WOMEN'S FUND
of the GREATER CINCINNATI FDN.

GOVERNMENT GUIDEBOOK
for Board & Commission Inclusion

Compiled by the Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation

ABOUT THE WOMEN'S FUND

More than 25 years ago, the Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation set out to improve the status of women in our region. What started as an idea has grown into a robust movement of people who are committed to speeding the pace of change for women's self-sufficiency.

At the Women's Fund, we are designing a community in which all women can participate, prosper and reach their full potential. We believe that by making the world a better place for women, we generate positive outcomes for everyone.

Our work is in three key areas: we **research** issues like equal pay, black women's economic mobility, childcare, and reproductive justice. We **advocate** at the local and state government level and within the private sector. We push for greater **civic engagement** so women from all backgrounds can lead in their own communities.

These three pillars: **research, advocacy,** and **civic engagement** are game changers and help level the playing field for women across the board and benefit not only women but everyone.

Our work is at the systems level where real, lasting change happens.

Vision: We are designing a community where all women can participate, prosper and reach their full potential.

Mission: Our mission is to advance gender and racial equity for women by addressing systemic barriers to upward mobility.

Thank you to our funders for this project: **Kroger** FOUNDATION   Stephen H. Wilder Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Civic engagement is a core principal of our democracy. Nowhere is this truer than at the local level, where decisions have a direct impact on citizens' everyday lives and communities.

But who are these engaged citizens, and do they accurately represent their communities? The Women's Fund believes government should reflect the community it serves, and a robust and healthy democracy exists only when all voices are at the table.

Research supports this.[1] Diverse boards provide better representation of an organization's stakeholders, including clients, constituents and the broader community. We arrive at better decisions as a group when more perspectives are in the room.

While many governments aspire to include citizen input, limited capacity and budgets often mean there are few systems in place to intentionally encourage broad citizen involvement. Low engagement means critical perspectives are omitted from public decision-making, particularly those of traditionally disenfranchised groups such as women and people of color.

That's why in 2018, the Women's Fund launched *Appointed*. This non-partisan initiative identifies opportunities for women to serve on civic boards and commissions and empowers them to seek a seat at the table. We provide support and training opportunities, and are a resource available to connect elected officials to interested board candidates.

During the research and launch of *Appointed*, and through discussions with government officials, we identified a critical resource gap. Although increased board diversity is often a community's goal, there was not a clear roadmap to achieving it. So we decided to create one, identifying tools and practices that promote inclusivity on civic boards and commissions. This Guidebook is the result.

Our goal is to help governments develop an accessible, transparent civic engagement process for all of their citizens. This Guidebook includes best practices, templates and examples, as well as clear next steps to implement the suggestions. We hope our resource will alleviate some of the time and monetary investment required to develop new programs and procedures, especially given the budget constraints and heavy workloads of our public servants.

Equity is not achieved with a one-size-fits-all approach; to be truly equitable we must approach individual needs individually. This Guidebook provides the outline for transforming your policies and practices so that everyone in our community has the opportunity to participate in local government.

Please let us know how we can continue to be a resource as you invest in an accessible government.

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1   PULSE Briefing: Gender Diversity on Boards and Commissions. (2018). https://www.gcfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/4.-2018-Gender-Diversity-of-Boards-and-Commissions.pdf

THEMES

Several themes surfaced while developing this Guidebook. Consider them a lens by which you review and make adjustments to your own government accessibility practices.

Meet people where they are.

People struggle to engage with government when it operates separately from where they live their lives. To foster engagement, meet individuals where they are. This means physically, in their communities and at places where they already go, as well as digitally, through simple application processes and mobile-friendly websites. Making government easy to access will increase citizen awareness and ultimately citizen engagement.

Make people feel welcome and included.

For people to raise their hands, they need to feel valued. To invite engagement from all constituents, clearly state your intention for diversity. Use welcoming and inclusive language. Follow up with action. The clearest way to demonstrate a commitment to diversity is to accept nothing less; hold board seats open until there is a diverse slate of candidates.

Remove barriers to participation.

Individuals can have the best intentions to participate but face roadblocks which make access impossible. Work schedules or child care issues may conflict, or meetings are too far from the bus stop. These barriers can be a blind spot to governments because they are not experienced by decision-makers already in the room. Holding meetings in the community, considering public transportation access, and providing onsite child care are all tools to increase citizen involvement. When planning your public events and meetings, ask what barriers you could eliminate that would enable all to participate.

Create tools for accountability.

With mounting demands on government services, inclusivity is at risk of falling to the bottom of the to-do list. Establishing and maintaining accountability measures is critical. Publicize your commitment, as well as the racial and gender composition of your boards and commissions. Create a policy to hold board seats open until there is a diverse slate of candidates. By embedding accountability into your day to day operations, you will ensure a commitment to increased engagement is an ongoing priority.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK

This Guidebook includes a set of recommendations, next steps, and resources.

1. Getting started: Outlining a few preliminary steps to set you up for success.

2. Recommendations: The recommendations in this Guidebook are grouped into five topic areas:

    Websites

    Application Process

    Marketing and Outreach

    Trainings

    Transparency and Good Government

Each section contains a variety of recommendations that will increase the inclusivity of your *appointed* boards and make them more accessible to your constituents. There is not a one-size fits all approach. We encourage you to review all the recommendations and implement those that work best for your government structure. That being said, some recommendations have a larger impact on increasing board diversity than others. We have indicated this by categorizing the items into those to implement, "Now," "Next" or "Later" in each section. We encourage you to prioritize your implementation in oder to maximize impact.

3. Resources: At the end of the Guidebook, we have provided an Appendix of key resources to support your journey. This includes links to best-in-class examples of government peers, lists of resources and templates and toolkits that will assist with implementation.

Write some goals for this Guidebook:

GETTING STARTED

Set Goals

Every region is unique. Understanding and defining what diversity means for your community is a critical first step. First, get to know the demographics of your jurisdiction, considering racial and ethnic diversity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, etc.

Next, study your current board makeup. Use this combined knowledge to set clear inclusion goals for your boards and commissions, ensuring these entities are reflective of the community they serve.

