. — Jeff Pickering

3. **Set and manage expectations.** Be crystal-clear about your expectations around time commitment and level of board responsibilities, while understanding that overall levels of board engagement will rise and ebb over time.

We have a specific list of responsibilities for board members: Attend 10 meetings, serve on at least one committee, connect with five potential donors. And all are asked to make a gift. — Jeff Pickering

We decided that everyone had to be on two committees. Just surfacing this and making it a requirement got them a bit more engaged. — Bill Lucido

4. **Assess and reflect** on board meetings themselves, continually involving everyone in improving these meetings and using them to further engage all board members.

The chair does a survey at the end of each meeting, and then reflects on it. — Veronica Blake

5. **Keep in touch** to help board members stay connected to the foundation between meetings.

I send a good news email to the board once a week, recognizing folks for getting real things done. Keeping the foundation on their minds is a constant exercise. — Jeff Pickering

6. **Let board members drive**, and encourage them to grow ownership and demonstrate leadership for the organization.

At our recent strategic planning meeting, I felt like a resource for the board, because my board members were running the conversation — it was great. They had a really robust discussion around who we are and what we should be. — Veronica Blake

BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN EACH MEMBER

- 1. Match responsibilities to strengths and interests.** Get to know board members to find the right role for each person, and to tap into the motivations that cause each person to take initiative.

It's really finding out what each board member's passion is, what their learning styles are, how they exercise their leadership, and then putting all that to good use. — Kathy Anderson

Recently, I was sitting down with a new board member who probably wouldn't see himself as a connector in the community, but in talking to him I realize that he knows everyone... But first he really needs to feel like he's understanding and is passionate about our mission to make the most of these connections. — Susanne Norgard

- 2. Be direct and supportive.** Make a direct ask, offer meaningful responsibilities and check in to provide support and accountability.

Rather than a long diatribe about board engagement and connections, a personal, straightforward and specific request for help will do the trick. "Will you meet with this person? Will you host this in your home? Will you write this check?" Most people are so busy, but they respond to a specific request. — Judi McCarthy

- 3. Form a CEO-chair partnership** that enhances the performance of the chief executive and all board members.

My board chair is a good sounding board and collaborator. It helps to have a thought partner who you can trust and bounce ideas off. — Susanne Norgard

We spend a lot of time talking about who is doing what, and who is the right board member to help with X. You do have to keep in close contact with the board chair to make sure you aren't overworking the board members. — Veronica Blake

PUSHING PAST BARRIERS

Even the best-intentioned board members encounter barriers to full engagement.

What's in the Way?

You may hear board members express barriers by saying things like:

I don't have enough time.

I don't know how to do that.

I have so many things going on that it fell to the bottom of the list.

I didn't know it was my role.

Simple Steps to Success

You can bust barriers and encourage greater participation through these simple techniques:

Help create a "right-sized" role for the time available.

Accompany every request with an offer for educational tools and supports.

Brainstorm about creative ideas to help keep the foundation "top of mind."

Tell a story about how critical having "all hands on deck" can be for an emerging foundation.

FIVE WAYS TO BUILD BETTER BOARD MEETINGS

1. **Make it personal:** Engage board members as individuals

We end the board meeting with talking about “what I’ve done to put the foundation top of my mind.” Each meeting, one of the board members will tell their own story — we get a better sense of why people are engaged, and they get practice in telling stories. — Susanne Norgard

We spend time thinking about how to give emotional resonance to our work. We had a guest at one meeting who was an immigrant who wanted to go to college. She can’t drive a car, can’t get college scholarships, but she had been in the community since she was two. People are welling up at her story. We need to get that closeness to our work. We also make sure board members have time to socialize so they get to know each other enough to express their true feelings in the meetings, because it’s important to have dialogue before we move forward on an issue. — Terence Mulligan

Each meeting, we would talk about a fund or a project, then find out who really loved that, and then give them the materials and sit down with them, and then they would go off and work magic. Every board meeting, we ask for a “share your ambassador moment.” Then we talk about it so people can get ideas. — Kathy Anderson

