



## Board Mentor Program Description

for

### New Board Members

NYSARH's Board Mentor Program is designed to help integrate and engage new board members from the very start of their board service. As the name suggests, the program pairs an incoming board member with an experienced board member who is asked to serve as a "mentor." As a new board member, you should expect the following from this program:

- **The support of your Board Mentor throughout the New Board Member Orientation Process.** The Board Mentor can help to fill-in gaps, offer context when necessary, and translate any acronyms or terms that are used.
- **A call or visit with your Board Mentor before your first board meeting.** Expect your Board Mentor to schedule a call or visit so they can get to know you a little bit. He or she will give you a sense of what to expect at the first board meeting (including what to wear, how the meeting flows, and any practices that may be unique to our board). They may also gather information to use in introducing you at your first board meeting, beyond the information provided in your bio.
- **The support of your Board Mentor at your first board meeting.** Your Board Mentor will be the first friendly face you see upon arrival, will save a seat next to his/her own at the board table, and will make sure you get introduced as people come in.
- **An introduction by the Board Mentor at your first board meeting.** Your Board Mentor will work with the Board Chair to ensure that the board agenda allows time at the start for a formal introduction. While board members may have seen your bio, this is an opportunity for the Mentor to fill-in the blanks and offer something along the lines of: "One thing I learned that his/her bio doesn't tell you is..." Time will also be made for the rest of the board to offer their own introductions, too, so you will know who is sitting at the table.
- **Coaching from your Board Mentor during your first board meeting.** During your first board meeting, your Board Mentor will sit next to you in order to quietly provide additional background information, translate terms and acronyms, and help you navigate through the board materials.
- **Follow-up after your first and subsequent board meetings.** Your Board Mentor will debrief with you after meetings to provide additional information, a bit of history, or the perspective that a long-time board member can bring; they will also answer any questions that you may have.

- **An opportunity to talk between meetings.** If you miss a meeting, your Board Mentor is available to walk you through some of the key discussion items.
- **Guidance regarding committee assignments.** Board members will tell you that they feel most engaged when they are doing committee work—but only if they are on the right committee and the work feels meaningful. Your Board Mentor will help you to identify the right committee to join, and will check in periodically about your committee service.

In order for the Board Mentor Program to be valuable for new board members and the Board as a whole, new board members are asked to engage with and be responsive to their Board Mentor. In order for the Board Mentor Program to work well, it should be a team effort.

Should you ever have any questions, comments, or suggestions about the Board Mentor Program, please refer those to the Governance Committee. Your feedback is important to us, so please don't hesitate to chime in!