

# GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUALS

## Maximizing Your Effectiveness in Finding The Right Board Opportunities

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Completing your **Online Profile** at [www.boardnetusa.org](http://www.boardnetusa.org) is a critical component of connecting with a nonprofit board.

**Please consider printing out this guide for your use while completing your profile!**

### Step 1 – Log on to secure your User ID and Password

### Step 2 - Completing Your Online Profile

1. Once you have your ID and Password, login to **boardnetUSA** and click on the **My Profile** button on the left side of the screen.

2 You will be prompted to complete your profile. There are seven main sections to complete, from **Personal Information** down to **Personal Statement**. After filling in the appropriate information for each section, click on the **Update** or **Add** button to move on to the next section.

3. To make changes or updates to your profile at any point in the future, simply login and click on **My Profile**, then click on the appropriate tab on the right side of your profile. Be sure to click **Update** once you have made the changes!

#### **General Considerations:**

The **Skills and Interest** section is key because skills are often what boards search for in the database. If this section is not complete, your profile will often be overlooked in searches conducted by nonprofits.

Another important section of the candidate profile is the **Personal Statement**, which is the last tab of your profile, and appears close to the top of your profile when viewed by nonprofits. Some questions you might consider answering in this section include:

- Why do you want to serve on a board (in general)?
- What kind of nonprofit are you seeking? Large, small, what stage of growth?
- What skills are you able to contribute? Would you prefer your work to be hands-on, policymaking, advocacy, etc?
- What past volunteer or service experiences have led you to an interest in certain fields of the nonprofit sector?

### **Following is a sample Personal Statement:**

"I have a strong interest in serving on an environmental non-profit board. It is extremely important to me to do what I can to make a difference, especially by protecting and preserving the environment. I have extensive experience working with a performing arts non-profit board through my experience at the local arts center. I believe that the arts in our city greatly contribute to the high quality of life. I am energetic, hard-working, dedicated, and well-organized. These qualities will assist me in serving as an effective board member."

**Important** Be sure to visit the Privacy Settings tab to flag your profile as accessible to all boards ( the default setting). Without this indicator, your profile will not be visible to all organizations.

**An Individual Sample Profile is available as a link on this website.** After you have completed your profile, we recommend that you compare it to the sample and complete items you might have overlooked.

## **Step 3 –Be Proactive in Finding a Nonprofit Board**

You can wait for organizations to contact you based on your profile, or you can contact nonprofits directly. In order to maximize the effectiveness of our program, we recommend that you do both. Following are step-by-step instructions on searching for nonprofits on boardnetUSA:

1. After logging in at **www.boardnetUSA.org**, select the **Find a Board** tab located on the left side of the screen.
2. Select from the following search options:
  - **boardnetUSA Search** – Search boardnetUSA's database of nonprofits by name, city or zip code, and other specifications. This is the broadest and most flexible search function available. **We recommend this option. A helpful search method is to enter your zip code and a 50 mile radius when you search for nonprofits.** To conduct a more focused search, select the *Enhanced Search Form* link at the bottom of the page.
  - **boardnetUSA Profile Match** – Match your profile with nonprofits in your local area. This method uses the desired skills and interests directly from your profile – you need not select manually from a list or characteristics. The results are categorized by the percentage of skills shared between the nonprofit's needs and those listed in your profile.
  - **boardnetUSA Search Agent** – Set up an automated search agent that will comb through boardnetUSA's database for nonprofits that match your requirements and email you the results every 3 days.
3. After viewing board openings and profiles from the results of your search, send compatible board openings to the **My Boards** folder by selecting the **Add** button located at the top right of the opening or on the initial results page to the right of the nonprofit's listing.

4. When you have completed your search session, click on the **My Boards** tab on the left side of the screen. There you can:

- View the board openings you targeted in your search (Current Processes).
- View former openings that are no longer available, because either you or the nonprofit responded as uninterested following initial communications (Expired Processes).

5. Click the **Send** icon on the right side of the screen to send inquiry emails to the selected nonprofits. You will be given the opportunity to compose a personal message relative to each board opening before the inquiry is sent. When drafting a message to a nonprofit through boardnetUSA, consider the following questions:

- Why are you contacting this nonprofit? What items in the board opening or profile have led you to call on them? What skill-gaps do you feel you can help to fill?
- Would you consider serving as a committee member before being elected to the board? Many boards are now using this technique to help candidates ease into board service.
- How can the organization contact you if interested in learning more?

6. **Notify Triangle BoardConnect (tbc@mindspring.com)** of your communications if you would like assistance in “prompting” the nonprofits you have contacted. Otherwise, wait for response emails from interested boards and *be ready to get involved!*

## Our Suggestions for Success

- Be as responsive as possible in completing your personal profile. Your thoroughness reflects a lot about your commitment to this process.
- Be responsive in a timely manner to inquiries of interest from nonprofit boards. If you have an interest, a timely response gets the prospective relationship off to a good start. If you don't have an interest, it is only fair to let them know.
- We strongly encourage you to review all new opportunities posted by nonprofit boards at least every 2-4 weeks. Nonprofits are posting new opportunities every week, and timely responses begin a great relationship.

Let us know when you have a successful match. Your success is our success!