2. **Get to the point:** Ensure that meetings focus on substantive topics

We create a consent agenda so we don’t spend a lot of time on housekeeping discussions. — Susanne Norgard

3. **Involve everyone:** Bring all voices to the table

During meetings, we go around the table and have each individual provide input so the most talkative don’t dominate. We may also break into groups and have each person declare their position. — Terence Mulligan

We added a closed session to all the board meetings without staff in the room, because sometimes people don’t want to say what’s really on their mind. — Veronica Blake

4. **Reflect on performance:** Take stock and improve

I send out a survey each year about how we’re doing, and then present a summary — we look at similarities, what stands out and what we need to work on. — Terence Mulligan

5. **Create the future:** Explore new horizons

We make sure we set aside time at board meetings to spend on generative thinking about important issues. — Susanne Norgard

The board meetings are not just a staff report-out, but an active board discussion, because our board committee chairs create the agendas for their committees rather than staff. The governance committee now is really tasked with the education of the board — so members are educating members. — Veronica Blake

CAPTURING MOMENTS FOR ENGAGEMENT

In the early years of a community foundation, critical events may serve as game-changers, sparking board members to become more engaged. Foundation leaders encountering one of these key moments should seize the opportunity to involve their board in active learning, and then find ways to help the learning persist and translate into sustained high engagement.

Responding to a crisis. An internal or external challenge can represent an opportunity for the community foundation to define itself and for board members to discover new ways of working together.

The board decided when the economic crisis accelerated, that they weren't going to waste this opportunity — we were going to use the time to grow and to launch out of it strongly. — Barry VanderKelen

Rallying around a cause. Bring out board members' best by tapping into issues and opportunities they are passionate about.

It's the street fight theory — we need something to be fighting for. There needs to be some issue or cause that is energizing people. For our board, it became issues related to immigration and significant demographic change. — Terence Mulligan

Transitioning to new leadership. When they go well, leadership changes can represent a fresh start. When they don't, they present a learning opportunity.

We went through an unsuccessful leadership transition. Nothing brings people together like a good crisis. Our board members learned who was reliable and passionate about having the institution succeed. The viability of the institution was called into question, so that provided an opportunity for change. — Jeff Pickering

Setting strategy together. For those who don't have a naturally occurring event, creating a new strategic plan can be an intentionally designed turning point. The planning process can define the board's role in implementation and create a vision for a fully engaged, high-performing team of board members.

The strategic planning process got people involved in thinking. The first one we did, five years ago, really got people engaged. It surfaced the problems or the opportunities to excel. People saw that we really need to do something, and then they got involved. — Bill Lucido

The strategic plan has been one of the most important things for the board's engagement, in terms of understanding their role. The discipline of the strategic plan really helped gather everyone together. — Jim Mayfield

WHAT IF IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE?

Virtually all boards experience situations in which an individual member is not engaged and performing in a way that contributes to success, particularly as expectations for board roles become more evident.

Experience shows that the most positive way to deal with this situation is to:

Be clear about expectations. Regularly review written expectations for what it means to be a board member in terms of responsibilities, time and level of engagement. Have each board member conduct and share an assessment of individual performance annually.

Be proactive. If a board chair and chief executive feel that a board member is not making an important contribution to the community foundation, and that further investment in engaging this board member is not worthwhile, it is the board chair's responsibility to have a conversation with the member. The chairperson can indicate that it seems difficult for this individual to fulfill his/her responsibilities as a board member, and state that it would be in everyone's best interest for this individual to pursue other channels for supporting the community.

View change as productive. Recognize that transitions in board membership that are managed well heighten the sense of purpose and pride for remaining members, raise the overall strength of the board and contribute to the success of the foundation.

When we began meeting more, and it became clear that you needed to be tuned into the work and be at these meetings, it caused those people who had not been giving the same kind of time to realize that they needed to get off the board. — Ann Kaster

We formed the governance committee, and then told the directors they would need to step up their activities for the community foundation. We had two board members who decided they wanted to move to emeritus status after that. — Jeff Birkholz

Tools of Engagement

These resources were developed by and for emerging community foundations seeking to more deeply engage their boards.

