

GIRLS ON BOARDS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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INTRODUCTION

About Girls on Boards

Girls on Boards is building the next generation of decision-makers in Canada. By placing experienced, emerging leaders from diverse backgrounds at the board table, Girls on Boards is putting forward a new vision for governance.

How does Girls on Boards work?

- Each year, Fora partners with non-profit boards across Canada to help 30 Young Directors secure a placement as a voting director for a minimum one-year term.
- Applicants are open to individuals across Canada, and 30 Young Directors are selected for their demonstrated history in leadership and community engagement. Young Directors are young women or gender-diverse youth, ages 18 – 25 by the end of 2022 (born between 1997 – 2004)
- Prior to their board appointment, Young Directors receive in-depth training from world-class facilitators in matters of governance, financials, fundraising, and problem-solving, as well as personal and team leadership.
- Throughout their term, each Young Director is supported by a pre-selected board member (“mentor”) and a volunteer coach (provided by Fora).

Why now?

The past two years have illuminated the urgency of good governance and the importance of equitable representation in decision-making spaces. Between the ongoing effects of COVID-19, our national reckoning with the realities of inequity in Canada through movements including #BlackLivesMatter and #EveryChildMatters, and threats to a healthy democracy, it’s more important than ever to build equity into all decision-making spaces.

Young women and gender-diverse youth from diverse backgrounds and identities have been left out of these spaces for far too long. Their voices, experiences, and ideas are essential in moving towards a more equitable future.

To build equitable boards, we are training a new generation of board directors who would otherwise be left out of the decision-making processes in organizations across Canada.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General Questions about Girls on Boards

What is Girls on Boards?

Launched in 2017, the Girls on Boards program places experienced young leaders from diverse backgrounds to non-profit governance boards or committees in their communities. Girls on Boards is helping young women and gender-diverse youth across Canada smash one of the persisting glass ceilings: governance boards. By providing the training and support to become board members, the program is committed to advancing equity by combatting sexism, racism, and ageism in the non-profit sector, and enhancing representative governance in Canada.

On March 16, Fora is launching applications for the sixth cohort of Girls on Boards! Young Directors will begin training in Fall 2022 and board appointments and coaching will commence in Winter 2022.

How does Girls on Boards work?

Fora bridges the gap between boards and young leaders by partnering with non-profit boards across Canada to help Young Directors secure a placement as a voting director, for a minimum one-year term.

Applications are open to young women and gender-diverse youth, ages 18 – 25 by the end of 2022 (born between 1997 – 2004), from across Canada, and are selected for their demonstrated history in leadership and community engagement.

Prior to their board appointment, Young Directors receive in-depth training from world-class facilitators in matters of governance, financials, fundraising, and problem-solving, as well as personal and team leadership. Throughout their term, each Young Director is supported by a pre-selected board member (“mentor”) and a volunteer coach (provided by Fora)

Why does Girls on Boards matter?

Girls on Boards addresses the historic exclusion of young women and gender-diverse youth in high-level decision-making spaces.

The past two years have illuminated the urgency of good governance and the importance of equitable representation in decision-making spaces. Between the ongoing effects of

COVID-19, our national reckoning with the realities of inequity in Canada through movements including #BlackLivesMatter and #EveryChildMatters, and threats to a healthy democracy, it's more important than ever to build equity into all decision-making spaces.

Youth from diverse backgrounds and identities have been left out of these spaces for far too long. Their voices, experiences, and ideas are essential in moving towards a more equitable future. Governance boards provide an ideal training ground for emerging leaders to build confidence, cultivate their leadership skills (e.g. consensus building, impact, and influence) and provides them an opportunity to learn about civic duty, governance, fiduciary responsibility, and the power of social change.

To build equitable boards, we are training a new generation of board directors who would otherwise be left out of the decision-making processes in organizations across Canada. The Girls on Boards program supports boards to champion diversity and inclusion by bringing new voices to the tables.

Who can apply to be a Young Director?

Applications are open to Young Directors who are between the ages of 18 – 25 by the end of 2022 (born between 1997 – 2004), identify as women or gender-diverse, and reside in Canada for the full duration of the program. Young Directors must demonstrate leadership experience and dedication to community work and volunteering. They should have an interest in board governance and be committed to advancing equity in board rooms.

What's the difference between a Coach and a Board Mentor?

Each Young Director will be paired up with a Coach and a Board Mentor to support them throughout their first board appointment.

