



MINNESOTA

Building Inclusive Boards: Set Up Your Boards & Commissions for Success!

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Welcome!

As you enter, please answer the question on the large sheets of paper. We will discuss them shortly.

Welcome from Sponsoring Lead Agencies

- Office of Governor Mark Dayton
- Minnesota Department of Human Rights
- Olmstead Implementation Office

Goals for this Training

- Learn skills on how to build more inclusive boards
- Share best practices for supporting state boards and commissions
- Determine ways to continue to share strategies and ideas to carry on this work

Agenda

Time	Topic
1:00 - 1:15	Welcome, Goals & Ice Breaker
1:15 - 1:30	Framework for Today's Training
1:30 – 2:00	Presentation: Access, Attitudes and Practices
2:00 – 2:20	Collective Q&A and Next Steps in Small Groups
2:20 - 2:50	Report Back from Small Groups
2:50 – 3:00	Evaluation & Closing

Who is Nexus?

- Community-building intermediary based in the Twin Cities since 2003
- **Mission is to build more engaged and powerful communities of color**
- Work in 3 program areas:
 1. Authorship: Community Engagement
 2. Ownership: Community Wealth Building
 3. Leadership: Building Capacity



Nexus' Work



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Our Program: The Boards & Commissions Leadership Institute (BCLI)

The BCLI is 7-month leadership program that trains, places, and connects people of color and other underrepresented community members on priority, publicly appointed boards and commissions that influence racial and economic equity.

- Train leaders to succeed technically and politically
- Place equity advocates on priority seats
- Connect to local, regional, state and national networks

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Ice Breaker

- In pairs with someone you don't know
- Please share:
 - Name
 - Department or Organization
 - What is your role at your board or commission: Board, staff, or community member
 - Why did you come today? What about this topic interested you?
 - Favorite movie

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State of MN Commitment to Inclusion

"A government that serves the people of Minnesota should reflect the rich diversity of Minnesota. We must ensure that all Minnesotans have equitable opportunities to work for their state government, to do business with the state, and to participate fully in the development of policy within our democracy." Governor Mark Dayton

State of MN Definition: Inclusion creates an environment where all employees feel valued, respected, and supported. An inclusive environment is where all employees (and board and commission members can bring their full selves to work and fully engage and connect.

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So what does an inclusive board mean to you?



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What words appeared 3 times



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Qualities of Inclusion

- Qualities of Inclusion – what does this feel like?
 - I can bring my full self to work
 - I feel valued and appreciated
 - I have access to all opportunities
 - I feel respected
 - I feel supported
 - I can do my best work and not be afraid to fail
 - I know that my differences will not serve as barriers
 - I feel that I belong to a team
- (Borrowed from Chief Inclusion Officer presentation)

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Why is this Important? Appointment Data

- In 2017 the Governor appointed:
 - 24.4% from communities of color and indigenous communities
 - 49.6% women
 - 13.5% people with disabilities
- Targeted focus by Governor Dayton
 - Increased racial diversity of MN's boards and commissions by 90%
 - Increased representation of Greater MN by 2.6% (now up to 35%)

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Framework of How We Build Inclusive Boards & Commissions



- Access: Conditions that create a welcoming environment for full participation of board or commission members
- Attitudes: Culture of your board or commission
- Practices: Methods you use to get the work of the board or commission completed

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What did we hear in the survey about your concerns?

1. Broadening networks for outreach and recruitment
2. Facilitation strategies, including how to include diverse voices at the table during a discussion
3. Governance
4. Want more diverse members
5. Other:
 1. How much sufficient to provide; how to educate new board members to the effort and time needed to be a productive board member

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Access

Definition: The conditions that create a welcoming environment for full participation of board members

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A Quick Checklist for Planning Accessible Meetings

It is important to note that the majority of steps that need to be taken to make events accessible can be taken well in advance of the event. Planning is key. Consider the following checklist to guide you through the planning. Not all of the checklist items may be relevant to all events, and you may need to ensure that everyone at your event can participate in all of the activities.

- Posting:** Enough accessible parking spaces for the event.
- Circle seating:** Accessibility plan of event path (entry, exit, rest, and elevators when needed) from the parking area to meeting rooms to restrooms to other sites for the evening, including a minimum 20 inches of clear path through doorway (36" for each doorway).
- Access statement:** In press releases, advertisements, publications and other information about the event include a statement such as this: "The meeting is accessible. Those attending the meeting are requested to notify their care providers of any personal care products in order to ensure accessibility for everyone. People with disabilities requiring additional services or equipment for printed material to participate in the meeting should contact (name) at (phone) or (email) in (date)." www.dhs.state.mn.us/olmsted
- Generous timeline:** Postpone the meeting early enough for people needing accommodations to request them, and to give you time to provide them. Know what people will actually receive the meeting accommodations.
- Seating:** Designate barrier free seating locations for people with disabilities. Have adequate space between rows of chairs, seats with a clear view of sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, and meeting close to the restroom or sign language interpretation.
- Room layout:** Should allow full participation in planned activities. For example, if activities require moving from table to table, allow enough space between tables for people using a wheelchair or walker.
- Accessible information throughout the event:** This includes speeches, presentations, file sharing, handouts, PDFs, videos and other information. For audio, accommodations may include sign language interpreters, captioning, hearing systems, and/or live transcription for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. People who are blind or visually impaired may need materials in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, audio, or tactile. www.dhs.state.mn.us/olmsted
- Appropriate terminology:** Ensure that "you're in" language is used both orally and in written form when talking to people with disabilities. For example, "people who are deaf" rather than "the deaf".
- Consistent communication:** For example, when speaking to a person who is blind, say "to your left" instead of pointing.
- Just ask:** If you aren't sure whether a person needs assistance, just ask. And if you need more