INTERESTS AND CAPABILITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Community foundation board chairs or executives administer this series of questions to gauge the capabilities and interests of a new board member. This tool can be used as a formal questionnaire or as part of a casual, “getting to know you” conversation. These questions can also be posed to existing board members on an ongoing basis, enabling leadership to track shifts in interests and commitments over time. Tracking cumulative responses of all board members provides a big picture that can inform overall board development planning.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

Board members complete this multipart tool to assess their own contributions to the board, as well as the effectiveness of the board as a whole. It also invites board members to express concerns and ideas for making the board stronger and to establish a personalized plan for the year. Completing this tool can be part of a facilitated meeting focused on board engagement.

ENGAGEMENT TRACKER

Chief executives and chairpersons use this tool to assess board-wide engagement levels and plan strategies for raising the bar. These leaders may find it helpful to compare their own assessment of a board member’s engagement with individual board member perceptions surfaced via the self-assessment tool.

MEETING ASSESSMENT TOOL

At the end of each board meeting, members can complete this tool to share their constructive feedback on the quality of the session and to make suggestions for the next meeting.

Note that blank, editable versions of these tools (Microsoft Word®) are available at www.irvine.org/communityfoundations.

Interests and Capabilities Questionnaire

Use this tool to capture the capabilities and interests of current and potential board members.

Board Member Name

1. How do you anticipate spending **time and energy** in your role on the Community Foundation board?

2. What are your other major **commitments** and interests?

3. Are there any specific **issues, causes or aspects of community** that you feel particularly passionate about?

4. Are you **philanthropic**? Do you make charitable donations to support causes you care about?

5. What **skills or capacities** do you feel you can offer to help the Community Foundation?

6. Do you have any **connections** that you think would help strengthen the Community Foundation's work?

7. Are there any **barriers** that might make it difficult for you to attend board meetings regularly?

8. Which of the Community Foundation's **committees** interests you most?

Note that blank, editable versions of these tools (Microsoft Word®) are available at www.irvine.org/communityfoundations.

Self-Assessment and Action Plan

PAGE 1 OF 2

Board Member Name _____

PART I. SELF-ASSESSMENT

Please rate your agreement with the following statements.				
As a member of the board, I:	STRONGLY DISAGREE		STRONGLY AGREE	
1. Understand, support and promote the mission , goals and work of the Community Foundation.	1	2	3	4
2. Prepare in advance, regularly attend and actively participate in board meetings.	1	2	3	4
3. Believe my thoughts and opinions are heard and considered .	1	2	3	4
4. Find board service to be a rewarding experience .	1	2	3	4

PART II. ASSESSMENT OF THE BOARD AS A WHOLE

Please rate your agreement with the following statements.				
OPERATIONS: In my opinion, the board:	STRONGLY DISAGREE		STRONGLY AGREE	
1. Is effectively organized and leverages individual strengths and skills .	1	2	3	4
2. Recruits and orients new members with skills and perspectives needed to further our mission .	1	2	3	4
CULTURE: In my opinion, board members:	STRONGLY DISAGREE		STRONGLY AGREE	
3. Have productive discussions and effectively handle disagreements.	1	2	3	4
4. Are both physically and mentally present at meetings.	1	2	3	4
5. Strongly encourage reflection and learning .	1	2	3	4
RELATIONSHIPS: In my opinion, board members:	STRONGLY DISAGREE		STRONGLY AGREE	
6. Have strong camaraderie with one another.	1	2	3	4
7. Have a strong relationship with the Community Foundation's chief executive .	1	2	3	4
8. Have a strong relationship with the Community Foundation's staff .	1	2	3	4

Note that blank, editable versions of these tools (Microsoft Word®) are available at www.irvine.org/communityfoundations.