Create Ownership

Identify who will own this project, and whether a task force should be created. Consider leadership and representatives from departments such as human resources, marketing/communications, IT and the city manager or chief administrator's office.

Announce Your Intention

Publicly announce your intention to increase board diversity and citizen engagement. Consider providing opportunities for citizen involvement in the process.

Don't forget your good ideas! Write your thoughts here:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEBSITE MAIN LANDING PAGE

www.anytownusa.gov

ANYTOWN USA

City Council   Mayor   **Board & Commissions**   Departments   Contact Us

1

Boards & Commissions

4 Joining a board or commission is a great way to get involved in your community's government. For most of our board positions all you need to be is a resident and registered voter. Want to make a difference in your neighborhood? Apply today!
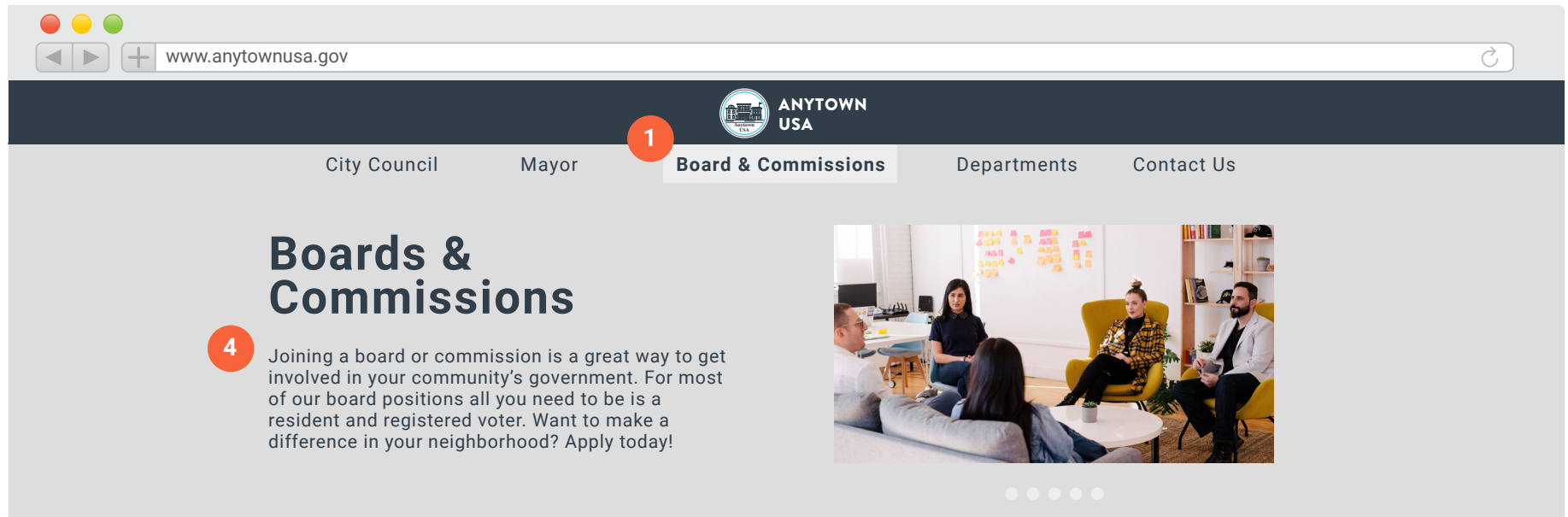
Our Boards & Commissions

Board of Zoning Appeal

Parks and Rec Board

Water Board

Planning Commission

Health Board

Public Services Board

Vision 2024 City Planning Committee

APPLICATION   **3**

VACANCIES   **2**

SIGN-UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER   **7**

5 **Questions?** Contact: Sue Smith
Sue.smith@anyytownusa.gov or 555-555-5555

MONTH

6

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT:

NOW

1. Centralized Website

Provide a centralized landing page for all boards and commissions.

2. Vacancies

Create one centralized location for all current and upcoming board and commission vacancies.

3. Application Link

Provide a prominent link to the application, and a description of the process of being appointed.

NEXT

4. Inviting Language

At the top of the page, include an invitation to participate and a statement about the importance of civic engagement/citizen involvement in government.

5. Point of Contact

List a contact person, including both email and a phone number.

LATER

6. Centralized Calendar

Include a centralized board/commission meeting calendar (clarify that meetings are open to the public and all interested individuals should feel welcome to attend and observe).

7. Ongoing Communication

Include a newsletter sign-up link.

WEBSITE INDIVIDUAL BOARD PAGES

www.anytownusa.gov

ANYTOWN USA

City Council   Mayor   **Board & Commissions**   Departments   Contact Us

(2) Parks & Recreation Board

(3a) The Parks and Recreation Board determines usage of our community's parks and facilities. Board decisions could include new developments, improvements, equipment updates and ongoing maintenance for the city's parks, playgrounds, forests and recreational facilities.

(3b) Meetings

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. at City Hall, Room 10011

(3c) Meeting Documents

Agendas   Approved Minutes   Supporting Documents

(3d) By-Laws

By-Laws: Parks and Recreation Board, PDF

(3f) Staff

Mark Mayer, Parks and Recreation Department

mark.mayer@anytownusa.gov or 555-5555-5555

(1)

BOARD & COMMISSIONS	PLANNING COMMISSION
BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL	HEALTH BOARD
PARKS & REC BOARD	PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD
WATER BOARD	VISION 2024 CITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Board Members Information

(4e) Interested in joining the Parks and Rec Board? View vacancies here.

(4b) Board member expectations: board members are expected to attend all board meetings and must obtain an excused absence. Members serve for four years and have the option to renew for a second term. This is **(3e)** not a paid position.

(4c) Potential members must live within city limits, be registered to vote and be a lover of parks.

Members cannot be a convicted felon or work for another city's park department. **(4d)**

(4a)

Member Roster	Appointed Date	Term Details
Frank Morgan	May 4, 2017	1st term, April 30, 2020
Anna Carol	May 4, 2017	2nd term, April 30, 2020
Kim Taylor	May 3, 2018	1st term, April 30, 2021
Tom Lewis	May 9, 2019	2nd term, April 30, 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT:

NOW

1. Individual Webpage

Provide a separate webpage for each board or commission.

