



Boards for All

Introduction

Plain Language





Background



“Human Rights” mean all people have equal opportunities to have good lives and the freedom to make choices. The United Nations Convention (treaty) on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities protects these basic rights for persons with disabilities. Countries that agree must support equal rights under the law.

When information is difficult to understand or read, people do not know about their rights or how to be involved in their communities. In the past many people were left out because written materials were provided using difficult words or ideas.



Now, organizations are changing the way they do things. They see the value of including people with different abilities and backgrounds because of what they can offer. Boards of directors and government agencies are changing their policies. They are creating materials in plain language and better designs so more people understand their basic rights.

They also know that access to information is the key to being a good decision maker. Clear materials in “plain” language must



be available. When more people have equal opportunities and information that is easy-to-use, they can participate as leaders in their communities.



When President Barack Obama signed the Plain Writing Act of 2010, he sent a message about “clear Government communication that the public can understand and use.” In 2011 he also sent an Executive Order that says “our regulatory

system must ensure that regulations are accessible, consistent, written in plain language, and easy to understand.” People with different experience can be active in their community and be valuable advocates, when they have understandable information.



Regional Centers, through the state of California, work to improve life for thousands of persons with developmental disabilities across the state. The Lanterman Act, the law that created this system, outlines what regional centers do.



It also states their boards of directors must have members who come from the community, with some being persons with disabilities and their families.

Boards for All helps any community member learn about being involved in leadership as a member of a board of directors, committee or community council. With this easy-to-use training, doors can be opened for many more people. Community members who did not think about this opportunity before, can now find out how to play a role in this important work.



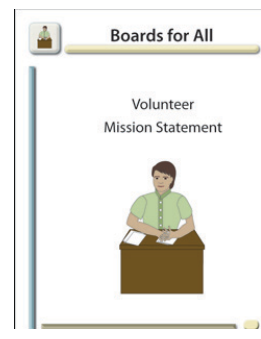
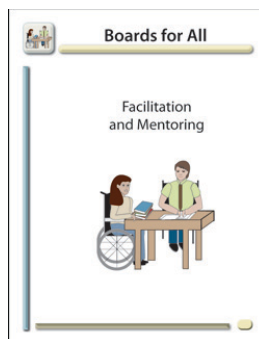
Boards for All is an online webcast training with easy-to-follow plain language videos and worksheets. These tools help show how people with different abilities can have a voice and lead organizations. They teach basic rules about how boards of directors and their committees work. The training also explains the importance of board member support called facilitation and meeting mentors.



The training includes five short videos with worksheets on these topics:

- Board of Directors
- Role of Board Members
- Purpose of Committees
- Board Development
- Facilitation and Mentoring

After each video, viewers are asked to complete worksheets and make their own leadership mission statements.





Collaborators



Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center

ELARC is a private, not-for-profit corporation contracting with the state of California to provide services to persons with developmental disabilities. The volunteer board of directors includes persons with disabilities, parents and community members. Together they work to ensure the agency's mission is carried out.

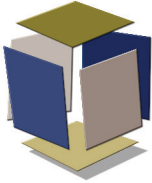
<http://www.elarc.org>



California State Council on Developmental Disabilities

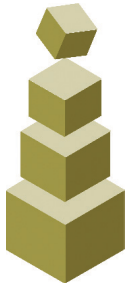
SCDD is established by state and federal law to ensure people with developmental disabilities and their families receive the services and supports they need. It is composed of individuals with a developmental disability, family members and representatives of State agencies. Members are appointed by the governor.

<http://www.scdd.ca.gov>



Board Resource Center

BRC helps organizations make inclusion happen by teaching how to be effective leaders. Most important, is working together to show boards of directors, committees and councils how to make complex ideas simple using understandable information, so people are included and valued.
<http://www.brcenter.org>



The SCILS Group

SCILS helps serve community organizations by teaching about person-centered thinking, and ways to assist people with disabilities to be involved in their community.
<http://www.scilsgroup.org>