2/16/2018

www.dhs.state.mn.us/olmsted

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Access: Logistics

- ADA Accommodations – it's the law!
- Let's review a checklist of things to consider
- Keep in mind that each person will have different needs

Access: ADA Additional Resources

Who to Ask if you have more questions (especially about costs)

- 1) MN State Council on Disability: <https://www.disability.state.mn.us/>
 - Joan Willshire, Executive Director
 - David Fenley, ADA/Access Coordinator for the Council
- 2) ADA MN, www.adaminnnesota.org
- 3) MMB Website: <https://mn.gov/mmb/employee-relations/equal-opportunity/ada/>
- 4) Mid-Atlantic ADA Center: <http://www.adainfo.org>
- 5) Upcoming event: ABILITY Conference, Tuesday, 2/27/18 in St. Cloud, cost is \$50 <https://www.stcloudstate.edu/conferences/ability/default.aspx>

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www.dhs.state.mn.us/dhmsbad

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Access: Additional Logistics

- Meeting Times: Day or evening?
- Lead staff contact: This is on the Secretary of State's website but who else is the contact for items like ADA accommodations?
- Meeting Location: Needs to consider ADA issues but what is convenient for most attendees
- Close to Transportation: Light rail, bus, bike parking
- Remote video or conference calling options such as GoTo Meeting or Skype: But also need to consider broadband access issues for participants
- Food & Childcare: Depends on budget for many public members, this does matter if meeting in evenings

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www.dhs.state.mn.us/dhmsbad

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Access: Identifying Potential Board Members

- Identify what qualities you currently have in board members
 - Wants: Statute requirements of different boards and commissions
 - Needs: Whose voices are missing?
- Note that the criteria or left side column is what you decide you need
- How to Track?
 1. Use a survey
 2. Ask board members in person

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Recruitment: So where do we find people?

- “Chalk Talk” Activity: Where do you currently find your board and commission members? What networks?
- What do you notice about what people have written? What are similarities or differences?

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Access: Other Networks

- Social networks: Linked In
- Professional networks, associations
 - Many young professional networks in different fields
 - GreaterMSP has a network for professionals of color and younger professionals
 - St. Paul Chamber of Commerce has a young professionals organization/host POC events
- Community organizations or where communities gather (public markets)
- In greater MN, there are fewer organizations and networks

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Access: Who is responsible for recruitment?

- Staff
- Other board or commission members
- Appointing Authorities (Governor, Legislature, individual agencies)

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Access: Recruitment Materials

- Marketing Materials: What do you use?
 - Pictures are great
 - Be clear about roles and expectations of board or commission members
 - Contact person information again key here
 - Big key messages in clear and in easily comprehensible language
 - Offer in other formats: Information sessions, webinars/recorded videos

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Attitudes
Definition: The culture of your board or commission to include all voices.

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Attitudes: Board or Commission Culture

- What do we know about culture?
 - Visible, transparent rules for participation
 - Hidden rules on how things get done
- You may not notice it but your boards and commissions have a "culture" of way they operate with both visible and hidden rules
- The lack of understanding both cultural pieces can be hard for new board or commission members

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Attitudes: Board or Commission Culture

- One obvious cultural piece is the decision making process:
 - How many use Parliamentary procedure/Robert's Rules?
 - Are you aware that there are other group decision making processes?
- This is important because we need to acknowledge that participation levels overall vary. Some people may need more time to actually respond to a decision or even to engage in the discussion.
- Goal is to foster an environment that is open to learning and different types of ideas – look for opportunities to include this at your meetings.

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Attitudes: Board or Commission Culture

- Culture of Board Discussions
 - Consider what happens when people disagree - is it addressed in the moment or not at all?
 - How are new ideas embraced? Is it clear if staff will follow up? Be clear if there is agreement of whether the issue should be addressed at the board or agency level or of it just an individual board member issue
 - Staff responsiveness is key to many of these things along with board or commission leadership
- What criteria are used to make decisions? How explicit are those criteria explained?
- Be aware of how topics such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation or ability are integrated into these conversations – for example if the board or commission culture does not seem to directly address lived experiences of these communities

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Attitudes: Board or Commission Culture

- Leadership Matters
 - Lead staff role to provide data and resources and apprise of upcoming issues or concerns
 - Board Chair role to facilitate/moderate the meeting, assure all items get addressed on the agenda, assure all members are heard and have their concerns addressed and move the meeting along in a timely manner
 - Board or commission members to participate fully and engage in conversations
 - Also remember to be clear about the process and/or timeline to serve in leadership positions such as the chair role and encourage this opportunity to new members

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Attitudes: Facilitation Resources

- MN Department of Human Rights will host a training on facilitation for state employees on 5/2/18 – stay tuned for the official announcement
- Resource for State Employees: Office of Management and Budget Enterprise Talent Development <https://mn.gov/mmb/etd/> provides facilitation training
- InterCultural Association (ICA) Technology of Participation (ToP) certification in facilitation, <http://top-facilitation.com/>
 - MN has a very strong chapter of ToP professionals and trainings <https://www.mntop.us/index.php?lang=en>

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Practices (Governance)
Definition: The methods used to get the work of the board or commission accomplished.