2. Write With Clarity

Instead of statutory language, use language that is easy to understand for all board descriptions. Be aware of other languages and dialects in your area.

NEXT

3. Detailed Board Info

For each board, provide the following information:

a) Purpose of the board and key tasks/decisions

b) Meeting days, times, and location

c) Agendas and meeting minutes

d) Link to or description of statutes or governing rules of the board

e) List whether board positions are paid

f) Contact information for a staff member board liaison

LATER

4. Detailed Board Member Info

For each board, provide the following about board members:

a) Current board composition, including appointment and term expiration dates

b) Current vacancies (with a link to the main vacancy page)

c) Board member expectations, including time commitment

d) Required and desired qualifications of committee members in a "job description" format
(skill sets, education/work qualifications, etc.)

e) Specify any disqualifying factors (e.g., felony conviction or conflicts of interest)

Anytown USA Boards and Commissions Application Form

Thank you for applying to serve on a board or commission.

Some of the information on this form is public data under Anystate USA Data Practices Act and will be maintained by Anytown USA in accordance with the law.
The information requested is for the appointing authority to make an informed decision.

You will be notified in the next 30 days if you are selected for an interview. Anytown USA keeps applications for a year and may reference them for other vacancies.

Applicant Name:

Home Address:

Professional Experience:

Personal Experience:

Which board(s) or commission(s) are you interested in serving on?

Why are you interested in serving as a volunteer on a board or commission?

Optional: Upload a Resume

UPLOAD A FILE

Voluntary Demographic Questionnaire

Anytown USA has made efforts to increase diversity on boards and commissions; diversity in terms of racial, economic, age, gender, geographic and sexual orientation. Knowledge of your status will assist us in monitoring the success of our efforts. Although you are not required to provide the information requested in the demographic questionnaire, your cooperation is appreciated and valued. The information provided is not used in determining appointment to boards and commissions.

Need a hardcopy of this application? Or need accommodations for a disability? Email Sue Smith at sue.smith@anytownusa.gov or call at 555-555-5555

Spanish- Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 555-555-5555

SUBMIT

Voluntary Demographic Questionnaire

It is the policy of the municipality that its board and commission appointments reflect the general demographic makeup of the area. In order to encourage diverse representation on boards and commissions, applicants are encouraged (but not required) to provide the information requested below.

In what year were you born? _____

How do you identify your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender/Non-Binary ☐ Another Way

How do you identify your race/ethnicity (select all that apply)?

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Black/African-American

☐ Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx

☐ Middle-Eastern/North African

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island

☐ White/Caucasian

☐ Other Race/Ethnicity

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT:

NOW

1. Format

    a) Provide an online application, as well as a printable/hard copy option (or contact person to request hard copy).

    b) Ensure the application is mobile-friendly.

    c) Invite requests for copies in alternate languages or assistance due to disability or other needs.

2. Requested Information

    a) Make the initial application simple: name, address, professional and personal experience and why you want to serve on a board.

    b) Make resumes optional (WHY? Resumes attract only those in professional occupations, and exclude those with alternative experiences and perspectives valuable to the board).

    c) Include optional demographic questions regarding age, gender and race/ethnicity to measure success in attracting diverse applicants. Clarify that this information will not be provided to the reviewers (if applicable).

NEXT

3. Prioritize Diversity

Hold board application deadlines open until there is a diverse slate of candidates.

4. Explanations

    a) Clarify why certain probing questions are required (e.g., it's a legal requirement).

    b) Outline which information is public and which is not public.

LATER

5. Communicate the Process

Outline the application process, especially what happens after an application is submitted (timelines, how notification occurs, etc.).

6. Board-Specific Qualifications

If a board has specific qualifications for appointment, consider a follow-up application or phone screening after an initial applicant pool is selected.

MARKETING & OUTREACH

NOW

1. Prioritize Marketing

Designate an individual within the administration to be responsible for marketing vacancies as part of their official job responsibilities.

2. Broad Recruiting

Use multiple approaches and broad recruiting methods to advertise board opportunities (newsletters and other publications, social media, print and digital media, community publications, etc.) Consider convening an advisory group to develop a plan to reach a broad and diverse applicant pool.

NEXT

3. Standardization

Create standard marketing procedures for all vacancies.

4. Community Partners

Maintain a list of diverse community partners and keep them updated on current and upcoming vacancies.

5. Authenticity

Develop authentic and appealing marketing by limiting stock photo images and text-heavy descriptions.

LATER

6. Use an Ad Campaign

Consider a small ad campaign on social media platforms to encourage constituents to apply for vacancies. Meet your citizens where they are on Facebook and other social media platforms.

TRAINING

1. Board Orientation and Handbook

Standardize board orientation for all new board members and provide all materials discussed in the training in a board handbook (make it available digitally).

2. Prioritize Equity

Create an infrastructure that supports equity and incorporate equity training into all board training and development opportunities. Consider establishing an inclusion mission as part of the board's policies and practices.

NEXT

3. Questions

Encourage questions and feedback from new board members.

4. Informal Introduction

Host a meet-n-greet for new board members to meet current members in an informal setting.

5. Involve Current Board Members

Invite current board members to lead relevant portions of orientation to foster relationship-building.

LATER

6. Mentoring

Ceate a mentoring or buddy program between new and seasoned board members.

7. Ongoing Development/Training

Establish development goals for individual board members to grow professionally during their time on the board.

Board Training 101

TRANSPARENCY & GOOD GOVERNMENT

www.anytownusa.gov

ANYTOWN USA

City Council | Mayor | **Board & Commissions** | Departments | Contact Us

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Notice

The next Anytown USA Parks and Recreation Commission will be on **November 6, 2023** at 6:00 p.m. in Room 300. Anytown Community Center.

(4) [11/5 MEETING AGENDA]   [PAST MEETING MINUTES]

What you need to know to participate:

• Review the agenda above. **(6)**

(5) • Child care is available to all attendees in Room 301. Thanks to our partners at CommunityPartner Child Care.

