**NBF Info Session FAQs**

**What does the “typical” Board Fellow experience look like?**

* We have 3 current Board Fellows here who will tell you about their experience a little later. The short answer, however, is that there really isn’t a “typical” experience. As a community, Board Fellows bring a diverse set of skills and expertise to their boards, and our partner organizations are also incredibly diverse. And even if the exact same Board Fellow was placed with the same organization two years in a row, the experience would be different because of natural shifts within the organization and on the board.
* The common threads are that we have 40 extremely committed Fellows serving their boards and organizations, contributing to a really rich community of like-minded peers, and developing their leadership potential.

**What’s the difference between visiting board service and a consulting engagement?**

* As a visiting board member, you’ll be sitting shoulder to shoulder with other unpaid volunteers, assessing how your skills and experience can help them achieve the organization’s mission, negotiating the scope of your service, and striving to establish yourself as a valuable addition to the team.

**How long is the Board Fellow commitment?**

* The commitment is 14 months from March of 1st year until graduation.

**What is the typical time commitment for this program?**

* On average, current and previous fellows have dedicated 10-15 hours per month on NBLP-related activities. This varies based on the board on which fellows are serving and any additional projects they may choose to work on with their organizations. Typically, fellows must attend monthly board meetings (often lasting 2-3 hours), bi-weekly board committee conference calls, monthly NBLP pod meetings with their coordinator and monthly NBLP master mind meetings.

**What is the timeline for trainings/other mandatory commitments?**

* 1st year
  + Welcome & community building: March 19 (before pub)
  + One-on-one meetings with BFCs (to talk about goals, matching)
  + Training days on April 10-11 (9-5pm both days)
    - Matching happens after training, and Fellows are welcome to start attending board meetings starting then
* 2nd year
  + All board meetings, subcommittee meetings
  + Monthly pod meetings
  + Monthly Mastermind meetings
  + Community-building events

**What happens at Mastermind meetings?**

* Two things. The first is that we bring in experts to present on topics pertinent to board service. And second we provide Fellows the opportunity have structured, peer-led conversations with other Fellows who are serving similar organizations (based on service focus, budget size, etc.)

**What happens at pod meetings?**

Pod meetings adapt to the interests and needs of the Fellows, and are led by BFCs. These meetings offer Fellows the opportunity to discuss their experience, reflect on challenges and successes, and share best practices.

**What specific trainings do you provide to Board Fellows?**

* Board service-related trainings this year
  + Expectations & Best Practices for Visiting Board Service
  + Governance Responsibilities
  + Nonprofit Financial Statements
  + Fundraising
  + Program Evaluation
* Leadership-related trainings this year
  + Understanding high-performing teams
  + Assessing group dynamics
  + Entering a pre-formed team
  + Persuasive styles

**Do all Board Fellows complete a project?**

* Board Fellows are not required to complete a project, but about 8 in 10 do. Some of this year’s Fellows are working on projects like these:

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| --- | --- |
| American Cancer Society | Implementation of board committees, reporting, and best practices |
| Project USE | 1) Bylaws review 2) Developing customer pricing strategy |
| Zhang Sah | Developing training and curriculum for instructors and staff |
| Career Wardrobe | Examine consignment store operations strategy |
| The Philadelphia Orchestra | Finance committee / labor contract review |
| Women's Therapy Center | Financial planning/budgeting/fundraising |
| National Multiple Sclerosis Society | Fundraising best practices across Chapters, Strategy for chapter realignment with national organization and merging with Delaware chapter |
| Community Partnership School | Implementation of master strategy plan; help with fundraising efforts |
| WePAC | Marketing and Advocacy Committee (a new committee - helping with its development) |
| Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia | New ReStore property/lease analysis, evaluating impact metrics |
| SquashSmarts | Serve as Young Friends Chair to engage younger philanthropic community, plan annual Squash Tournament, |

**What organizations does the program partner with?**

* We expect around 60 of our partners to apply to host a BF in 2015-2016. The organizations are diverse in the causes/constituents they serve and how they deliver services, where they work, how their boards are structured, and also in their age, size, and budget.

**Do organizations reapply each year?**

* Yes, and about 85% reapplied last year. And they can reapply as many years in a row as they like.

**How does the matching process work?**

* Fellows receive demographic information (mission, size, budget, funding mix, subcommittees, upcoming initiatives, etc.) for all organizations that have applied. They then narrow the list, and have a one-on-one conversation with a BFC to talk about their choices and talk about what the experience with each might look like. Finally, Fellows submit their top 6 choices, which are entered into an optimizer that optimizes for happiness. Only 1 Fellow serves for each organization.

**Does everyone match in their top 6?**

* Over the last 2 years, we have a 98% success rate getting Fellows a top 6 match.

**What happens if a Board Fellow is having trouble connecting or engaging with their board?**

* In most cases, Fellows meet with their Coordinator to brainstorm a new approach or strategy first. If repeated attempts at engagement by the Board Fellow go unanswered, the Associate Director will step in and help manage the situation.

**If I have served on a nonprofit board of directors in the past, am I still eligible for the program?**

* Because the engagement with a board can be as short as 9 months, students with past experience as a voting member of the board of directors for a nonprofit organization won’t benefit from the program as much as someone who has no board experience. And so generally speaking, those students are not eligible to apply to the program. That said, a one-on-one conversation with the Associate Director is probably a good idea to better assess the student’s past experience and program’s potential value in light of that experience.

**Can I be a Board Fellow and another Fellow at the same time?**

* Yes, the Leadership Office has scheduled training dates for each program so that they do not conflict with each other. Board Fellow trainings do not conflict with Leadership Fellow, Venture Fellow, or Lipman Fellow trainings. If an applicant is able to handle multiple programs’ significant time commitments, he or she can keep being a boss.

**How does the application process work?**

* The application goes live at the end of the info sessions, and consists of 3 essay questions. 750 word limit total. We’ll select some applicants for a 45-minute individual interview (behavioral-based), and announce the new class before spring break.