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Practice: Overall Role of State Boards & Commissions (B&Cs)

- Review agency reports, policies, plans and budgets
- Facilitate community input and incorporate public comments on policies and/or proposals
- Inform the agency of critical issues
- Make [recommendations](#) and [decisions on policies and implementation](#)

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Practice: Orientation & Onboarding New Members

- Example from the registration survey:

“Orientation is provided to all new board members; each is assigned a coach (experienced board member) who personally contacts the individual at the time of appointment; the coach is assigned seating next to the new member at each board meeting so as to be available for explanations; new board members and their coaches meet together following the first board meeting to debrief and continue with orientation.”

- Many of you indicated that you do orientations well – what else do you have to share? And why do you think this is the case?
- Connecting new Board or Commission members to a more seasoned member helps build relationships amongst board members

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Practice: Using Agendas to Generate Discussion

- Board agendas are powerful tools to get the work of the commission completed and also reinforce culture and expectations
- Typical agendas cover meeting minutes, staff reports, other board or commission business
- Discussion items are important but could be more powerful by adding discussion items for more deeper discussion
 - This is also known as “generative” topics or framing an issue where as strategic topics are how to address an issue. (Chait, Ryan and Taylor. 2005. *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of the Nonprofit Boards*)
- Another Best Practice: Explain acronyms or commonly used language or create a legend or cheat sheet of acronyms to hand out at meetings

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Practice: Setting & Reviewing Annual Board or Commission Goals

- Writing annual review of board/commission work accomplishments is a helpful practice of understanding the board
- Consider setting aside time to do retreats or a deeper dive on current issues impacting your board/commission if you can not get to generative topics during the normal course of your board meetings

Practice: Evaluation

- Evaluate for overall impact to mission: Create an annual board/commission satisfaction survey to check in on board/commission satisfaction and if you are meeting the purpose of the board
- Evaluate at the individual board or commission member level: Do check ins to see if board members are pleased with meeting agendas or how their suggestions are handled – do they feel part of the work and contribute their strengths?
- These do not have to be annual either – could be quarterly or semi-annually – up to each board. But if you don't evaluate how will you know?

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Practices: ADA

- ADA Accommodations are not just about access to the meeting but there are also best practices to ensure participation at the board or commission too
- Accessible Meetings Handout was co-created by Olmstead Implementation Office as a resource to help you think about ADA practices

In small groups of 3-4 people, please come up with 2 items:

- 1) *One collective question to ask the presenter*
- 2) *Come up with ways to continue this conversation beyond this training today*

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Moving Forward

- Today's training is not an "end all, be all" but start or continuation of a conversation about building more inclusive boards
- Resources – at the State
 - MN Department of Human Rights, <https://mn.gov/mdhr/>
 - Olmstead Implementation Office, https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idc.plg?idcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&DocName=opc_home
 - MN State Ethnic Councils, <https://mn.gov/mdhr/news-community/community-collaboration/ethnic-councils.jsp>
 - Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs, Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council & Minnesota State Council on Disability
 - MMB Website, <https://mn.gov/mmb/>
- For those here who are not State employees, MN Council of Non-Profits, www.minnesotanonprofits.org

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Interest from Diverse Communities in Joining State Boards and Commissions

- Cohosted Statewide Board and Commissions Information Sessions in the Fall 2017
 - 7 Cities: Bemidji, Duluth, Worthington, Rochester, St. Paul, Brooklyn Center, St. Cloud
 - 219 registered; 112 people attended info sessions
 - Demographics:
 - 52% People of Color
 - 7% American Indian
 - 18% Person with Disability
 - 17% LGBTQ
 - Many indicated interest in state boards and commissions with a dozen or so applying on the spot

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What have we been hearing from potential applicants?

- **Access concerns:** What accommodations (ADA, childcare, transportation) can I ask for? Are all the meetings in St. Paul? What if my work will not let me join? Will I have an ASL or language interpreter at all of my meetings?
- **Attitudes:** Even if I apply and am appointed, will board members really listen to what I have to say? Is there anyone else who looks or thinks like me on this board or commission?
- We have been encouraging them to bring their lived experiences to the table and to make it a valuable experience.

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Evaluation & Closing

- Any last minute questions?
- Can a few of you share one thing you took away from today's training about how you will now build more inclusive boards?
- Please fill out the evaluation

Thanks!

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Thank you for attending!

Don't forget to fill out your evaluation forms!

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