

How to prepare for a HOA volunteer role

By CAI Staff



A homeowners association (HOA) is no better than the board of directors that leads it. If an association is to be excellent, willing volunteers must be developed.

Excellent board members understand that their position is one of service rather than control. They serve their neighbors; they don't supervise them. A service-forward attitude results in a less defensive perspective in which new ideas and opinions are welcomed and not perceived as insults or threats.

Before seeking a board seat, the best candidates improve their readiness for the position. They should:

Read the governing documents at least once. The governing documents are the framework (along with applicable laws) within which the board must operate.

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Understand the business judgment rule. The business judgment rule separates careful board members from liability for the decisions they make while governing the association. Learn the boundaries of that rule.

Attend at least four board meetings. Familiarize yourself with board [meeting procedures](#), and observe the current issues being addressed.

Talk to the community manager. The [manager](#) may not endorse or oppose any board candidate (ethics bars it), but he or she can tell you what makes a good director.

Read the annual budget. Study the budget and see where the association's money goes before you pass judgment on the current board.

Read the most recent reserve study. If the board has been reluctant to raise assessments in several years, and repairs aren't being made in the community, the board may have suspended reserve account deposits.

Avoid predetermined agendas. Board candidates often run on platforms that sound great but are based on inadequate information. The sitting board almost always has much more involvement and information than non-directors, so avoid making promises before you learn if you are right.

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