Coaches: A coach is a professional woman or gender-diverse individual with previous board governance and/or mentorship experience, who supports the Young Director's personal and professional goals and assists them in navigating issues related to the program, e.g. time management, preparing for interviews. With the help of a coaching handbook, Young Directors and Coaches are matched at the beginning of their board assignment.

Board Mentors: A board mentor is a director on the Young Director's matched governance board who will be the Young Director's main contact for the duration of their term. The Board Mentor facilitates the Young Director's on-boarding process and is their go-to contact on the board. The Board Mentor will be provided with a guidebook to help navigate this mentorship opportunity with the Young Director, including a checklist to structure meetings.

We ask that the Young Director, Coach, and Board Mentor meet three times throughout the one-year board term to discuss the best way to support the young leader's goals.

Will there be a Leadership Forum this year?

Fora will be hosting a Leadership Forum on June 10 and 11 in Toronto, Ontario.

While trainings will primarily be virtual this year, there is a possibility of an in-person Leadership Summit event. Participants will be given ample notice if we are able to proceed with an in-person event, and all travel and accommodation expenses (for Young Directors living outside of the GTA) will be covered by Fora.

How is my personal data used and stored?

Please note applicants' personal data will be stored securely by Fora on the third-party Submittable server. Applications will be stripped of personal identifying information when viewed by the Fora voluntary Application Committee.

Data will not be shared with any other company or organization.

How is Girls on Boards funded?

Fora is a Canadian registered charity working to advance the full participation of young women in decision-making spaces for over a decade. The Girls on Boards program is funded with generous support of the RBC Foundation, with contributions from Bain & Company, Oxford, Air Canada, Edelman, OMERs, and Power Corporation of Canada.

If you're interested in supporting the Girls on Boards program, please contact Miriam at miriam.buttu@foranetwork.org to learn how you can get involved.

LEARN MORE: YOUNG DIRECTORS

Key Dates for Young Directors

Applications open: March 16, 2022

Applications close: April 13 at 15:00 Eastern Standard Time

Interviews: Mid-to-late April

Start date: June 10-11

Trainings*: Fall 2022

Schedule TBD

Workshop topics will include:

- Professional Communications
- Game-changing Governance
- Navigating Imposter Syndrome
- Financial Fundamentals
- Negotiations
- Fundraising
- Navigating Tokenism

**Please note that these topics are subject to change*

Board placement start date: Winter 2022 (Depending on individual boards)

Coaching start date: Winter 2022 (Depending on individual boards)

[Apply as a Young Director today!](#)

Who can apply to be a Young Director?

Applications are open to individuals who:

- Are between the ages of 18 – 25 by the end of 2022 (born between 1997 – 2004)
- Identify as women or gender-diverse
- Reside in Canada for the full duration of the program

Young Directors must demonstrate leadership experience and dedication to community work and volunteering. They should have an interest in board governance and be committed to advancing equity in board rooms.

Why do I have to apply from a specific city?

Many participating boards are located in major Canadian cities. When applying, applicants will identify the city they will be residing in for the duration of the program and will be to a board in or near their respective city.

If you do not live near any of the major cities identified, you can let us know where you live in the “Other” section.

What can Young Directors expect when joining the program?

The program aims to set up each young woman for success and ensures they have the opportunity to learn the essentials of board work and develop their professional and personal goals throughout the program. Young Directors are trained, coached, and connected to the wider Girls on Boards community before joining their governance board.

When accepting the offer to become a Young Director, you are committing to the following activities:

- Working with Fora to join a community board and accepting a placement for a minimum term of one year
- Participating in each board meeting and joining 1 - 2 board committees
- Completing the coaching program and meeting regularly with your coach and board mentor (twice monthly for the first three months, monthly thereafter)
- Attending and participating in all Girls on Boards training sessions
- Participating in Girls on Boards' ongoing evaluation
- Agreeing to be featured on all Girls on Boards' social media and web content
- Assisting with future recruitment efforts

Below is the complete breakdown of Young Director requirements:

Program Requirements	Date	Time Commitment
Girls on Boards Young Director Training	Fall 2022	2.5 months, about 7-8 hours per month
Board meetings (excluding Committee work)	Winter 2022	The number of board meetings vary between organizations. Meetings typically range between 1-3 hours.
Coaching program	Beginning to the end of board assignment	12-21 hours
Board mentorship	Beginning to the end of board assignment	4-12 hours
Program evaluation (informal check-ins with Project Coordinator, surveys, and focus groups)	Throughout the Girls on Boards program	2 hours
Networking opportunities	Throughout the Girls on Boards program	3-5 hours
Leadership Forum	June 10-11	2 business days

How are Young Directors matched to boards?