• The nearest bus stop is #3, and it is located right in front of the Community Center. Free public parking is available a block away at **(3)** 100 Street Lane Anytown USA.

• Wheelchair ramps are available at the main entrance.

• If you need interpreter services, please contact Sue Smith at sue.smith@anytownusa.gov or meet Sue at the back of the room before the start of the meeting.

(7) Citizens unable to attend in person can watch the commission meeting on Facebook Live or call-in to 555-555-4555 passcode: 1234 to listen to the meeting. Have questions or comments? Email our board chair: **frank.morgan@anytownusa.gov**. **(8)**

The December meeting will be held on **Saturday, December 9, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.** at the Anytown USA United Way. **(2)**

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT:

NOW

1. Collect and Publicize Board Data

Track the gender and racial composition of each board. (Consider other demographic data, such as sexual orientation, ability, religion, etc.) Publish this data on the board website and on meeting documents when appointments are made.

2. Adjust Meeting Times/Location

Host meetings at locations across the community and vary meeting times to be convenient for 9-5 and shift workers.

3. Transportation

Highlight public transportation and parking options in meeting announcements.

4. Publish Meeting Documents

Ensure meeting information, documents and minutes are easily accessible on the website.

5. Open Meetings

Live stream or include an online participation option for all public meetings. Consider utilizing Facebook Live or other social media platforms' streaming services.

NEXT

6. Remove Barriers to Access

Provide child care, transportation, translators, and/or accessibility services at all public meetings.

7. Conversational Language

Use conversational language or provide background/context when technical issues are discussed (subject to governing laws/rules).

LATER

8. Remote Participation

Allow board members to participate in meetings via conference call/video conferencing (subject to governing law/rules).

9. Engage Community Partners

Work with community leaders to advertise and increase engagement at meetings.

10. Education for Elected Leaders

Provide orientation for new elected officials/staff about civic boards and the appointment process.

GUIDE CHART

Website Main Landing Page

Recommendation:	Details:	Priority:	Implementation Staffing:	One-Time or Ongoing:	Implementation Cost:
CENTRALIZED WEBSITE	Provide a centralized landing page for all boards and commissions.	NOW	HIGH	ONE-TIME	$$$ HIGH
VACANCIES	Create one centralized location for all current and upcoming board and commission vacancies.	NOW	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ MEDIUM
APPLICATION LINK	Provide a prominent link to the application, and a description of the process of being *appointed*.	NOW	MEDIUM	ONE-TIME	$$$ MEDIUM
INVITING LANGUAGE	At the top of the page, include an invitation to participate and statement of the importance of civic engagement/citizen involvement in government (serving on an *appointed* board is an important public service, etc.).	NEXT	LOW	ONE-TIME	$$$ LOW
POINT OF CONTACT	List a contact person, including both email and a phone number.	NEXT	LOW	ONGOING	$$$ LOW
CENTRALIZED CALENDAR	Include a centralized board/commission meeting calendar (clarify that meetings are open to the public and all interested individuals should feel welcome to attend and observe).	LATER	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ MEDIUM
ONGOING COMMUNICATION	Include a newsletter sign-up link.	LATER	HIGH	ONGOING	$$$ MEDIUM

18

GUIDE CHART

Website Individual Board Pages

Recommendation:	Details:	Priority:	Implementation Staffing:	One-Time or Ongoing:	Implementation Cost:
INDIVIDUAL WEBPAGE	Provide a separate webpage for each board or commission.	**NOW**	HIGH	ONE-TIME	$$$ HIGH
WRITE WITH CLARITY	Instead of statutory language, use plain English for all board descriptions.	**NOW**	HIGH	ONE-TIME	$$$ LOW
DETAILED BOARD INFORMATION	On each page, provide: (a) Purpose of the board and key tasks/decisions (b) Meeting days, times, and location (c) Agendas and meeting minutes (d) Link to or describe specific statutes or governing rules of the board (e) List whether board positions are paid (f) Contact information for the staff member who assists the board	**NEXT**	MEDIUM LOW MEDIUM MEDIUM LOW LOW	ONE-TIME ONGOING ONGOING ONE-TIME ONE-TIME ONE-TIME	$$$ LOW $$$ LOW $$$ MEDIUM $$$ LOW $$$ LOW $$$ LOW
DETAILED BOARD MEMBER INFORMATION	On each page, provide: (a) Current board composition, including *appointed* date and term expiration (b) Current vacancies (link to main vacancy page so stays consistent, link to application) (c) Board member expectations to serve on the board, including estimated time commitment (d) Required and desired qualifications of committee members in "job description" format (skill sets, as well as education/work qualifications) (e) Specify anything that would disqualify potential applicants from board service (e.g., felony conviction, conflicts of interest, etc.)	**LATER**	MEDIUM MEDIUM MEDIUM MEDIUM MEDIUM	ONGOING ONGOING ONE-TIME ONE-TIME ONE-TIME	$$$ LOW $$$ LOW $$$ LOW $$$ LOW $$$ LOW

GUIDE CHART

Application Process

Recommendation:	Details:	Priority:	Implementation Staffing:	One-Time or Ongoing:	Implementation Cost:
FORMAT	Provide a centralized landing page for all boards and commissions. See details on full page.	**NOW**	HIGH	ONE-TIME	$$$ HIGH
REQUESTED INFORMATION	(a) Make the initial application simple: name, home address, professional and personal experience and why you want to serve as a volunteer. (b) Make resumes optional. (c) Include demographic questions for age, gender and race/ethnicity to measure success in attracting diverse applicants. Include language that this information will not be provided to the reviewers (if applicable).	**NOW**	LOW LOW LOW	ONE-TIME ONE-TIME ONE-TIME	$$$ LOW $$$ LOW $$$ LOW
PRIORITIZE DIVERSITY	Hold board application deadlines open until there is a diverse slate of candidates.	**NEXT**	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ LOW

