



Does AGB have information about trustee mentoring?

In AGB's guide to new trustee orientation, Richard T. Ingram addresses the need for trustee mentoring:

"There is virtue in the practice of assigning each new board member to an appropriate and respected veteran trustee who would act as a mentor for perhaps one year. The new trustee and the veteran should be compatible for any number of reasons (personal styles, experiential backgrounds, interests, or an alumni connection). The mentor should be present for at least the trusteeship segment of the orientation and sit with the new trustee at board meetings. It also is good form for the mentor to call the new trustee before and following each board meeting to see if any topic needs interpretation or explanation."

AGB's Board Basic pamphlet about the [Committee on Trustees](#) also discusses how to mentor new board members:

"Mentors should be sitting trustees with sufficient years of service to know how the board works, its curiosities and idiosyncrasies. They should be among the best-performing trustees, leaders or past leaders of board committees who are willing to spend the time to assist new trustees up the learning curve of trusteeship. This might mean a phone call prior to board meetings in the first year of trusteeship to help the new trustee understand the agenda of work that is anticipated by the pre-meeting mailings. Communication with the mentor following each meeting is critical. The objective is to help the new trustee understand what was accomplished, to review how the board reached its conclusions, and to answer any questions.

Not to be forgotten is the need to train mentors. Prepare a short statement of responsibilities and include a suggested calendar of mentor-new trustee contacts that at a minimum covers the first year of trustee life."

AGB member board professionals discuss trustee orientation and mentoring programs on the AGB Board Professionals Network. If you are a board professional interested in joining the Network, please contact the [Network moderator](#).

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4 Tips for Successful Trustee Mentoring

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Mentoring can have a powerful influence on a new board member, and assigning a seasoned board member who is available for face-to-face guidance immediately engages the new board member to learn from another individual's personal experience. Below are four tips for successful trustee mentoring.

1. Mentors should be experienced trustees. From AGB's Board Basic on *The Committee on Trustees*, "Mentors should be sitting trustees with sufficient years of service to know how the board works, its curiosities and idiosyncrasies. They should be among the best-performing trustees, leaders or past leaders of board committees who are willing to spend the time to assist new trustees up the learning curve of trusteeship."
2. Mentors should attend new-trustee orientation with their mentee. While orientation programs are designed with new trustees in mind, it's important for the mentor to also know what is expected of the new board member. Additionally, the new board member may have specific questions based on things he or she heard.
3. Mentors should guide new trustees on how best to engage with materials and participate at board meetings. A phone call prior to board meetings in the first year can help the new trustee understand the agenda and expectations in terms of preparation and participation. Communication with the mentor following each meeting is critical. The objective is to help the new trustee understand what was accomplished, to review how the board reached its conclusions, and to answer any questions.
4. Mentors should also receive training! A short statement of responsibilities is helpful, as well as a suggested calendar of mentor-new trustee contacts that at least covers the first year of mentorship.

For more advice about on-boarding new trustees, [watch Ellen Chaffee's AGBU video about board orientation.](#)

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