



# Central Wisconsin Children's Museum Board Nomination and Orientation Process

## Board Nominating Process

CWCM's by-laws allow for a board composed of 25 directors. Each director's term is three years, and a director may serve two terms. At any given time, the board may have less than 25 members.

The Administrative Committee, with assistance from the full board and Executive Director, is responsible for the process of selecting new board member nominees, which includes 1) evaluating the profile of the current board and identifying assets that are currently needed or will be lost as members retire, 2) identifying prospective candidates for nomination (with suggestions from the full board of directors, 3) coordinating the board orientation process as described below. Ideally, this process starts at the beginning of each year, with interviews taking place during April and May, a class of new directors presented at the June board meeting (when the annual election of directors takes place), and director terms beginning in September. This is not a set schedule; board members may also be recruited/nominated/oriented throughout the year as necessary.

1. A profile of the board is completed or updated annually by all board members. This includes board diversity with respect to gender, age, ethnic/race, geographic location, professional work, skills and expertise, and affiliations. The Administrative Committee evaluates board the profile, defining the qualities needed to strengthen and balance the board, and likely resources for those candidates. This information is used when selecting prospective candidates.

2. The Administrative Committee may solicit prospective candidates through several sources. It may ask current board members, past board members, the Executive Director, and others who may have knowledge of persons who fit the identified recruitment needs, to submit names and biographical information about possible candidates. The committee may identify certain resources, organizations, or funding sources with whom to explore the possibility of potential board members. The committee also maintains a file of candidates considered in the past, but not selected. This may have occurred because either the candidate was not willing or able to serve at the time, or the assets of the candidate were already being met by a current director or another prospective candidate. The committee may add names to this file at anytime during the course of the year, for consideration at any time in the future. The Administrative Committee keeps the entire board informed about the candidates under consideration and invites further board input.

## Board Orientation Process

*Critical Board Building Challenge: How can we help board members acquire the skills and knowledge they need to quickly become effective leaders and decision-makers?*

Providing new board members with the information they need to perform effectively is a critical step in developing a strong Board of Directors. The responsibility for developing and implementing an effective program of board orientation is shared between the executive director and the board itself. There must be a commitment to developing a well-informed board, one with the knowledge needed to lead an effective organization. Within the board, the responsibility can be delegated to the Administrative / Board Development Committee. CWCM's orientation procedure is designed to bring new board members "up to speed" as quickly as possible with much of the "orientation" taking place even before an individual is elected to the board.

### **During The Recruitment Stage (Before Election to the Board):**

#### **Board Web Page**

When a prospective board member is identified and interested, a board member contact will direct the prospective nominee to the CWCM Board Web Page located at [www.cwchildrensmuseum.org/board.html](http://www.cwchildrensmuseum.org/board.html). The page contains most documents that will later be distributed in the board manual and allows the prospect to access a wealth of information that will help them make an informed decision about joining the board.

#### **Face-to-Face Meeting**

After the prospective has the opportunity to examine the Board Page, a face-to-face meeting will be set up with the CWCM Executive Director and at least one board member to answer any questions. The meeting will allow both the prospective and CWCM to determine whether the board position is a good fit for the individual. The board Statement of Responsibilities will be highlighted and expectations will be discussed in detail (number of meetings, committee assignments, length of board term and an idea of the time commitment required). Some discussion of possible committee roles will also be discussed.

#### **Nomination and Election**

If the prospective board member agrees to be nominated to the board, they will fill out and turn in their Prospective Board Member Form and their signed Statement of Responsibilities. They will be elected at the next board meeting and then invited to attend the board meeting following their election.

## **After Nomination and Election**

### **Board Orientation Meeting**

The Administrative Committee Chair or other designated current board member along with the Executive Director typically facilitate the board orientation session. Board President(s) should be present along with any other key people.

Setup and Supplies needed:

- Board Manual (Hardcopy binders, Packet of Current Brochures in pocket)
- Statement of Responsibility forms (if not all new members have completed this.)
- Computer with internet connection
- Table and chairs – Art room or Annex

The Orientation Meeting will consist of:

- PowerPoint presentation – basics about CWCM
- History of the Organization
- A tour of CWCM
- Review of the Board Manual  
(see CWCM Board Manual Table of Contents for details)  
(emphasis on Strategic Plan, Operating Budget, and Committees)
- One-on-one meetings with Board President and/or ED to determine best fit for committee service. This could happen at the end of the Orientation Meeting or at another time. Board members should be asked if they would like to serve on a committee that might not be the obvious choice (a marketing person might like to serve on E & E, etc.). However, the new board member will be expected to lend their primary expertise when needed by the organization.

### **First Board Meeting**

At the new members' first board meeting, introduce them to all current board members and staff. Whenever the board has several new members, make sure all members have nametags or table tents. Consider assigning a mentor board member to work with the new board member at least through the first several months.

### **Resources**

Developing a Board Recruitment Plan <http://www.createthefuture.com/developing.htm>  
Orientation and Training of New Board Members [http://www.createthefuture.com/board\\_orientation.htm](http://www.createthefuture.com/board_orientation.htm)  
Free Complete Toolkit for Boards <http://www.mapnp.org/library/boards/boards.htm>  
Board Café – Newsletter for Nonprofit Boards of Directors <http://www.boardcafe.org/>  
The Nonprofit GENIE <http://www.genie.org/>  
The Board Source – Building Effective Nonprofit Boards <http://www.boardsource.org/>