



TOOL KIT #4

BOARD/STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

FAQ – RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENT CENTER BOARDS

It is essential for Board members to understand what is expected to remain in compliance with federal requirements under IDEA. Because strong Board oversight is built into grant requirements, these guidelines support healthy nonprofit governance. Even if the federal grant is only part of the nonprofit organization's budget, Board members need to know their responsibilities.

1. What does IDEA require regarding Board structure and composition?

The Board must be a Parent Organization as defined by IDEA 671(a)(2). To meet this requirement, the majority of board members must be parents of children with a range of disabilities, ages birth-26. In addition, the Board must include individuals working in the fields of special education, related services, and early intervention, individuals with disabilities, and members who are broadly representative of the population to be served, including low-income parents and parents of limited English proficient children.

2. What are the Board meeting requirements?

The Board must meet and review progress on grant objectives at least quarterly.



3. What is the Board Role as grantee?

When an organization receives a U.S. Department of Education/Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) grant, the Board – not the Chief Executive (as, CEO or Executive Director) – holds the grant. While writing the continuation report is a Program Director (staff) responsibility, the Board Chair is the authorized representative who signs continuation reports. If there is a change of Board Chair during the grant period, the Project Officer must be informed.

4. What are the financial management obligations of Parent Center Boards?

The Board should review the Grant Award Notification (GAN), which is the official document of your grant terms. The Board is obligated to follow Federal Uniform Guidance and other relevant regulations and guidance noted in the GAN.

The Board should be familiar with major grant requirements. These include sound financial management systems, and aligning drawdowns of grant funds to activities. Drawdowns should correspond with immediate needs, with minimal time between drawdowns and expenditures (“3-day rule”). The rate of drawdown must be commensurate with the Parent Center grant project’s approved scope and milestones. Monitoring of drawdowns will avoid the following “red flag” situations: large amount of unexpended funds and excessive or infrequent drawdowns. Transfers of greater than 10% across budget lines on form 524 requires prior approval from the Program Officer.



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5. What other changes require reporting to or prior approval of the OSEP Project Officer?

In addition to new Board Chair or changes in the budget of over 10%, key staff vacancies, especially those in excess of 3 months, should be discussed with the Program Officer, as these may impact both budget and performance. Change in level of effort (the amount of time on the project) for key personnel should also be discussed. A new Project Director for the Parent Center grant (not the Executive Director) must receive prior approval.

Additional Tips:

The OSEP Project Officer may conduct or request TA to do a site visit, and if so, be sure to have available your Board minutes and other documents. Know your document retention policy! Board members may use this opportunity to share their work and learn more about the program.

Your Regional Technical Assistance Centers is ready to help on any of these issues. They are here for you!

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