



Get On Board

Organization History

Since the 1950s, The Plantory has shifted and shaped its organization to meet the needs of the community and nonprofit sector. Initially, the organization was under the umbrella of the National Conference for Christians and Jews before transitioning into the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ). When the national chapter of NCCJ folded in 2005, the organization became the Kentucky Conference for Community and Justice (KCCJ). In 2010, after a trip to Toronto's Center for Social Innovation, KCCJ evaluated their mission and rebranded as The Plantory, a centrally-located coworking space for nonprofits and small businesses to collaborate in Lexington, KY.

Mission

Our mission is to promote a more equitable and sustainable nonprofit sector. The most critical element of that mission is to place the most vulnerable and impacted community members into decision-making positions. Professional development and training is the first step toward this type of leadership. Get On Board -- one of our most impactful programs -- provides individuals a fundamental understanding of how to be a successful leader and valuable board member. Individuals receive training in fiduciary responsibilities, racial and gender bias training, and essential board functions.

Diversity on nonprofit boards is a significant issue in Lexington, KY. According to a study done by BoardSource, an entity dedicated to improving nonprofit governance and leadership, America's boards and commissions are no more diverse than in 1994 when they first began their study. When BoardSource completed their 2017 survey, 84 percent of board members reported as Caucasian and 27 percent of boards identified as all white. Lexington itself has not released absolute numbers on the diversity of its committees. However, WalletHub rated it as the third least diverse large city in America (large cities are cities with 300,000+ citizens).

While several studies have identified the issues, Boardsource also stated that the figures of low diversity are sure to continue because no concrete strategies have been introduced to combat them. Get On Board is a program designed to take actionable steps against Lexington's problem with diversity on its boards and commissions. Get On Board actively recruits individuals that meet various factors of diversity including race, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and more to participate in the program. One of the highlights of Get On Board is the board fair held at the beginning of the program. This board fair allows participants to speak personally with leadership from Lexington's boards and commissions to determine what board most fits their personal goals. Participants sit in on a board meeting of their top three organization choices. The goal is to place individuals onto boards that they are passionate about at the end of the nine-week program.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of Get On Board is to train community members on necessary board functions. The program strives to place them on a board by the end of the program.

- Instill the importance of diverse and inclusive boards that make decisions that affect the communities they serve.
- Provide the skills and confidence to fundraise for their organizations
- Introduce a broad swath of mission-based nonprofits operating in Lexington, KY
- Manage and facilitate conversations between prospective board members and the nonprofit of their choice.
- Provide a basic understanding of the legal and ethical responsibilities needed to be a successful board member
- Coach and improve communications, public speaking, and conflict resolution skills.
- Educate on the topic of essential board functions
- Place potential board members on nonprofit boards within the city
- Change the current status quo by centering community members and holding boards accountable

Program Design

Below is an example of the current nine-week program schedule.

Week 1: Diversity and Inclusion & Intro to Get On Board

A diversity and inclusion expert from Lexington, KY speaks will discuss the ways that board members can advocate for all types of diversity (race, gender, class, disability) and the importance of considering the impact diverse voices can have on their community.

Week 2: Board Members and the Fundraising Process

A non-profit professional working in Lexington, KY will discuss the role of a board member in the fundraising process, including specific techniques, best practices, and possible roadblocks.

Week 3: Fiduciary Responsibilities

The non-profit professionals continue their presentation on the fiduciary responsibilities of board members. Many of our graduates had no idea that finances and fundraising are the foundation of a board member's service.

Week 4: Nonprofit Board Fair

The class participates in a non-profit board fair. Several Lexington nonprofits attend and provide information about their missions. The intention is for class members to identify an organization they are interested in serving.

Week 5: Experiential Learning Activity

Participants are instructed to contact the organizations they are interested in and schedule a time to sit in on their next board meeting.

Week 6: Communications and Public Speaking

Participants receive coaching on communication and public speaking skills. Participants also learn the best techniques to engage in friendly debates with fellow board members.

Week 7: Parliamentary Procedures

Participants will learn about the parliamentary rules involved in board service.

Week 8: Legal and Ethical Responsibilities

The class will learn about the legal and ethical responsibilities that board members hold.

Week 9: Class Graduation.