

Thank you for considering service on the Florence Crittenton Board of Directors.

The mission of Florence Crittenton is to **empower families through a continuum of behavioral health services to increase hope, relieve distress, and achieve promising futures.**

As you consider this opportunity, please familiarize yourself with this list of expectations:

As a Board Member —

1. I will interpret the organization's work and values to the community, and promote the organization.
2. I will attend at least 75% of board meetings (held monthly at 6 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month), committee meetings, and special events.
3. I will make a personal financial contribution at a level that is meaningful to me.
4. I will actively participate in one or more fundraising activities.
5. I will actively participate in one or more standing committees.
6. I will act in the best interests of the organization, and excuse myself from discussions and votes where I have a conflict of interest.
7. I will take seriously the major legal responsibilities of serving on a board, including and especially the fiduciary role.
8. I will stay informed about what's going on in the organization. I will ask questions and request information. I will participate in and take responsibility for making decisions on issues, policies and other board matters.
9. I will work in good faith with staff and other board members as partners towards achievement of our goals.

From Florence Crittenton —

1. I will receive an orientation to the board by the CEO and a current member of the Board of Directors.
2. I will be sent, without request, monthly financial reports and an update of organizational activities that allow me to act as a "prudent person" in my legal responsibilities as a board member.
3. Opportunities will be offered to me to discuss with the CEO and board members the organization's programs, goals, activities, and status; additionally, I can request such opportunities.
4. The organization will help me perform my duties by keeping me informed about issues in the behavioral health services and community in which we are working, and by offering me opportunities for professional development as a board member.
5. Board members and staff will respond in a straightforward fashion to questions I have that I feel are necessary to carry out my fiscal, legal and moral responsibilities to this organization. Board members and staff will work in good faith with me towards achievement of our goals.
6. If the organization does not fulfill its commitments to me, I can call on the Board President and CEO to discuss these responsibilities.

For Your Reflection

As you consider joining the board, here are some questions to consider:

Is Florence Crittenton the right cause and organization for me?

Approach this decision as if you were planning to make a major donation: you would probably begin by thinking of areas where you have strong feelings – perhaps care for the elderly, or civil rights, or the elimination of poverty. After settling on a subject area, you might then learn about several different organizations working in that field, and investigate ones that seem to have high impact and are well managed. Only after you were fully satisfied would you make the donation. The next time you consider joining a board, first ask yourself whether you truly feel strongly about the type of work that the organization does and the people it serves. Since, as a board member, you'll be investing not only money but time and energy, ask yourself whether the organization seems to be a pretty good risk as an investment.

Can I work with this agency and this board at this particular stage in its life?

At one time in an organization's life, board service may be fairly smooth with a few bumps, while at another time, board service may involve a hair-raising roller coaster ride (of course, an unexpected event can throw any board for a loop). What type of board seems right for you right now? What about the diversity of the board; does it represent the stakeholders in the community? You may want a board that really lets you roll up your sleeves and get to work with the other board members, or you may want a board that is stable and can let you learn about board work in a deliberate way.

What can I, and what will I, contribute to this organization?

What skills, contacts, and perspectives do I have that will be useful to this organization? How, specifically, will the board use what I can bring? Often as board members, we find that some of our talents and contacts never seem to get utilized by the boards we're on. Perhaps you gave up a music career for accounting, or have writing skills that are not used at your job. Perhaps your network includes dozens of influential community leaders. Consider first what you bring to the table, and then, whether you are willing to give that to the organization. Look, too, for vehicles for your skills; if you can't see a specific vehicle (work on an event, help market a service, work with the Treasurer), your desire to contribute may well go unfulfilled. Ask yourself:

Do I believe in this organization enough to introduce my friends to it? Can I make a commitment to attending at least 75% of the meetings? Am I willing to give up one or more mornings a month? Am I willing to make a donation? Can I volunteer with other board members at other times than meeting dates? Would I feel comfortable having my name on their letterhead or in their brochure? The right time to ask these questions is before, not after, you have joined the board.

This final question is one that potential candidates should ask themselves and one that active board members should periodically re-examine during their board service:

What do I want to get out of being on this board?

An all-too-common experience for board members at the ends of their terms is a feeling that they didn't, after all, really get deeply involved and don't, as a result, feel that they either contributed as much or got as much as they had hoped when they first joined. Board members who plan and ask for what they want in the board will contribute more as well as gain more. For example, if you don't have a finance background but wish you knew more about finance, consider asking to be appointed to a financial task force. If there's a community leader on another committee who you would love to get to know, ask to be on that committee, and put in the time to be sure you get to know all the members well. If one of your reasons for joining the board was to meet new people, volunteer to help any way that makes sense.