Girls on Boards actively recruits and receives applications from governance boards in all major Canadian cities throughout the year. Fora works to match all Young Directors with a board in their city of residence (as indicated in their application).

Once a board has confirmed their participation, we are committed to placing a Young Director on their board. The time it takes to secure a partnership with a non-profit governance board varies, and is usually dependent upon the number of board meetings per year and the board's individual nomination processes. For instance, it takes much longer to confirm boards that have quarterly meetings, in comparison to those with monthly meetings.

For confirmed participating boards:

- The Girls on Boards team reviews any requirements provided by a board and aligns it with a Young Director's skills, interests, and preferences
- Recruitment processes differ according to the board, however most request an interview (formal or informal) with the Young Director to ensure the young leader is a good fit for their organization
- Some boards may ask to interview multiple candidates and then select the young leader best suited to their board's needs
- If boards are required to follow an internal and/or official nomination process, Girls on Boards cannot guarantee the match, but will let you know what to expect and support you throughout the process
- Two Young Directors may be matched to the same board, or a young leader may be placed on a board with an alumna Young Director

Girls on Boards will keep each Young Director updated on the status of their placement and will formally follow-up when a match is made.

What will my official role be on the board?

Every board is different and their individual by-laws determine the exact role a Young Director may play on the board.

Young Directors can be placed on boards as:

- Voting member of a Board
- Ex officio (non-voting) member of a Board
- Member of key Governance Committees, and/or
- Young Directors will likely sit on 1 - 2 committees on the board

Will every Young Director be matched with a board?

Young Directors work with Fora to identify community boards that align with their interests, location, and skillset. Fora will work with each Young Director in an effort to match them with an available board position for a one-year placement.

Young Directors are encouraged to support the matching process. Fora strives to match all of our Young Directors with a board, however, not all Young Directors are guaranteed a match within the 18-month program.

What if I don't accept my board match?

Girls on Boards works hard to ensure that each Young Director's board preferences and interests are taken into consideration when making a match. If there are extenuating circumstances in which the Young Director cannot accept the board offer, the Young Director will be expected to take the lead on their board search and assist Girls on Boards in securing a new match.

Where are Young Directors located in proximity to their Coaches and their matched boards?

Young Directors are based across major Canadian cities. While Girls on Boards attempts to match Young Directors and Coaches located in geographical proximity, Coaches and Young Directors are not required to be located in the same city, and can work together virtually via phone, email, Zoom, or Skype.

Whenever possible, boards and Young Directors are based in the same city, so the young woman is able to attend all Board meetings in-person.

How is the Young Director experience affected by COVID-19?

Due to ongoing effects and uncertainty caused by COVID-19, the Girls on Boards program is continuing to use an impactful and interactive virtual model. Trainings and other program activities will primarily be hosted on Fora's Community Platform, in which participants will have a unique profile and the opportunity to interact with other participants online. Each Young Director is expected to attend each workshop and actively participate.

Fora will be hosting a Leadership Forum on June 10 and 11 in Toronto, Ontario. While the training will primarily be virtual this year, there is a possibility of an in-person Leadership Summit event. Participants will be given ample warning if we are able to proceed with an in-person event, and all travel and accommodation (for Young Directors living outside of the GTA) expenses will be covered by Fora.

At the moment, almost all non-profit board meetings are being held virtually. Young Directors will likely join virtual-only board meetings until it is safe to meet in-person.

LEARN MORE: COACHES

Key Dates for Coaches

Applications open: March 16, 2022

Applications close: April 13 at 15:00 Eastern Standard Time

Interviews: Mid-to-late April

Coaching start date: Winter 2022 (Depending on the Young Director's board start date)

Welcome and Onboarding: Fall 2022 (Dates subject to change)

Equity on Board Training: Fall 2022

[Apply as a Coach today!](#)

Who can apply to be a Coach?

Coaches are women or gender-diverse professionals living in Canada. They must have mentorship and/or governance experience and be fully committed to removing the barriers to participation facing young people, particularly BIPOC youth. Coaches must be available for regular coaching for 12 months (see below for more details on the time commitment).

What are the expectations and time commitment for Coaches?

