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# Director Recruiting Toolkit

***Now Includes an Electric Cooperative Director  
Job Description***

**PREPARED BY: NRECA**

These materials are available electronically on Cooperative.com under the Governance and Leadership tab.

We are interested in hearing your feedback on this document. Did you find it useful? How could it be improved? Please send your comments to [pat.mangan@nreca.coop](mailto:pat.mangan@nreca.coop).



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Dear Board Chair or President:

Over the next decade, a new generation of co-op leaders will be in electric co-op boardrooms. They are likely to be younger and from more diverse backgrounds, reflecting the changing demographics of Rural America today. Will they be up to the task?

The challenges these new directors will face are more complex and numerous than ever before, and the best pathways won't always be clearly marked. It is therefore imperative that cooperatives revisit their policies and procedures for recruiting, vetting, and educating candidates for the board so that the co-op can attract the best leadership talent that its service territory has to offer. In your role as Board Chair or President, you have an important part to play in the successful recruitment and development of these new directors.

It is important to recognize that other organizations in the community are also competing for the best and brightest. They, too, want people who are highly qualified, engaged, and enthusiastic to serve on their boards.

This toolkit was created to assist co-ops with board succession planning, particularly in the area of screening potential candidates. It has five parts:

1. A competency-based director job description that can be modified to meet the specific needs of each co-op and link to your board's policies.
2. A questionnaire to aid potential board candidates in evaluating their interest in and fitness for board service.
3. A discussion guide to use in interviewing candidates for the board.
4. A candidate evaluation to keep notes on each candidate that is interviewed.
5. A checklist for bringing newly elected directors up to speed.

The intention is to assure consistent and fair treatment, and good understanding of the cooperative, its role in the community, its challenges, and the role of directors beginning even before getting on the board. The best leaders will want to know those things before committing to run and serve.

Indeed, having a thoughtful process in place may make it easier to recruit the best of the best. Prospective candidates need not commit initially to running and serving. Instead the process invites them to explore the idea first.

Feel free to download this toolkit as often as you wish and to adapt it to fit your local circumstances. And please, share what you learn so that other cooperatives may benefit from your experience.

Sincerely,



Tracey Steiner  
Senior Vice President, Education & Training, NRECA

# Toolkit Overview

## What this Toolkit Contains

- A [competency-based](#)\* **Director Job Description** which outlines a director's responsibilities for fulfillment of the cooperative's purpose, mission, and vision as well as legal accountability for its operations. It can be used in the director recruiting process to ensure that candidates know exactly what's expected of a cooperative director. It can also be used to help current board members come to agreement on the role of a director or to coach a director whose performance is no longer meeting expectations.
- A **Candidate Questionnaire** for prospective board candidates to fill out that gives them an idea of what's involved in serving. It also gives the co-op a view of the experience, skills, opinions, and ideas a candidate will bring to the board.
- A **Candidate Interview Discussion Guide** that suggests some questions to use when interviewing prospective candidates. It expands on the questions in the Candidate Questionnaire. This Discussion Guide will be helpful for individual candidate interviews or orientation sessions held for candidates. No matter how your nominating or vacancy appointment processes are configured, this guide should prove helpful in gathering information about a candidate's qualifications and capabilities.
- A **Candidate Evaluation** that allows nominating committee members to summarize their findings about each candidate after the interview. Its use is optional depending upon your co-op's nominating process. The Evaluation may also prove useful if your board is considering multiple candidates to fill a vacancy.
- An **Orientation Checklist** for giving candidates or newly elected directors the background information they'll need to know about your co-op.

# Toolkit Overview, *continued*

## What are Director Competencies

Psychologists define "competency" as an underlying motive, trait or skill that leads to superior job performance. It is "underlying" in the sense that it is a motivator of behavior, and people who have the competency may not even be aware that it is why they are effective on the job. In discussing competencies, it is useful to distinguish three related concepts: knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Knowledge entails understanding and being able to use basic information and concepts in some area. It is generally acquired by reading, by study, or by attending seminars.

Skills are specific job-related abilities. For example, a director may have skill in using the facilitating a meeting, or the skill to make a great speech. Skills are generally acquired by practice.

Competencies are more fundamental than either knowledge or skills, and they are generally more difficult to acquire. A director may have knowledge about our industry and the skill to explain how the industry is evolving. A competency is not the skill or the knowledge, it is the underlying desire by the director to want to understand and explain our industry. The competency explains why some directors work hard to understand the industry. That is an underlying motive. In short, having a competency means having a habit of doing or saying the right things at the right time.

