

Capacity Building for Lake Organizations



The Lakes Partnership is working to help lake organizations maximize their roles in protecting lake health. Our model of lake organization capacity is built around four related parts: *membership, organization, relationships, and programs*. This tool is focused on Organizational Capacity: specifically, the evaluation of board members.

Board Member Evaluations

To have an effective board, each member must know what they are expected to contribute. Too many times, board members attend meetings but may not contribute much beyond that. One issue many board members face is not having enough time to contribute in ways that they would like. Another reason they may not contribute is because they are not sure of the organization's expectations.

As a board member, it is useful to get feedback about how you're doing, as well as have the opportunity to share impact and ask questions. Because most board positions are for two years, it may be helpful for the Chair or a designated committee member to have a quick (15-minute), informal check-in within the first six months to ensure understanding and provide specific feedback. Before the meeting, provide the board member with a short list of questions for them to think about, such as:

1. How are you feeling about the operations of the board? This question allows the board member to voice any concerns.
2. Are you comfortable with the expectations of your board position?
3. Do you have all the information and tools necessary to fulfill your role on the board?
4. What can I/we do to help make sure you succeed in your role?

Having answers to these questions can help guide your conversation and make this check-in productive.

As the person meeting with the board member, here are some questions you may want to think about ahead of time:

1. Was this board member recruited/invited to join the board due to specific skills or experience?
2. Were they provided a position description at the start of their service?
3. Have they had any successes worth celebrating?
4. Do they need more guidance or support?

To read more about how to enhance board member participation, read the Lake Tides article from spring 2021 available at <https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/resources/newsletter/default.aspx>.

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