Time Commitment: Meeting with your Young Director

- First 3-months: Meet twice monthly (1-2 hours per meeting)
- Ensuing months: Meet once a month

Training Requirements & Expectations

- Complete the 12-hour intensive coaching program over three months
- Meet with Young Director once a month for the duration of their board term
- Connect with the Young Director and Board Mentor three times throughout the program, including before the Young Director's first board meeting, 6 months into the program, and at the end of the program
- Support a Young Director's development by sharing one's own career and volunteer experiences
- Participate in Girls on Boards' program evaluation - complete one survey and one interview at the end of the program
- Attend Fora's Equity on Board training

Upon completion, all participants will receive a certificate and LinkedIn badge.

Please see the chart below for a complete breakdown of Girls on Boards activities. Coaches' activities are in bold.

Program Activities	Date	Time Commitment
Girls on Boards Young Director Training	Fall 2022	7-8 hours per month
Young Director Board meetings (excluding Committee work)	Winter 2022	The number of board meetings vary according to the organization; however meetings typically range between 1-3 hours
Coaching program	Beginning to the end of board assignment	12-21 hours
Board mentorship	Beginning to the end of board assignment	4-12 hours
Welcome and onboarding	Fall 2022	1-2 hours
Program evaluation (survey and focus group)	End of the program	2 hours
Networking Opportunities	Throughout the Girls on Boards program	3-5 hours
Leadership Forum	June 10-11	1 business day
Equity on Board Training	Fall 2022	3 hours

What’s the difference between a Coach and a Board Mentor?

Each Young Director will be paired up with a Coach and a Board Mentor to support them throughout their first board appointment.

Coaches: A coach is a professional woman or gender-diverse individual with previous board governance and/or mentorship experience, who supports the Young Director’s personal and professional goals and assists them in navigating issues related to the program, e.g. time management, preparing for interviews. With the help of a coaching handbook, Young Directors and Coaches are matched at the beginning of their board assignment.

Board Mentors: A board mentor is a director on the Young Director’s matched governance board who will be the Young Director’s main contact for the duration of their term. The Board Mentor facilitates the Young Director’s on-boarding process, and is their go-to contact on the board. The Board Mentor will be provided with a guidebook to help navigate this mentorship opportunity with the Young Director, including a checklist to structure meetings.

We ask that the Young Director, Coach, and Board Mentor meet three times throughout the one-year board term to discuss the best way to support the young leader’s goals.

LEARN MORE: GOVERNANCE BOARDS

Key Dates for Governance Boards

Applications: Rolling

Board Mentor Welcome and Onboarding: Fall 2022

Equity on Board Training: Fall 2022

Board assignment start date: Winter 2022 (dependent on individual board by-laws and AGM dates)

[Sign up your Board today!](#)

Which boards are eligible to participate?

Girls on Boards partners with registered non-profit organizations in Canada. Young Directors' board appointments are to the Board of Directors. Participating boards must be committed to advancing equity on their board.

Participating boards are required to:

- Provide a warm welcome to the Young Director to serve for a minimum term of one-year
- Select a current board director to serve as a "Mentor" to the incoming Young Director
- Ensure a minimum two (2) board members (including the Board Mentor) participate in Fora's online Equity on Board training (one 3-hour workshop)

Does Fora cover all fees for Young Directors?

Fora will cover all fees associated with training, matching, and coaching. Once a Young Director is matched to a Board, any costs incurred as a director (e.g. per diem, travel, training, etc.) will be assumed according to the matched Board's policies.

What are the expectations and time commitment for Board Mentors?

Time Commitment

- 1-2 hours per month

Expectations

- Attend Fora's online Equity on Board training before the Young Director joins the board. Upon completion all participants will receive a certificate of completion and a LinkedIn badge;
- Attend a Board Mentor orientation session
- Connect with the Young Director and Coach three times throughout the program: before the Young Director's first board meeting; 6 months into the program; and at the end of the program

- Assist with the Young Director’s onboarding process
- Set up regular discussions (before or after meetings) to address Young Director’s questions or concerns
- Participate in Girls on Boards’ program evaluation: complete one survey and one interview at the end of the program
- Ensure a Memorandum of Understanding is signed before the Young Director’s first board meeting
- Maintain an ongoing, open, and accessible relationship throughout the Young Director’s one-year term

Please see the chart below for a complete breakdown of Girls on Boards activities. Board activities are listed in bold.