Recent NRECA course and survey feedback points to the following as [key competencies for Directors](#):

- A Quick Study [See competency: Self- Awareness/Continual Learning]
- Open to New Ideas [See competency: Flexibility]
- Able to Understand and Engage Members as their Expectations Change [See competencies: Member Focus; Interpersonal Communications]
- Able to Connect with Fellow Directors from Different Generations [See competencies: Diversity and Inclusion; Builds Relationships and Influences Others]
- Adept at Analyzing Complex Options to Make Sound Decisions [See competency: Analytical Thinking and Decision Making]

# Toolkit Overview, *continued*

## Getting the Most Out of This Toolkit

The steps listed below are recommended in using the tools contained in this document -

1. Be sure to review these documents to verify that they conform to your cooperative’s bylaws and policies, particularly as to the director qualifications provisions of your bylaws.
2. Customize the documents to fit your needs. Where it reads XYZ COOPERATIVE, insert your co-op’s name instead. Are there some questions you need to add, edit, or delete?
3. On the **Director Job Description**, review the expectations to be sure the board agrees on what’s included and specify which policy contains more detailed information. Provide it to all board candidates to help them understand the role of a director. Consider sharing the Description with current board members as part of a regular “check in” and review of the agreed upon expectations of a director.
4. On the **Candidate Questionnaire**, make sure that the information about time commitments and compensation is accurate.
5. If you use a nominating committee, make sure that its members are versed in the director qualification requirements and the nominating and election process. You may also wish to give the nominating committee an orientation session that includes some basic facts about the co-op, some of the challenges it faces, the competencies required of a director, and how the job description describes the competencies needed in light of those challenges. They may also benefit from some practice in using the questionnaire and recording responses on the evaluation form.

## Electric Cooperative Director Job Description

### Position Overview

The [XYZ COOPERATIVE] board serves on behalf of the membership to provide oversight and strategic governance. While day-to-day operations are led by the [XYZ COOPERATIVE] chief executive officer (CEO), the board-CEO relationship relies upon appropriate oversight and strategic guidance by the board.

Expectations of the board as a whole	Expectations of each board member
<i>The Board is responsible for -</i>	<i>Each individual board member is-</i>

### ***Governance Structures and Practices***

- Determining and guiding the cooperative in fulfillment of its mission, purpose, and governing policies. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Adhering to sound governance practices and procedures. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Assuring that the cooperative has a succession plan in place for the CEO and itself. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Encouraging director diversity by supporting an electric cooperative board that reflects the diversity of the cooperative's membership. Recognizing the practical limitations of obtaining a diverse board, the board seeks to solicit diverse individuals to seek election to the board, and to consider diversity when filling vacant director positions. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Coordinating with state and national cooperative organizations to determine a political action strategy that advocates for the co-op. *(See Policy # XXX)*

### ***Cooperative Outlook***

- Encouraging future cooperative success by cultivating member knowledge of and interest in the cooperative and board membership. *(See Policy # XXX)*

### ***Governance Structures and Practices***

- Expected to understand and fulfill the fiduciary duties of a board member. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Act and respond within the established hierarchy and procedures of the cooperative. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Expected to approach each board decision and vote with the best interests of the entire cooperative in mind. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Expected to demonstrate behaviors that support a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment where all board members, staff, and members feel respected and valued regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation or identity, disability, or education. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Encouraged to advocate on behalf of the cooperative and engage in the political process in a way that aligns with board consensus and encourage employees and consumer-members of the cooperative to do the same. *(See Policy # XXX)*

### ***Cooperative Outlook***

- Promote the value of the cooperative within the community. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Understand and provide effective oversight of the cooperative's risk management efforts. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Stay informed about board and committee matters. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Serve as a conduit for information about community and members' interests and concerns. *(See Policy # XXX)*

### ***Vision and Strategic Oversight - Expectations of the Board as a whole***

- Adopting policies and developing practices to facilitate compliance with law, preparation of accurate financial statements, adoption of and compliance with appropriate internal controls, and assessment of major risks. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Generally overseeing business performance, plans, and strategy. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Overseeing the allocation of the cooperative's budget. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Working with the CEO in developing and evaluating corporate objectives and strategic plans. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Deciding what lines of business to be in (consistent with state law). *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Hiring (and firing if needed) and overseeing the performance of the chief executive officer. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Retaining and overseeing the work of the audit firm. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Oversees the engagement of the cooperative's attorney. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Hiring outside consultants when necessary to inform the board. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Providing strategic guidance and feedback to the CEO. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Challenging, supporting, evaluating and compensating the CEO as warranted. *(See Policy # XXX)*