GUIDE CHART

Application Process

Recommendation:	Details:	Priority:	Implementation Staffing:	One-Time or Ongoing:	Implementation Cost:
EXPLANATIONS	(a) Clarify why certain probing questions are required (legal requirements, etc.). (b) Outline what information is public and what is not public (see Minnesota application).	**NEXT**	MEDIUM MEDIUM	ONE-TIME ONE-TIME	$$$ LOW $$$ LOW
COMMUNICATE THE PROCESS	Clearly outline the application process, especially what happens after one applies (timeline, how notified, etc.).	**LATER**	MEDIUM	ONE-TIME	$$$ LOW
BOARD-SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS	If a board has specific qualifications for appointment, consider a follow-up application or phone screening after you have narrowed down the applicants.	**LATER**	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ LOW

GUIDE CHART

Marketing & Outreach

Recommendation:	Details:	Priority:	Implementation Staffing:	One-Time or Ongoing:	Implementation Cost:
PRIORITIZE MARKETING	Designate an individual within the administration to be responsible for marketing board/commission vacancies as part of their official job responsibilities.	NOW	HIGH	ONGOING	$$$ MEDIUM
BROAD RECRUITING	Use multiple approaches and broad recruiting methods to advertise board opportunities: official government newsletters and publications, social media, external print and digital media, community events, through community partners, etc. (see appendix).	NOW	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ LOW
STANDARDIZATION	Create standard marketing procedures for all vacancies, including advertising vacancies on the website, through newsletter blasts and social media.	NEXT	HIGH	ONE-TIME	$$$ LOW
COMMUNITY PARTNERS	Maintain a list of diverse community partners and keep them updated on current and upcoming vacancies.	NEXT	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ LOW
AUTHENTICITY	Approach marketing and outreach by emphasizing authenticity by limiting stock photo images and text-heavy descriptions.	NEXT	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ LOW
USE AN AD CAMPAIGN	Consider a small ad campaign on civic social media platforms to encourage constituents to apply for vacancies.	LATER	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ MEDIUM

GUIDE CHART

Training

Recommendation:	Details:	Priority:	Implementation Staffing:	One-Time or Ongoing:	Implementation Cost:
BOARD ORIENTATION AND HANDBOOK	Standardize board orientation for all new board members and provide all materials discussed in the training in a board handbook (make it available digitally).	**NOW**	HIGH	ONGOING	MEDIUM
PRIORITIZE EQUITY	Create an infrastructure that supports equity and incorporate equity training into all board training and development opportunities. Consider establishing an inclusion mission as part of the board's policies and practices.	**NOW**	MEDIUM	ONGOING	LOW
QUESTIONS	Be intentional in encouraging questions and feedback from new board members.	**NEXT**	LOW	ONGOING	LOW
INFORMAL INTRODUCTION	Host a meet-n-greet for the new board members to meet current members in an informal setting (can be part of orientation/first board meeting).	**NEXT**	LOW	ONGOING	LOW
INVOLVE CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS	Invite current board members to lead relevant portions of orientation to build relationships.	**NEXT**	MEDIUM	ONGOING	LOW

GUIDE CHART

Training

Recommendation:	Details:	Priority:	Implementation Staffing:	One-Time or Ongoing:	Implementation Cost:
MENTORING	Create a mentoring or buddy program for new board members to develop a relationship with a seasoned member (if appropriate for the specific board).	**LATER**	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ LOW
ONGOING DEVELOPMENT/ TRAINING	Establish long-term goals for individual board members to grow professionally during their time on the board.	**LATER**	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ LOW

GUIDE CHART

Transparency & Good Government

Recommendation:	Details:	Priority:	Implementation Staffing:	One-Time or Ongoing:	Implementation Cost:
COLLECT AND PUBLICIZE BOARD DATA	Track and report the gender and racial composition (or other demographic data) of each board. Publish this data on the board website and on meeting documents when appointments are made.	NOW	HIGH	ONGOING	LOW
ADJUST MEETING TIMES/LOCATIONS	Hosting meetings at locations across the community, and vary meeting times to be convenient for 9-5 and shift workers.	NOW	MEDIUM	ONGOING	LOW
TRANSPORTATION	Highlight nearest public transportation and parking options in public meeting announcements.	NOW	MEDIUM	ONGOING	LOW
PUBLISH MEETING DOCUMENTS	Ensure meeting information, documents and minutes are easily accessible on the website.	NOW	MEDIUM	ONGOING	LOW
OPEN MEETINGS	Live stream or include an online participation option for all public meetings.	NOW	LOW	ONGOING	LOW
REMOVE BARRIERS TO ACCESS	Provide child care, transportation, translators, and/or accessibility services at all public meetings.	NEXT	MEDIUM	ONGOING	HIGH

GUIDE CHART

Transparency & Good Government

Recommendation:	Details:	Priority:	Implementation Staffing:	One-Time or Ongoing:	Implementation Cost:
CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE	Use conversational language or provide background/context when technical issues are discussed (subject to governing laws/rules).	**NEXT**	LOW	ONGOING	$$$ LOW
REMOTE PARTICIPATION	Allow board members to participate in meetings via conference call/video conferencing (subject to governing law/rules).	**LATER**	LOW	ONGOING	$$$ LOW
ENGAGE COMMUNITY PARTNERS	Work with community leaders to advertise and increase engagement at meetings.	**LATER**	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ LOW
EDUCATION FOR ELECTED LEADERS	Provide orientation for new elected officials/staff about civic boards and the appointment process.	**LATER**	MEDIUM	ONGOING	$$$ LOW

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT & TRANSPARENCY DURING A CRISIS

Maintaining citizen engagement and government transparency during a crisis such as COVID-19 presents added challenges and can take a backseat to more immediate and emergency concerns. While the primary focus of government can and should be to address the crisis at hand, citizen engagement is more critical than ever to fully comprehending the situation and developing robust solutions.

Physical distancing concerns require adjustments to traditional methods of engagement such as public meetings and community listening sessions. Creative solutions are needed, but they don't have to be expensive. Sometimes they just involve acting more intentionally and creating new opportunities for community feedback.
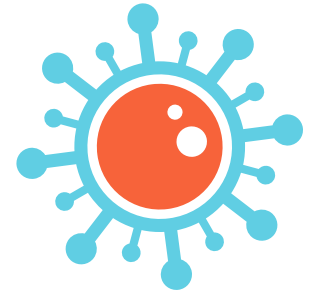
Here are some tips and resources to get started:

MODIFY PUBLIC MEETINGS. Create a safety plan for public meetings. Secure a larger facility to allow for physical distancing, ask that citizens submit questions and feedback ahead of time and provide easy ways for citizens to call or video-chat into the meeting. Ensure that new methods are widely communicated to the public.

