



## **Local Association Board Expectations (Sample)**

**As a local association board of directors, you may find it helpful to formalize or express the expectations you have of members. This document is only a sample of expectations your board may have for itself. Some of what follows may be specifically referenced in your by-laws. After reviewing the material below, adapted from the expectations for the Big I New York board, you may wish to include the expectations as part of an orientation for new directors or an annual review for all directors.**

### **Local Association Board Expectations**

The board of directors' primary focus is the membership. Its deliberations must put the collective interests of member independent insurance agencies and brokerages first. The board must be able to distinguish between transient "wants" and real "needs" of the membership to be successful. This means not simply reacting, but leading membership. A responsibility is placed on the association to educate members so they understand board direction. Each board meeting should start with a reminder of member focus.

### **Core Principles**

The board deliberates with many voices and governs with one. The board will govern with:

- A member-centered and knowledge-based approach
- An emphasis on outward vision rather than an internal preoccupation
- An effective blend of strategic leadership and administrative detail
- Future orientation rather than past or present orientation
- A proactive rather than reactive approach
- A focus on outcomes.

The board will encourage:

- Diversity in viewpoints
- Collective rather than individual decisions
- Learning and leadership development
- Responsible risk-taking.

The board will cultivate a sense of group responsibility and be responsible for excellence in governing. The board will accept accountability for initiating policy and will use the expertise of its individual members to enhance its ability in decision-making and policy setting. Each board member will faithfully review material in advance of meetings and will come prepared for discussion. The board will not permit any officer, member or individual to hinder or be an excuse for not fulfilling board commitments.

The board will direct, control, and inspire the organization through the distribution of relevant, accurate and timely information to members, scheduling and arranging of programs that are relevant, accurate and timely and will represent the broader membership at industry events.

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The board will exercise sufficient self-discipline to govern with excellence. This will encompass but not be limited to such matters as attendance, preparation, policy-making principles, respect of roles, and ensuring continuance of governance capability.

The board will commit to the continual improvement of board performance through governance education and skills training and development. The board will commit to enriched input and deliberation process. The board will commit to orientation of new Board members through a leadership development program which outlines the Board's job responsibilities and governance processes and policies. The orientation program will include a mentoring program utilizing Executive Committee members.

The board will monitor its process and performance at each meeting and engage in periodic Board discussion of process improvement.

Board members are expected to understand and appropriately question the financial strength and performance of the association. Each Board member shall be familiar and comfortable with the balance sheet and profit and loss statements.

### **Governing Resources**

Governing well is the most efficient and effective approach to a successful board and, therefore, the board will invest in its governance capacity.

Board skills, methods, and knowledge will be sufficient to assure governing with excellence:

- Training and retraining will be used liberally to maintain and increase member skills and understandings.
- If deemed necessary, outside monitoring assistance may be arranged so that the board can exercise confident control over organizational performance.
- Outreach mechanisms will be used as needed to ensure the board's ability to listen to members' viewpoints, values and needs.

Costs will be prudently incurred, though not at the expense of endangering the development and maintenance of excellence in governance.

### **Code of Conduct**

The board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as board members. Board members must represent loyalty to the interests of the membership and the association. They must avoid conflict of interest with respect to their fiduciary responsibility. Board members must adhere to the association's conflict of interest policy.

Board members may not attempt to exercise individual authority over the organization except as explicitly set forth in the by-laws. Board members' interactions with public, press or other



entities must recognize the same limitations and inability of any board member to speak on behalf of the board or the organization except where authorized and fully prepared to communicate explicitly stated board positions.

Board members will respect confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature.

Board members must respect and comply with the association's Non-Harassment Policy.

### **Committee Principles**

Committees and Task Forces shall perform their duties as outlined in the bylaws, position descriptions, and charges.

Committees or Task Forces will reinforce the wholeness of the board's job and oversight and will not interfere with organizational priorities or delegation from the Board.

### **Leadership Development**

The board recognizes the critical role that proper orientation and training plays in creating a culture of success for board members. Therefore, the board commits to an energetic, deep, and continual program of leadership development.

The Executive Committee shall maintain a mentoring program to pair new board members with experienced officers and Board members.

New board members shall participate in an orientation with at least two association officers or senior board members held not more than 60 days following their installation.

Each year, all board members shall participate in an association orientation/refresher course that acquaints members with key policies and activities of the association.

Each year at the beginning of the business year, each board member will read and attest to their understanding of the How the Board Governs.

Each director and officer of **[Local Association name]** has as a primary responsibility to act in the best interest of the association on behalf of members. All directors and officers must act considering the needs of the membership in total, not a specific constituency.

Following is a list of duties:

- Membership recruitment & development. This includes updating other members of the board and Big I New York if there are membership changes
- Keep informed on local industry activities, trends, and/or items of concern; be prepared to discuss with the board.



- Keep a record of any industry, legislative, membership inquiries, activities and report to the board of directors meetings
- Do your homework in advance and attend all Board meetings and participate on any conference calls.
- Promote InsurPAC and IAPAC through communications to members about the important role these two PACs play in association advocacy efforts
- Promote and participate in legislative advocacy through attendance at Big I New York's Advocacy Day and the National Leadership Conference and association Big I New York's grass roots efforts.
- Dues follow-up (calling members who have not renewed, putting them in touch with Big I New York's membership department).
- Keep informed of state and national events in the insurance industry; regularly read insurance industry publications – update the board regarding any issues that may impact the membership
- Be sure to be on the mailing list of Big I New York and that you take the time to stay current on news and activities
- Be constructive in your approach to criticism and ideas. Be prepared to offer suggestions and participate in discussions at all board meetings. You should help guide the industry.
- Submit articles for local association newsletter
- Attend all board meetings each year and participate in any board conference calls.