



Step 3: Key Considerations to Creating a Diverse Board

Making a commitment to diversifying your board provides an opportunity to rethink traditional ideas about what a “qualified” board member looks like. In the past, “ideal” board members have typically been considered as people with many years of business experience, the ability to make a significant monetary donation and a network that they could ask to contribute. Today, the best board is a board that 1) reflects the community you serve, 2) optimizes their strengths and 3) elevates the relevancy and capacity of your council. Yes, having board members willing to fundraise and get their own network involved is important but there are many other ways for board members to contribute that may have been overlooked in the past.

In this document we invite you to think outside the box about when it comes to board member experience and attributes. Some board members may donate a significant amount, others may activate networks that raise significant dollars, and some will connect you with invested sponsors and partners. Other board members will benefit your council through their lived experiences. They can offer ideas on how to engage with youth in certain communities, how to connect with families in new ways or can shed light on issues your board may have never considered. Given this new view, there are many people in your community who would make excellent board members. Our goal is to eliminate barriers that would keep someone from considering themselves as a valuable asset to your council.

Below are key considerations to keep in mind:

1. **Board Giving:** The most successful board includes members from all income levels, representing a variety of networks within your community. While 100% board giving is the goal, there are a variety of meaningful ways for board members to give and provide value to your council that are not financial such as introductions to new communities or knowledge on uniquely complex topics.
2. **Business/Professional Experience:** In addition to board members with specific professional expertise, actively recruit and invite board members who have unique lived experiences and who represent your participants and families. Here are a few options to consider: does your council have a significant percentage of participants receiving financial assistance? If so, do you have a board member who represents that population? Does your council serve a large immigrant or refugee population? Do you have board members that represent those participants? Does your council serve participants with physical, mental, emotional, or social disabilities? Do any of your board members represent that community?
3. **Age:** It is valuable to have a variety of ages serving on your board. Those in their 20s are experiencing a completely different world than those in their 60s and 70s. Both age



groups have a unique perspective and different skills to offers. Many young people have a lot of energy and time to give but are not normally asked to step into leadership roles.

Do you have active alumnae who could serve and provide an unique perspective and voice for your council? Conversely, retirees may be looking for ways to engage in something new or fill their time with something meaningful and could bring new ideas to the table.

4. **Previous experience with your council:** Ideally your board members are drawn to and familiar with the core values and mission of GOTR but to recruit a diverse group of leaders you will likely need to look outside your current volunteer pool. Build relationships with other organizations in your area doing good work. Get to know the parents of the girls you serve. Reframing what makes a good board member will help you identify people in your community who you may not have considered for a board member role.

The underlying goal is to build a board that will advance the mission of your council by representing and centering the breadth and depth of the people you serve. Diversity breeds innovation and honors the dignity of all people. That is how we want to show up for our community and model our core values.