ENSURE ONLINE INFORMATION IS CURRENT. Keep citizens informed by ensuring meeting minutes and agendas are posted promptly, and keep calendar information current. Clearly post contact information for questions or comments.

USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO CONNECT. Increase social media presence on official city/township accounts as well as those of individual elected and government officials. Use this to provide information and solicit feedback and comments.

ENGAGE NONPROFIT PARTNERS. Reach out to nonprofits and community organizations and keep lines of communication open. These organizations are in day-to-day contact with a broad cross section of the community, including our most vulnerable residents.

USE DIGITAL TOOLS TO SOLICIT CITIZEN INPUT.
- **Questica and Balancing Act** – government budgeting software and budget-specific citizen engagement tools
- **Bang the Table** – digital public engagement tool
- **MetroQuest** – citizen engagement tool for urban and transportation planning
- **Common Ground for Action** – small group online forums

OTHER RESOURCES:
- COVID-19: Resources for Individuals and Governments
- Eight Best Practices for Video Streaming Your Local Government Meetings
- Principles for Equitable Public Outreach & Engagement During COVID-19 and Beyond (focused on the transportation sector but principles are applicable to other sectors)

APPENDIX 1

We understand that building and editing a website can be a difficult task, especially with a small team. In order to help implement a comprehensive board and commission section of your website, we enlisted a web developer to create wireframes for you to use, as well as a step-by-step guide for your website manager to implement it in your website.

Here are the files for download: https://bit.ly/WFGuidebook.

When you download the folder, you may need to right click and "Extract All" to access all the content.

The folder includes:

- The index.html with a main landing page, an individual board page (click Parks & Recreation Board), a board application and a meeting notice for a Parks & Recreation meeting (as an example). All the wireframe pages can be customized for each board and event.

- A to-do list for your website developer.

- Resources with fonts, icons, images, javascript, style sheets and views.

Here are three examples of application forms for your use: short, mid-sized and long. Please feel free to customize as you would like. There are also two examples of voluntary demographic forms for you to use and customize.

YOUR LOGO HERE

EXAMPLE SHORT APPLICATION FORM

Are you a resident of (Governed Location)? Please circle: yes   no

_____

First   Middle   Last

_____

Preferred Name

_____

Residence Address   City   State
                                                              Zip

_____

Phone Number   Email Address

_____

Occupation   Employer Name

Why are you interested in serving on a board or commission? (250 words maximum)

What skills and/or experience do you posess for the committee for which you seek appointment? Please consider both professional and personal experience. (250 word maximum)

EXAMPLE MID-SIZED APPLICATION FORM

YOUR LOGO HERE

_____

First   Middle   Last

_____

Preferred Name

_____

Residence Address   City   State   Zip

_____

Phone Number   Email Address

_____

Best way to contact you?   Best time of day?

What skills and/or experience do you possess for the committee for which you seek appointment? Please consider both professional and personal experience. (250 word maximum)

Why are you interested in serving on a board or commission? (250 words maximum)

30

Employment and/or Relevant Experience:

Resume Upload [optional document upload]

* Please attach resumé, if available (optional). Note that this is not mandatory, and it will not count against you if one is not provided.

Letter of Interest [optional document upload/multimedia upload]

1. How can your skillset be best utilized for the effectiveness of the board position you seek? Please feel free to include any skills or experience through non-paid work experience, internship, civic or volunteer activities that you think would be relevant here.* [short answer]
2. Please list boards and committees that you serve on, or have served on (business, civic, community, fraternal, political, professional, recreational, religious, social). [short answer]

Expectations:

Board Member Expectations:

ABC Board consists of [XX] members appointed by Anytown Mayor. Members should be residents of Anytown USA and are *appointed* for [XX]-year terms. Regular meetings are held monthly on [Anyday] from [X:XX – X:XX], with subcommittees meeting separately as needed. Some additional independent work (including outside reading, individual meetings, XXXXX, etc.) is expected.

1. Are you a resident of Anytown, USA?
2. Can you commit to the Board Member Expectations listed above?* [Y/N]
3. Can you commit to serving the full __-year term?* [Y/N]
4. How can we help make this board commitment more accessible to you? [either short answer or maybe a multiple choice with responses: childcare needed, transportation needed, request a different meeting time, etc.]
5. If this opportunity isn't the right fit, would you like us to keep you in mind for board openings on other committees/commissions? [Y/N]
6. Are you aware of any conflicts of interest that would arise from your appointment to this board?* [Y/N]
a.   If yes, please explain: [short answer]

YOUR LOGO HERE

EXAMPLE LONG APPLICATION FORM

First   Middle   Last

Preferred Name

Residence Address   City   State   Zip

Phone Number   Email Address

Best way to contact you?   Best time of day?

Employment and/or Relevant Experience:

Resume Upload [optional document upload]

* Please attach resumé, if available (optional). Note that this is not mandatory, and it will not count against you if one is not provided.

Letter of Interest [optional document upload/ multimedia upload]

1. Comany Name [short answer]
    a. Recommended: inclicling a blurb here on why this question is asked
2. Your Title [short answer]
3. Employer's Address [short answer]
4. Phone [short answer]
5. E-mail [short answer]
6. Type of business or organization [short answer]
7. Why are you interested in a position?*
        [short answer]
8. How can your skillset be best utilized for the effectiveness of the board position you seek? Please feel free to include any skills or experience through non-paid work experience, internship, civic or volunteer activities that you think would be relevant here.* [short answer]
9. Please list boards and committees that you serve on, or have served on (business, civic, community, fraternal, political, professional, recreational, religious, social). [short answer]
10. Review the board webpage. As a board member, what would be your goals for the board during your term of service?

