

# STRONG PARKS, STRONG COMMUNITIES

## Tool 4: Recruiting the Board You Need

Board recruitment is a process of identifying the right individuals to meet the needs of your philanthropic partner organization, providing them with information about your organization's board and the board's responsibilities, and convincing them to become part of the board.

The steps in this process include:

1. **Develop criteria for board composition.** Identify the skills, background, and demographics to be represented on the board. For example, do you need people skilled at advocacy, people with corporate relationships, or people with significant financial capacity? Does your board's demographic composition reflect the diversity of park users and constituents? After you have defined "who you need," compare it with who you have on your current board. Identify gaps to fill as you recruit new leaders (see **Board Tool 3, Board Profile Grid**).
2. **Identify prospects.** Advertise board positions as required. Identify the people and organizations to contact as part of the recruiting process. Get the name, email address, and phone number of each person to be contacted as a prospect for the board. As part of this process, try to understand what each prospect could bring to the board. Some boards make it a practice to recruit people with "potential to be board chair someday."
3. **Narrow the list to top prospects.** Go through the list of possible board members and narrow the list to the strongest core group (six to nine individuals). Prioritize the list of remaining prospects. Make plans for immediate follow-up with the core group prospects. You may want to seek input from your park superintendent.
4. **Assign contact person to each prospect.** Assign an individual currently on the board to contact each prospect. Give each contact person the appropriate recruiting materials (see #5, below).
5. **Contact top prospects.** Set up interviews with top prospects. The interview should include a board member and the Executive Director (if your group has staff). Focus the discussion on exciting things your group is doing, as well as expectations of board members. If appropriate, discuss opportunities for involvement on committees in lieu of board service, and the identification of other possible prospects. Provide:
  - An overview of the organization's purpose, major programs, funding sources, etc.
  - A list of expectations of prospective board members—responsibilities, meetings, committee assignments, tenure, and time commitment (see **Board Tool 10, Board Member Job Description**)
  - A list of current board members and key volunteers
  - Copy of your bylaws and last annual audit of the organization
6. **Invite prospects to get to know you.** Schedule a visit by the prospective board member to see your programs in action or to talk with program staff. Invite the prospect to attend a board meeting to get an idea of how the group makes decisions and delegates responsibilities.
7. **Follow process.** Once it becomes clear that the board member is interested, and the feeling is mutual, follow your process for board appointment.