Program Activities	Date	Time Commitment
Girls on Boards Young Director Training	Fall 2022	7-8 hours per month
Board meetings (excluding Committee work)	Winter 2022	The number of board meetings vary according to the organization; however, meetings typically range between 1-3 hours
Coaching program	Beginning to the end of board assignment	12-21 hours
Board mentorship	Beginning to the end of board assignment	4-12 hours
Welcome and Onboarding	Fall 2022	1-2 hours
Program evaluation (survey and focus group)	End of the program	2 hours
Networking Opportunities	Throughout the Girls on Boards program	3-5 hours
Leadership Forum	June 10-11	1 business day
Equity on Board Training	Fall 2022	3 hours

Does the board have to be a registered charity?

No, the Board does not have to be a registered charity but it does need to be incorporated and have a functioning Board of Directors.

Why are board members required to complete Fora’s Equity Training?

Boards must be committed to advancing equity, specifically ending sexism, racism, and ageism that permeates the non-profit sector.

Girls on Boards requires a minimum of 2 board members (including the Board Mentor) to complete Fora's online Equity Training (one 3-hour workshop).

This workshop has been designed for non-profit board directors and has incorporated lessons learned over years of programming to set boards and Young Directors up for success. The training covers topics such as:

- Strategies to support Young Directors during their placements
- Taking an anti-racism approach to microaggression and tokenisms

The training covers the nuances of gender, inequity, power, and privilege will assist board members in navigating complex conversations and supporting the board's beneficiaries. Research from Statistics Canada shows we need a "critical mass" of board directors to positively address boardroom dynamics, encourage innovative ideas, and recognize diverse perspectives. In Fora's recent report, *Leading Together*, the "amplification" strategy - the repetition of key points by multiple people - supports the need for more than one board member to be trained in systems of oppression.

Participating board members will receive a LinkedIn badge upon completion.

How are Young Directors assessed and assigned to a board?

Young Directors undergo a thorough application process and are asked to complete:

- An in-depth application demonstrating their leadership abilities and skillsets - applications are reviewed by the wider Fora community
- An interview with the Girls on Boards Steering Committee

Young Directors are also required to:

- Complete an intensive 3-month coaching program - with an assigned coach - to develop their personal and professional goals
- Complete Girls on Boards governance and professional skills training over 3 months

We use the information from Young Directors' application and interview, as well as any feedback from their coaches, to assign governance boards Young Directors who are best aligned with their mandate, needs, and culture. Girls on Boards strongly believes in the mutual benefits of the program and matches Young Directors and boards based on the guiding principle that boards will learn from their match as much as their match will learn from the board.

Does the board need to advertise a specific position (e.g. Secretary, Treasurer, Director), or can this be left open until the Young Director joins the board?

The Young Director must be given a seat on the board, but their specific role can be decided during or after their nomination and election.

Do boards get input in the selection process?

This can be discussed on an individual basis.

Are there assurances that the Young Director will complete the board term?

Each Young Director, along with designated Board Mentor and Fora, will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) before their first board meeting. This MOU states that each party agrees to all program requirements and ensures that Young Directors remain in their position as a fully participating board director for at least one year.

What if either party is not satisfied with the match?

Fora will work diligently to ensure a good match, and will inform the board of the prospective match in advance. If either party becomes dissatisfied with the match mid-way through the term, Fora will become involved to work towards a resolution.

The board application indicates that the board must nominate the Young Director, but what happens if the Board does not accept the match?

Before submitting an application, please ensure all members of your board, including your Chair, agree to participate in the Girls on Boards program and nominate a young woman or gender-diverse individual to the board for a minimum one-year term. Once submitted, you have committed to placing a Young Director on your board.

What's the difference between a Coach and a Board Mentor?

Each Young Director will be paired up with a Coach and a Board Mentor to support them throughout their first board appointment.

Coaches: A coach is a professional woman with previous board governance and/or mentorship experience, who supports the Young Director's personal and professional goals and assists them in navigating issues related to the program, e.g. time management, preparing for interviews. With the help of a coaching handbook, Young Directors and Coaches are matched at the beginning of their board assignment.

Board Mentors: A board mentor is a director on the Young Director's matched governance board who will be the Young Director's main contact for the duration of their term. The Board Mentor facilitates the Young Director's on-boarding process, and is their go-to contact on the board. The Board Mentor will be provided with a guidebook to help navigate this mentorship opportunity with the Young Director, including a checklist to structure meetings.

We ask that the Young Director, Coach, and Board Mentor meet three times throughout the one-year board term to discuss the best way to support the young leader's goals.