Expectations:

Board Member Expectations:
ABC Board consists of [XX] members appointed by Anytown Mayor. Members should be residents of Anytown USA and are *appointed* for [XX]-year terms. Regular meetings are held monthly on [Anyday] from [X:XX – X:XX], with subcommittees meeting separately as needed. Some additional independent work (including outside reading, individual meetings, XXXXX, etc.) is expected.

1. Are you a resident of Anytown, USA?
2. Can you commit to the Board Member Expectations listed above?* [Y/N]
3. Can you commit to serving the full __-year term?* [Y/N]
4. Are you applying for reappointment to a board or commission on which you currently serve?* [Y/N]
    a. If yes, how many terms have you served on this board or commission? [dropdown menu]
5. How can we help make this board commitment more accessible to you? [either short answer or maybe a multiple choice with responses: childcare needed, transportation needed, request a different meeting time, etc.]
6. If this opportunity isn't the right fit, would you like us to keep you in mind for board openings on other committees/commissions? [Y/N]
7. Are you aware of any conflicts of interest that would arise from your appointment to this board?* [Y/N]
    a. If yes, please explain: [short answer]

Other:

1. How did you hear about this opportunity? [short answer]
2. When other opportunities, similar to this one, arise, are you interested in helping us spread the word? [Y/N]

EXAMPLE VOLUNTARY DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

YOUR LOGO HERE

[Government Entity] seeks to increase diversity on boards and commissionsl diversity in terms of racial, economic, age, gender, geographic, sexual orientation, ownership, disability and education attainment, You are not required to provide this information. If you are willing, your information is kept strictly confidential and when reported, will not identify any individual.

1. Which (neighborhood, ward, etc.) do you live in? _____

2. Do you rent or own?
   a. Rent
   b. Own

3. Are you registered to vote?
   a. Yes
   b. No

4. How do you identify your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Transgender/Non-Binary
   d. Another way: _____

5. How do you describe your sexual identity?
   a. Asexual
   b. Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Queer
   c. Straight/Heterosexual
   d. Another way: _____

6. Do you have a sensory, physical or mental disability?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7. If yes, into which category does your disability fall?
   a. Mobility
   b. Sight
   c. Hearing

d. Speech

e. Developmental

f. Another category: _____

8. What category represents your age?

a. 18 to 24 years

b. 25 to 39 years

c. 40 to 54 years

d. 55 to 64 years

e. 65+

9. What was your total household income in the previous year before taxes?

a. Less than $25,000

b. $25,000 to $49,000

c. $50,000 to $74,000

d. $75,000 to $124,000

e. $125,000 to $199,000

f. $200,000+

10. What is your employment status? (Check all that apply)

a. Employed full-time

b. Employed part-time

c. Full time student

d. Retired

e. Unemployed

f. Self-employed

g. Homemaker

h. Other: _____

11. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

a. Some high school

b. High school or GED

c. Technical school graduate

d. College graduate

e. Postgraduate

f. Other: _____

23. What is your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply)

a. Native American/American Indian/Indigenous

    i. What tribe(s) are you affiliated with?

    _____

b. Asian/Asian American

    i. What is your ethnicity?

    _____

c. Black/African American

    i. What is your ethnicity?

    _____

d. Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx

    i. Please specify country of origin:

    _____

e. Middle Eastern/North African

f. Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian

g. White/Caucasian/European

h. Another race/ethnicity not listed:

    _____

Sample Marketing Language

Emails

Hello,

Anytown USA is looking for new board members for ABC Board, and we think you'd be a good fit.

Our office/department/administration is looking to create a diverse, effective, and intentional board that reflects the population of the people it serves. We know from mountains of research that this is the best way to make long-term, thoughtful decisions that will positively impact our community, and we'd love for you to apply.

The application will be open until DATE. Here's more information on this and other boards [link to website page]. If you have any questions or need help filling out the application, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Devoted Public Servant

Newsletters

Anytown USA is looking for new board members for [ABC Board].

We're looking to create a diverse, effective, and intentional board that reflects the population of the people it serves. We know from mountains of research that this is the best way to make long-term, thoughtful decisions that will positively impact our community.

Please help us spread the word that [ABC Board] is looking for dedicated community members who are excited to serve. Applications will be open until DATE. Find more information on this and other boards HERE [link to website page]. If you have any questions, please contact [person who manages this] at [email address] or [phone number].

Social Media (Facebook)

[ABC Board] is looking for a new board member!

We are looking for dedicated community members who are excited to serve. This position is open to people of all ages, all genders, and all levels of work and education experience.

Anytown USA wants its board to reflect the population of the community it serves, and are seeking a diverse pool of candidates. If you or anyone you know is interested, please fill out the application found here: [link to application/website].

[Recommended: a sharp visual to accompany this post.]

Notes: 🖊

APPENDIX 3
COMMUNITY OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

Below is a list of traditional and non-traditional venues to consider when advertising board and commission opportunities.

Government/Internal Opportunities

Outreach Opportunity

☐	Government website
☐	Newsletter
☐	Government job postings
☐	Announcement during government meetings
☐	Physical postings in government agencies with regular foot traffic (City Hall, courthouses, community centers, permit centers, etc.)

Contacts in My Community ✎

Below is a list of traditional and non-traditional venues to consider when advertising board and commission opportunities. Use this space to brainstorm and list people you want to connect with in your community.

Community Organizations

Outreach Opportunity

☐	Community Councils/Other Neighborhood Groups
☐	Civic groups (League of Women Voters, Junior League, etc.)
☐	Non-profit Agencies
☐	Religious Institutions
☐	Schools/PTOs
☐	Libraries

Contacts in My Community ✎

Community Organizations (*continued*)

Outreach Opportunity

	Outreach Opportunity
☐	Parent Groups
☐	Local Chambers of Commerce
☐	Leadership Development/Training Programs
☐	Professional/Affinity Organizations (e.g., Bar Associations, Rotary Clubs, etc.)
☐	Non-Profit Associations/Trade Groups
☐	Alumni Associations

Contacts in My Community ✏️

Community Organizations (*continued*)

Outreach Opportunity

- [ ] Labor Organizations

- [ ] Community/Technical Colleges

- [ ] Public Transportation

- [ ] Social Service Agencies

- [ ] Work Training Programs

- [ ] Recreation Centers/YMCAs

- [ ] Veterans Associations

Contacts in My Community

COMMUNITY OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

Social Media

Outreach Opportunity

☐	LinkedIn
☐	Nextdoor
☐	Facebook Groups (private and public)
☐	Twitter
☐	Instagram

Contacts in My Community ✏️

Other Media

Outreach Opportunity

☐	Parenting Magazines
☐	Local Community Newspapers
☐	Radio
☐	Community Newsletters

Contacts in My Community ✎

APPENDIX 4
TRAINING

Below are additional resources providing guidance on advancing equity and inclusion within government operations.