### ***Personal Effectiveness - Expectations of each board member***

- Regularly attend board meetings and related local, regional, state and national events. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Know, understand, and promote the cooperative's mission, vision, and strategic objectives; Be familiar with the cooperative's organizational structure, business lines, financial information, key risks, and risk management strategy; Solicit and relay cooperative member comments, suggestions, and questions; Communicate positions of cooperative members, but vote in the cooperative's best interests; When voting, be adequately informed, exercise independent judgment, and avoid or address conflicts of interest; read cooperative and board communications. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Think systematically, conceptually, and analytically to determine effective solutions. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Participate in training and education to increase knowledge and understanding of industry and governance issues. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Understand the cooperative's operations and finances. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Come to meetings prepared, having reviewed materials and formulated questions for clarification of issues. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Actively participate in board discussions, periodic evaluations and planning efforts. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Build a productive working relationship with other directors that contributes to moving the cooperative forward. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Serve on committees, task forces or work groups as assigned. *(See Policy # XXX)*



- Comfortably use basic technologies including a PC or tablet, email, and other applications or technologies used by the cooperative and the board to communicate and conduct business. *(See Policy # XXX)*
- Recognize that unless authorized by the board of directors, a director may not speak on the board's behalf; direct, instruct, or supervise cooperative employees or agents; or disclose confidential information or documents. *(See Policy # XXX)*

The [XYZ COOPERATIVE] board -

- Consists of [5, 7, 9, 11] members
- Meets [monthly, quarterly, as needed] for regular board meetings on [day of week] from [start time] to [end time]
- Requires a time commitment by directors of approximately [ X ] hours per month.

## Candidate Questionnaire

Welcome. We hope these questions will help you decide whether serving on XYZ COOPERATIVE'S board of directors is right for you.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name

Address

City State Zip

Best phone number to use (please specify cell, home, work, etc.)

Alternative phone number (please specify cell, home, work, etc.)

Email address

Best days/ times to reach you

### QUALIFICATIONS

- ☐ How long have you been a member of XYZ?
- ☐ Briefly summarize your work experience.
- ☐ What other boards or committees have you served on or leadership positions have you held in the past?
- ☐ What other boards or committees do you currently serve on?
- ☐ What education have you received?
- ☐ What knowledge, expertise, or special abilities would you bring to the board? (e.g., Business/Management, Finance, Accounting, Nonprofit Experience, Cooperative Experience, Outreach/Advocacy, Communications, Electric Utility Experience, others?)

Do you have any connections (i.e., family relationships, business agreements) to the cooperative that might possibly be seen as a conflict of interest? (Check your bylaw provisions for conflicts that disqualify someone from board service. Examples might include a close relative who is an employee of XYZ or on its board, working for one of the co-op's major suppliers, a financial interest in a competing utility, having received substantial compensation from the co-op in the past three years, sale of property involving the co-op, a lawsuit with the co-op, etc.).

Have you ever been convicted of or plead guilty to a felony? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Are you a member of the cooperative with no outstanding debts owed to the cooperative?  
Yes \_\_\_ No

## Candidate Questionnaire, *continued*

### YOUR ABILITY TO SERVE

Serving on the XYZ board will require about \_\_\_\_ days per month. The board usually meets on INSERT DAYS AND TIME OF BOARD MEETINGS. Board members take \_\_\_\_ or so trips per year to association meetings, usually for a few days in length and may be required to participate in virtual meetings such as video conference calls. In addition, new directors are encouraged to receive at least \_\_\_\_ days of training per year. The average director also spends \_\_\_\_ hours a month on “homework” such as reviewing information, preparing for meetings, or talking with fellow co-op members.

Directors are paid \$\_\_\_\_

(DESCRIBE YOUR CO-OP’S DIRECTOR COMPENSATION, i.e. per diem, flat monthly fee, etc.) to compensate for time spent for meetings, training, and travel, plus reimbursement of expenses.

How comfortable are you with being able to make that commitment of time and energy?

- ☐ Very comfortable
- ☐ Somewhat comfortable
- ☐ I’d have to make some adjustments to do it.

### YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT XYZ COOPERATIVE

- ☐ Is the co-op doing anything that really upsets you?
- ☐ What are some of the important issues that you believe **the co-op board** needs to be focused on in the next few years?
- ☐ What interests you most about serving on the board of directors?
- ☐ Are you familiar with the elements of the cooperative business model?
- ☐ If you answered “yes” to the question above, what do you like or dislike about the cooperative form of business?

## Candidate Questionnaire, *continued*

### COMMUNITY

- ☐ Thinking beyond XYZ COOPERATIVE and the utility business, what do you think are some of the biggest challenges our local area faces?
- ☐ How would you describe your personal involvement in the community?
- ☐ What sorts of projects or organizations have you been involved in?☐ What about speaking up for the co-op in the community — is that
  - ☐ something you'd be comfortable doing,
  - ☐ probably would be OK doing, or
  - ☐ something you'd rather not do?
- ☐ Electric utilities are a heavily-regulated industry. What's your view about participating in the political process (such as contacting your Congressional representatives) on behalf of the cooperative, if needed?

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The signature above indicates that you (the candidate) attest to the fact that you are providing full and accurate information to the best of your ability and that you have received and read copies of the cooperative's articles of incorporation and bylaws and satisfy the qualifications for directors noted there.

## Candidate Interview Discussion Guide

### PURPOSE

This discussion guide will help you make interviews or orientation sessions with prospective board candidates more enjoyable and productive. Our goal is to find the best possible directors. Key factors to look for include:

- ☐ Their willingness and ability to serve
- ☐ The experience and expertise they'd bring to the board room
- ☐ Their knowledge and opinions about XYZ COOPERATIVE and the cooperative form of business
- ☐ Their ability to communicate effectively and work well with fellow directors, the CEO, and employees
- ☐ Their involvement in the community
- ☐ Their interest in and ability to advocate for the cooperative in the community and in the political process

### PREPARATION BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- ☐ Before the interview begins, be sure you are familiar with the details about how the nomination process will work and how the election will be conducted so that you can answer any questions the candidate may have.
- ☐ Determine whether you want to have your attorney present at the session and if so, what topics you want him/her to cover (such as bylaw requirements directors must meet to be eligible to serve and the fiduciary responsibility and potential liability that directors have).
- ☐ Determine whether or not you want to record the interview and whether you will permit candidates to make their own recordings.
- ☐ Spend a few minutes reviewing the Board Candidate Questionnaire that candidates are to fill out. You will begin the session by discussing their answers to those questions.
- ☐ What will happen after the nominating committee makes its recommendations?

## Candidate Interview Discussion Guide, *continued*

### DURING THE INTERVIEW

- ☐ Be clear about deadlines and offer the name of someone at the co-op the candidate can contact with any questions.
- ☐ Explain when and how people will get their ballots and vote.
- ☐ Explain what opportunities candidates will have to get an article in the newsletter or use the mailing list, and how to go about it.
- ☐ Tell them if there will be any events for candidates to meet members and what they should do.
- ☐ Discuss the expectation about how candidates can conduct their campaigns.  
For example, some co-ops have bylaws that disqualify a candidate who makes false statements. Others discourage candidates from making negative attacks on other candidates.
- ☐ When the session begins, stress that there are no right or wrong answers.  
Explain, however, that their answers may reveal that they are not qualified to serve based on XYZ's director qualifications. You may wish to provide a copy of your bylaws to the candidates at the interview if they have not received it already.
- ☐ Conflicts of interest are a matter of degree. If you think it is serious enough to disqualify someone, flag it for further follow up.
- ☐ Use the evaluation to take notes on each candidate to help you recall each individual's responses, strengths and weaknesses.

Here are some suggested discussion questions to start the ball rolling as you review the answers people have given on the Candidate Questionnaire.

### QUALIFICATIONS

- ☐ What would you say are the top three reasons you'd be well qualified to serve on the board?
- ☐ Is there anything in your background that people might raise questions about if they saw you are a candidate for the board?
- ☐ Have you ever gone to an event or meeting sponsored by the co-op? What did you think of it?

## Candidate Interview Discussion Guide, *continued*

### ABILITY TO SERVE

On the Candidate Questionnaire, there's a brief description of the time commitment involved in serving on the board. Some people are surprised when they first hear about it. What was your reaction?

