

Board Member Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- Be willing to learn from other board members.
- Always remember that the job of the board is to provide oversight and not become involved in the mechanics of operating the local public health agency.
- Be a good listener.
- Read board minutes.
- Study policy books.
- Always read and prepare for meetings ahead of time.
- Recognize that your responsibility is not to run the local public health agency, but to see that it is well run.
- Work through the properly-appointed director according to board and organizational policy.
- Refer, as far as possible, all complaints and requests to the director for appropriate action.
- Familiarize yourself in a broad and non-technical manner with the problems of the local public health agency.
- Try to interpret to the staff, through the director and directly when appropriate, the attitudes, wishes and needs of the citizens of the county; and try to interpret to the citizens the needs, problems and progress of the local public health agency.
- Voice opinions frankly in board meetings and vote for what seems best for the citizens of the county.
- Recognize fully that the director is entirely responsible for carrying out policy in accordance with state/county law, rules and regulations.
- Help to frame policies and plans, only after considering the recommendations of the director, together with his/her reasons for making such recommendations.
- Require oral and written reports for the purpose of keeping the board properly informed on local public health agency matters.
- Give all local public health agency staff authority in keeping with their responsibilities.
- Vote only for the best-trained technical and professional employees who have been properly recommended by the director.
- Maintain harmonious relations with other board members when harmonious relations are consistent with your obligations to the local public health agency.
- Visit the local public health agency to gain clearer understanding of problems, but not to interfere in the day-to-day administration.
- Establish criteria for evaluating the efficiency of the director.
- Present personal criticism of local public health agency employees only to the administrator.
- Support and protect local public health agency staff in the performance of their duties.
- Give friendly counsel and advice to the director.

Don't:

- Interfere with the day-by-day routine of the local public health agency administration and supervision.
- Refuse to support worthwhile local public health agency programs because of personal reasons.
- Show favoritism to relatives and/or friends.

- Make promises and commitments before the questions are fully discussed in the board meetings.
- Join a clique to control board action.
- Don't have an axe to grind.
- Don't hesitate to ask questions if you don't understand.
- Use board membership for political or business advancement for yourself or your families.
- Indulge in petty criticism of the administration of the local public health agency.
- Divulge confidential information.
- Assume authority in local public health agency matters when the board is not in session.
- Accept gifts from suppliers or contractors, or make personal purchases through the local public health agency to gain advantage of state or county contracts.