Sample Topics

1. Government Structure and Powers
2. History of the Board and Board Procedures
3. Board Member Roles and Responsibilities
4. Public Official Ethics and Responsibilities
5. Public Meetings and Open Records Laws
6. Budget Management
7. Strategic Planning
8. Conflict Resolution
9. Equity Training
10. Inclusion Training
11. Robert's Rules of Order

Sample Resources to Make Available

1. State Public Records Handbooks
2. Records Retention Policy of the governing body
3. Copies of most recent budget documents
4. Robert's Rules of Order
5. Templates for a variety of common board actions, including:
6. Meeting agendas, notices and minutes
7. Board Resolutions or other actions
8. Meeting cancellation notices
9. Attendance tracking sheets
10. Room reservation request forms
11. Conflict of Interest disclosures forms
12. Annual review forms

Austin, TX

Austin, TX, provides extensive online training in a variety of topics, including budget and planning; conflict resolution; overview of city government; Robert's Rules of Order; and Texas Open Meeting Acts. Austin also provides workbooks that supplement the training. These workbooks include the city vision and values statement; roles and responsibilities for board members; and templates for agendas, minutes, recommendations, and many other documents.

Portland, OR

Portland, OR provides a comprehensive resource page for all current advisory board members, which includes access to materials about conflicts of interest, ethical responsibilities and guidance on how to submit a minority opinion.

APPENDIX 5
BEST IN CLASS PEERS

Austin, TX

http://www.austintexas.gov/department/boards-and-commissions

Includes a simple and mobile-friendly application and extensive online board training. Austin has restructured its council committees to increase neighborhood involvement and remote access for meetings.

Ithica, NY

http://cityofithaca.org/339/Boards-Committees

Provides a welcoming website with many details on board service, individual boards, and the application process. Board meetings are accessible; Ithaca offers free child care at some public meetings, agendas are published in advance, meetings are videotaped and many use a Q&A format.

Portland, OR

http://www.portland.gov/civic/advisorygroups

Includes a thorough description of the application process, collects demographic information, and maintains a detailed training webpage.

Boston, MA

http://www.boston.gov/civic-engagement/boards-and-commissions

Provides a clear and engaging website with an abundance of information, clarity on what the board does and how to apply, and the website is written in plain English. Also describes its "City Hall to Go," a program to provide city meetings and services in the community.

Minneapolis, MN

http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/index.htm

Utilizes a brief and accessible application in multiple languages, provides detailed information about individual boards, and solicits demographic information to increase board diversity.

APPENDIX 5
OTHER RESOURCES

Below are additional resources providing guidance on advancing equity and inclusion within government operations.

City for All Women Initiative

City for All Women Initiative[1] in Ottawa, Canada, provides a **guide**[2] and **handbook**[3] for municipalities to advance equity and inclusion. This guide includes a comprehensive roadmap for government entities interested in equity-driven government.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities[4] provides a **resource library**[5] to increase female voices in government. This resource discusses examples such as mandatory diversity and inclusion training for leadership, mentorship programs, gender inclusive policies, etc.

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1 City for All Women Initiative https://www.cawi-ivtf.org/

2 Guide https://www.cawi-ivtf.org/publication/advancing-equity-and-inclusion/

3 Handbook https://www.cawi-ivtf.org/publication/equity-and-inclusion-lens-handbook-2018/

4 The Federation of Canadian Municipalities - https://fcm.ca/en/programs/women-in-local-government

5 https://fcm.ca/en/resources/wilg/women-in-local-government-resource-library

APPENDIX 6
METHODOLOGY

This Guidebook was created using both external research as well as insights and feedback from community members and government officials acquired through the *Appointed* initiative.

We began with an extensive review of tools and practices to promote inclusivity on civic boards and commissions. The Research Committee of the Women's Fund collected and evaluated best practices from municipalities outside of the Greater Cincinnati area. These municipalities were selected through Best Place to Live lists, the original report for *Appointed*, and a government accessibility report by the City of Cincinnati. The Committee examined municipal websites, focusing specifically on application forms and procedures and meeting accessibility.

The Committee then created a report outlining best practice insights and examples of best-in-class peers in the following areas: main landing webpages and individual board pages, appointee training and preparation programs, board applications and public meetings. The Committee also examined research on government accessibility published by other non-profit groups.

Separately, we reviewed advice and feedback received during interviews and conversations with individuals conducted as part of the *Appointed* initiative. These individuals included community members with civic board experience as well as government officials who either appoint board members or manage civic boards. In early 2020, a preliminary version of the Guidebook was circulated to select government officials for review and feedback.

During each step of the research and drafting of this Guidebook, feedback and guidance was provided by the Advocacy Committee of the Women's Fund, the steering committee for the *Appointed* initiative.

APPENDIX 7
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all our partners who have assisted in bringing this Guidebook to fruition. Special thanks to the Women's Fund Advocacy Committee, who has been a part of *Appointed* and this Guidebook from the beginning, and to the Women's Fund Research Committee for the background research driving both *Appointed* and the best practice recommendations in this report. Thank you also to Esther Anderson for volunteering to develop the website wireframes, and Kait Bell, who designed the layout of this Guidebook. Finally, a very special thank you to United WE, whose groundbreaking program The Appointments Project™ served as the early inspiration for *Appointed*.

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WOMEN'S FUND
of the **GREATER CINCINNATI FDN.**