



**TREES FOREVER PROSPECTIVE BOARD CANDIDATE  
INFORMATION PACKET**

## **WELCOME**

Thank you for your interest in helping Trees Forever Plant a Better Tomorrow!

As a non-profit organization, we truly benefit from the energy, expertise and enthusiasm of our amazing volunteers. There are many ways to get involved, and one of the most impactful opportunities to make a difference is by serving as a Trees Forever Board member.

This guide provides an overview of what it means to be a Board member for Trees Forever. We are hoping to answer your questions and get you excited about the possibility of joining us as a dedicated volunteer.

## **ABOUT TREES FOREVER**

Trees Forever is a Marion, Iowa based nonprofit specializing in the advocacy, planting, and caring for trees in Iowa, Illinois, and parts of Wisconsin.

We partner with national, state, and local utilities, cities, and governments through over 15 annual programs ranging from education regarding right tree/right place, to restoring public and private trees through the planting and distribution of trees.

Trees Forever builds communities through volunteerism, advocacy, and education for a better tomorrow.

Our work positively impacts water and air quality, reduces utility costs, and improves physical and mental health by creating a more attractive and productive planet.

Our mission is to plant and care for trees and the environment by empowering people, building community, and promoting stewardship. We are working toward our vision of people sustaining the places where they live, work, and play by planting and caring for trees and natural areas.

Each year Trees Forever:

- Plants and cares for tens of thousands of urban and rural community trees.
- Educates volunteers and youth on conservation practices.
- Builds more resilient, diverse, and native tree canopies.
- Engages communities in natural disaster recovery.

To learn more, please visit [TreesForever.org](https://TreesForever.org). You will find bios of our current Board of Directors and professional staff, you can link to detailed financial information including a link to our most recent audit and 990 form, and you will find lots of information about our programs and how volunteers can get involved.

## **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A TREES FOREVER BOARD MEMBER?**

As a member of the Board of Directors, you will be responsible for helping to manage the business and affairs of Trees Forever. You will work with a great group of Board members from across the Midwest.

Our board term is three years. If you are interested, you may serve a second three-year term immediately following your first term. After your second three-year term, you must step off the Board for one year before being eligible to serve again.

Our bylaws allow for 5 to 25 board members.

We hold six meetings per year. Two of those meetings are in-person, while four are virtual. The in-person meetings are held in Cedar Rapids/Marion and Des Moines.

As a new Board member, your term begins in January. You will get off to a good start with an in-depth Board orientation session in January. Our goal is to equip you with the information and context you need to transition into your Board role as quickly as possible. We will also pair you with a Board Mentor (a more experienced Board member) who will be available to answer your questions, provide any needed context, and help welcome you to your new role.

### **Trees Forever Board Roles and Expectations**

1. Passion for Trees Forever Vision/Mission demonstrated by:
  - Board meeting engagement.
  - Advocacy in public and legislative forums.
  - Use of personal influence in raising funds.
  - Personal financial annual contribution.
2. Active participation in the majority of Board meeting held each year.
3. Active participation in at least one Board committee:
  - Demonstrated leadership.
  - Follow through on assignments.
4. Participation in at least one Trees Forever sponsored event and activity per year.
5. Fulfill obligations under the Amended and Restated Bylaws of Trees Forever Inc. of May 2024.
6. Come to meetings prepared, having read materials in advance so as to be ready to engage in discussion where appropriate.
7. Participation in setting annual Board goals based upon strategic plan, and monitoring Board performance along with oversight of staff annual goals.

### **BOARD COMMITTEE OPPORTUNITIES**

Each Board member is asked to actively participate in at least one committee.

The primary options for committee service include:

- Finance and Performance Metrics Committee.
- Development Committee.
- Governance Committee.

### **Finance and Performance Metrics Committee Roles and Expectations**

The Finance and Performance Metrics Committee provides financial oversight to the organization and lends expertise on accounting and financial matters. The Committee also guides the use of and presentation of performance metrics. Some members should have an extensive understanding of GAAP accounting and/or experience in non-profit accounting. Experience working with auditors and reading financial statements and audits is also desired.

1. Members should understand budgets and be able to review budgets to determine they are based on sound business assumptions.
2. Review monthly financial statements and compare them to budgets.
3. Suggest what financial information is presented and in what form information is presented to the Board.
4. Oversee choice of external auditors and function as an audit committee. (Experience working with auditors and reviewing audit reports is preferred.)
5. Read and understand Annual Audits and be available to discuss and material deviations or reportable shortcomings raised by auditors.
6. Report financial shortcomings and material deviations from budget to the Board.
7. Serve as advisors to the staff Finance Team.

Size of Committee: 4-7 | Frequency of meetings: Bi-monthly with updates on off months

### **Development Committee Roles and Expectations**

The Development Committee supports and guides the strategic development initiatives for Trees Forever and encourages active Board participation in building relationships with existing and new donors and sponsors.

1. Set annual Board fundraising goals with the full Board of Directors.
2. Identify strategies to advance the organization through development and marketing.
3. Identify and review Board giving, fundraising goals and strategies, and organization-wide fundraising efforts for both the short-term and the long-term success.
4. Ensure development expectations are reflected in Board recruitment efforts.
5. Participate in Development Committee meetings.
6. Work with Trees Forever Foundation Trustee on endowment campaigns, etc.

Size of Committee: 4-7 | Frequency of meetings: 3 meetings annually with quarterly updates on off months

### **Governance Committee Roles and Expectations**

The Governance Committee oversees nomination of directors, organizational effectiveness and human resource issues, including succession planning, in order to support leadership development and transition while increasing engagement and satisfaction among Board, staff and stakeholders. The committee chairperson should meet annually with the chairman and CEO to discuss anticipated Board member vacancies and skill needs.

1. Identify potential candidates for Board vacancies, including soliciting current and past Board members for nominations.

2. Lead the development, review and discussion of the Prospective Board Member Interest Form, Board Member Roles and Responsibilities Packet and the Board Member Assessment Survey.
3. Review Board Member Orientation information and participate in the orientation session for new Board Members. Appoint a Board Member mentor for every new Board Member following the orientation.

Size of Committee: 4-7 | Frequency of meetings: Quarterly

### **Executive Committee**

The Board also has an Executive Committee, which is made up of officers of the Board of Directors (chair and vice-chair), CEO, and chairpersons of standing committees (Finance, Development and Governance).

The Executive Committee makes decisions when the full Board cannot meet, guides the strategic planning process, and assists in setting agendas for Board meetings.

### **Trees Forever Foundation Trustees**

In addition to a Board of Directors, Trees Forever has a Board of Trustees. The Trustees manage the business and affairs of the Foundation, including the control and disposition of its property and funds.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Conflict of Interest**

All Board members and trustees are asked to sign a statement confirming that they have read and understand Trees Forever's Conflict of Interest policy statement. This policy protects Trees Forever when it is contemplating entering into a transaction that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the organization. (More information can be found in the full Conflict of Interest policy).

### **Reimbursement of Expenses**

Generally, Board members cover their own expenses. However, if a Board member has an expense outside of regular Board meetings that creates a hardship, they may request expense reimbursement.

### **Liability Insurance**

The State of Iowa limits liability for nonprofit Board members, but other states may or may not have similar provisions. Trees Forever has Directors and Officers Liability Insurance to help protect Board members.

## **NEXT STEPS**

If you are interested in continuing the conversation about becoming a member of the Trees Forever Board of Directors, please complete the electronic application at [TreesForever.org/BoardInterest](https://TreesForever.org/BoardInterest).

**Thank you for your interest!**