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BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION - Introduction

Very few new board members will be experts in all aspects of the history and present issues before the Board. All Workforce Boards should have a structured, ongoing program to educate new members. This can involve staff, use of outside experts, printed materials, or talks with the chair or with other experienced board members. Such a program might include orientation on the following themes:

- An understanding of the systemic nature of local employment and training programs. An understanding of the Board's relationship to this "system" and not to individual programs. The mission of the Board.
- The legal authority that supports the Board. What political relationships and constraints affect its operations.
- Detailed information about how the Board does its work: membership, committee structure, staff duties, and budget.
- An overview of economic trends which will affect the employment and training needs of employers and job seekers in the Board's local labor market area.
- An overview of public and private resources available to provide education, job training and placement services. What programs are currently operating? What are their funding levels, client loads, operational strategies, and performance results?
- Detailed information about the Board's most current annual plan, goals, and priorities.
- Detailed information about any particular problems or challenges immediately facing the Board.
- The Board's current relationship with other public and private organizations, businesses, or community groups that affect the way the Board carries out its mission.

The orientation should leave new members with a clear sense of how they individually can contribute to the work of the Board. Board members will rise to the challenges before them. High level people need to feel that they are dealing with high level issues that make a real difference in the affairs of their communities and that their special knowledge and experience is being put to good use by the Board. Anything less will invite boredom and apathy and eventually destroy their effectiveness as members.