PART III. REFLECTION AND COMMENTS

Use a separate sheet to share comments, including responding to the items below.
<p>If you “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with any of the statements in the self-assessment, please explain why. What would improve your effectiveness as a member of the Community Foundation board?</p> <p>If you “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with any of the statements in the assessment of the board as a whole, please explain why. What could the Community Foundation do to better support you or the board as a whole?</p>

PART IV. PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

Use the prompts and spaces below to establish your goals as a Community Foundation board member for the coming year.			
Personal action plan:	MY GOAL	SIGN(S) OF SUCCESS	TIMING
1. Strategy: Participating in the strategic planning process, from plan creation to implementation. Offering big-picture ideas and support that helps the Community Foundation realize its mission and operate effectively over the long term.			
2. Giving: Making financial contributions that power the Community Foundation’s work.			
3. Connection: Using my personal and professional network to advance the mission of the Community Foundation.			
4. Ambassadorship: Promoting the value of the Community Foundation in ways and venues that increase its visibility and credibility.			
5. Issue Expertise: Putting my experience in and passion for an important issue (e.g., the arts) to work for the Community Foundation.			
6. Memory: Helping the Community Foundation stay on track with its strategic plan by keeping tabs on board and staff rationale and lessons learned along the way.			
7. Presence: Attending and actively participating in board meetings, committee meetings and Community Foundation sponsored events.			
8. Learning: Actively seeking ways to learn about philanthropy, local needs and opportunities, and other topics important to our organization and community.			
9. Other: Setting and achieving some other goal that advances the Community Foundation and/or improves my experience as a board member.			

Engagement Tracker

Board Member Name

Rate engagement in the following dimensions, noting any comments in the space below.				
This board member:	STRONGLY DISAGREE		STRONGLY AGREE	
1. Understands, supports and promotes the mission and goals of the Community Foundation.	1	2	3	4
2. Is familiar with the Community Foundation's services .	1	2	3	4
3. Understands his/her roles and responsibilities .	1	2	3	4
4. Has/seeks knowledge about needs and opportunities in the community.	1	2	3	4
5. Monitors key developments and trends in philanthropy.	1	2	3	4
6. Prepares in advance, regularly attends and actively participates in board meetings.	1	2	3	4
7. Volunteers for working groups and committees , and serves effectively on them.	1	2	3	4
8. Participates in activities and events sponsored by the Community Foundation, such as fundraisers or convenings.	1	2	3	4
9. Makes significant (based on personal means) financial contributions to the Community Foundation.	1	2	3	4
10. Nominates others who can add value and strengthen composition of the board, committees and volunteer groups.	1	2	3	4
11. Offers specific skills, expertise and relationships in the community to enhance the organization's outreach and services.	1	2	3	4
12. Communicates the value of philanthropy to policymakers, grantmakers, the media and the general public when given the opportunity.	1	2	3	4
13. Expresses his/her thoughts and opinions .	1	2	3	4
14. Believes his/her thoughts and opinions are heard and considered .	1	2	3	4
15. Values providing leadership to the field .	1	2	3	4
16. Finds board service to be a rewarding experience .	1	2	3	4
17. Feels comfortable communicating the Community Foundation's strategic plan .	1	2	3	4
Comments:				

Note that blank, editable versions of these tools (Microsoft Word®) are available at www.irvine.org/communityfoundations.

Meeting Assessment Tool

Constructing Better Board Meetings

Rate three key aspects of today's meeting. Use the space at bottom to add comments.			
	LESS IMPORTANT		ESSENTIAL
1. The issues we covered today were:	1	2	3 4
	NOT HELPFUL		INDISPENSABLE
2. The materials provided were:	1	2	3 4
	OPERATIONS		POLICY AND STRATEGY
3. Today's discussion concerned primarily:	1	2	3 4
Other comments. Use this space to provide any other inputs. Consider questions such as:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What might we have done differently to improve our meeting today? • What was the most valuable contribution we made to the Community Foundation's success today? • Did we use the time allotted for the meeting wisely? • In light of today's meeting, what are the most important topics we should address at our next meeting? 			

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INSIGHT COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS SERIES: ON BOARD

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