Here is a list of the duties that directors of XYZ COOPERATIVE are required to fulfill. Let's review each one briefly, and please tell me if you have any questions or concerns about them:

- ☐ Hire, delegate, and appraise the CEO
- ☐ Govern through policies and plans
- ☐ Comply with director duties and standards of conduct
- ☐ Provide direction through a strategic planning process
- ☐ Authorize resources consistent with the strategic plan and the long-range financial plan
- ☐ Serve as a regulator (setting rates)
- ☐ Provide monitoring and oversight of the cooperative
- ☐ Demonstrate due diligence through board performance assessment
- ☐ Facilitate member dialogue regarding improving the quality of life in the community
- ☐ Recognize the impacts of regulatory and legislative issues on the cooperative
- ☐ Actively participate in state and national associations to drive public policy that supports electric cooperatives
- ☐ Engage co-op members to support local, state, and federal elected officials who support electric cooperatives

Now that you've had a more detailed look at what's involved, what's your feeling about your ability and willingness to serve on our board?

- ☐ When people first go on the board, they often find that there's a lot they need to learn about the utility business and the way cooperatives work, so that's why the co-op arranges for directors to get training through our state and national associations. What are some subjects that you might be interested in learning more about to help you be a good director?
- ☐ Directors have a duty to represent the members, but the members don't always agree about everything, and likewise the directors don't always agree with each other. In your experience, what's the best way to handle it when there are differences that need to be discussed and decisions that need to be made?
- ☐ Are you comfortable using technology such as laptops, tablet computers, smart phones, email, and the internet?

## Candidate Interview Discussion Guide, *continued*

### OPINIONS ABOUT THE CO-OP

- What kind of reputation does XYZ COOPERATIVE have?
- What comments have you heard or what thoughts do you have about the reliability of electric service?
- The rates and fees?
- The quality of customer service?
- The cooperative's stewardship of the environment?
- The quality of the employees?
- The management and board?
- The cooperative way of doing business?
- What sort of background, experience, or ideas do you have that would help the co-op fulfill its mission of serving the members?

### COMMUNITY

- Does XYZ COOPERATIVE have a good reputation for pitching in to help the communities it serves or is it just seen as being there to sell electricity?
- What avenues do you think XYZ COOPERATIVE might explore to make sure that it is seen as being a truly valuable asset to the communities it serves?
- What background, experience, community connections, or ideas would you bring to the board that would help the cooperative be a truly valuable asset to the communities it serves?



## Candidate Interview Discussion Guide, *continued*

### AS THE INTERVIEW ENDS

- If at the end of the interview a petition candidate indicates an intention to proceed (and assuming these conform to your cooperative's practices):
  - Provide copies of nominating petition forms and advise the candidate regarding how many signatures will be needed.
  - Provide the candidate a self-certification form to sign to affirm their agreement and understanding of the qualifications and expectations for board service.
  - Obtain the candidate's written permission to conduct a criminal background check and/or credit check.
- Remind the candidate of particular details about the process or rules that are likely to cause confusion. For example, the fact that a husband and wife with a joint membership will count as only one membership signature (assuming this is your co-op's rule) may need emphasizing. You could then also suggest that they get some extra signatures to ensure they will satisfy the number required.
- Be prepared to review key items discussed with candidates at the conclusion of the session, such as upcoming dates and deadlines. Having these key points outlined in a written handout may be helpful.
- Be sure to thank the candidates sincerely for their time and interest in serving XYZ COOPERATIVE.

### CONCLUSION

If these sessions have been conducted by a nominating committee, committee members should fill out the Candidate Evaluations after the prospective candidates are no longer in the room or, if completed during the interview, then committee members should be positioned so that the candidates cannot see the ratings that are given. Each committee member should make his or her own individual evaluations without consulting other committee members.

## Candidate Evaluation

Purpose: This form is optional. It may be used by a nominating committee or by people representing the co-op at candidate interviews or orientation sessions.

Board candidate name \_\_\_\_\_

Date interviewed \_\_\_\_\_

Rates each candidate on each of the subjects listed below.

<b>Subjects:</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Background and experience				
Time, energy, and ability to serve				
Knowledge of co-op				
Loyalty and commitment to co-op				
Commitment to serving the community				
Interest and willingness to learn more				
Self confidence				
Ability to communicate effectively				
Ability to work well with other directors				
Integrity /trustworthiness				
Understanding of fiduciary responsibility				

1. What strengths would this candidate bring to the board?
2. Does this candidate appear to have a particular issue or agenda that motivates his/her interest in being on the board?
3. Does this candidate have a potential conflict of interest or other disqualification?  
☐ No  
☐ Yes Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What, if any, weaknesses or red flags are there?
5. Are there any questions or concerns that require follow up by co-op staff?

Recommendation:

- ☐ Strongly recommend  
☐ Recommend  
☐ Do not recommend

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## New Director Orientation Checklist

### Topics to Cover

#### **About the cooperative business model:**

- The 7 cooperative principles
- What it means to operate as a not-for-profit, cooperative business
- Cooperation among cooperatives – “the network” including Touchstone Energy information (if your cooperative is a member)

#### **About the cooperative:**

- Brief overview: number of members, areas served, miles of line, number of employees, services provided, load make-up, etc.
- Recent history (storm outages, new construction, recent major accomplishments, etc.)
- Industry overview
- Major challenges and risks the cooperative faces
- The co-op’s purpose, mission, vision and values
- The co-op’s strategic plans and activities underway in the next year or two to meet strategic goals
- Budget and financial overview
- Power supply and rates
- Review of recent member surveys, satisfaction data
- Tour of headquarters / meet key staff
- Organization structure and compensation structure/philosophy

#### **About the board and how it functions:**

- Rights and responsibilities of directors/Fiduciary duty
- How the co-op’s strategic planning process works
- How the board functions, when it meets, basic parliamentary procedure overview
- Board structure and committees (if any)
- Governing policies – particularly standards of conduct, conflicts provisions, etc.
- Training options & requirements, upcoming training opportunities
- Confidentiality requirements / designated spokesperson
- Board use of technology (iPads, website, email)
- Who to contact for further information
- Board compensation and expense reimbursement

## New Director Orientation Checklist, *continued*:

### Materials

- Bylaws & articles of incorporation
- Directors manual / governing policies
- Newsletters
- Annual report and most recent audit report
- Strategic plan
- Current budget
- Recent press clippings
- Brochures
- Calendar of meetings & events
- Recent board minutes
- Board roster

Another approach is to break this down into subject matter areas, such as:

- Governance, Legal, Regulatory/Compliance
- Finance & Audit
- Corporate Strategy
- Organization/Human Resources

# Sources for Recruiting New Directors:

For some cooperatives, knowing where to go to find qualified candidates with the time and interest to serve can be challenging. Here are a few tips for how to begin your search and expand it beyond the most obvious sources.

**“Inner Circle”** = Who do you know? A logical place to start is to ask current board members who they know among their neighbors, friends and acquaintances. Review those individuals against the characteristics your board is seeking and the director job description.

**“Second Circle”** = Who among your members has shown an active interest in the cooperative? These may include:

- Current or past members of your member advisory group
- Regular/frequent attendee of cooperative meetings and functions
- Members who participate in one or more cooperative programs, this may include a demand side management program, a volunteer or charitable activity, or similar activities
- Former Youth Tour members, scholarship recipients, or other members who have been recognized or rewarded by your cooperative

**“Third Circle”** = Community leaders and volunteers. The most common response when current co-op directors are asked why they decided to run for the board was that they wanted to “give back” to the community. Look at who is actively serving your community in some capacity that demonstrates that they may have interests and abilities similar to those of a co-op director. Perhaps they serve on the school or hospital board, are active in a parent-teacher association, or local philanthropic or social organization. Also consider those who may volunteer at a local museum or cultural site as a docent, serve as a poll worker during elections, teach classes as an adjunct professor at the community college, or coach a youth sports team.

**“Fourth Circle”** = Help interested members find you. Maybe you don’t know their names, but they know the cooperative and are interested in being involved but don’t know what is required, who to contact, etc. Publish and promote opportunities beyond your typical or required nomination and election notifications to members. Examples include:

- Hosting an information session at the co-op or on social media (e.g., Facebook Live event)
- Sharing information on your co-op web site and social media channels about opportunities to serve; include the director job description and have someone available who can be a point of contact to answer questions
- Using your co-op publications, annual meeting and other member touch points to communicate about the job of a cooperative director.
- Consider tapping into a [board posting or matching program](#). There are national and state resources that provide nonprofit organizations opportunities to post essentially “help wanted” ads for board service. Some function like a career board – posting only – while others are “matching” services where interested organizations and individuals seeking opportunities to serve are matched with one another. National examples include Volunteer Match, Idealist and AARP’s Create the Good.