



Girls on Boards: Frequently Asked Questions

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General

What is Girls on Boards?

Launched in 2017, the Girls on Boards program places community minded, motivated and trained young women between the ages of 18 and 25 on not-for-profit governance boards across the country.

Participants, called Young Directors, complete the onBoard Canada program at Ryerson University's G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, and are then assessed and matched with a board for a minimum term of one year.

At the start of the program, each Young Director is assigned a coach to assist them in developing personal and professional goals. Once placed with a Board, a director who sits on the matched Board is identified for the Young Director. This "board mentor" supports the Young Director's transition and onboarding process and becomes their main point of contact for the duration of their term.

Why is this program important?

Girls on Boards addresses the need to position young female leadership as attainable and valuable in high-level decision making spaces. There is no longer a justifiable reason for young women to be excluded from or marginalized within in governance spheres. The Girls on Boards program supports boards to champion diversity and inclusion to bring new voices to the tables.

Volunteer boards provide an ideal training ground for young women to 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. With increased confidence levels and greater experience operating in the governance sector at a high level, Young Directors can better access and succeed in male-dominated leadership.

How is Girls on Boards funded?

As a charitable organization, G(irls)20 works in partnership with several partners to secure funding and content. Girls on Boards is funded by The Government of Canada (through the Department for Women and Gender Equality, formerly Status of Women Canada), RBC Foundation, Ardene, Air Canada, Bain & Company, D2L, Edelman, and Ryerson University's The Chang School of Continuing Education.

Does G(irls)20 cover all fees for the young women?

G(irls)20 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.

Why is Gender Based Analysis Plus training a part of the Girls on Board program?

Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) training supplements the Girls on Boards program, and as such, is a secondary component of program's strategy in tackling low female representation on boards. This

training is offered to Young Directors, coaches, board mentors, and participating board directors, so as to ensure all program participants understand the principles and benefits of gender equality in the workplace and community. The “plus” component of the training takes multiple intersecting identify factors into consideration when completing a gender analysis.

By training participants to make intersectional and evidence-based recommendations, this 3-hour course offers necessary tools to analyze how boards’ policies and programs can better support diversity and inclusion.

What is the onBoard Canada program?

onBoard Canada is an online governance training program offered by Ryerson University. It was created to provide participants with the appropriate skills, knowledge and resources to make an effective contribution on governance boards, while also building their own leadership skills. The program consists of 7 courses with 3-4 modules in each and includes topics such as, board essential, legal roles and responsibilities, and strategic planning¹.

What’s the difference between a coach and a board mentor?

Coaches

Coaches are professional women with previous board governance experience who support the personal and professional development of a Young Director over one year. Coaches and Young Directors are matched at the beginning of the program and meet twice monthly over several months. After being matched to a Board, coaches meet with their Young Director on an ad hoc basis for the duration of her placement.

Responsibilities

- Complete a 12-hour coaching program over 3 months – with the assistance of a coaching handbook – with a Young Director and then 1 hour per month for the ensuing year
- Support a Young Director’s development by sharing one’s own career and volunteer experiences
- Continue to be a source of professional and personal support for the rest of the Young Director’s term

For more information on the coaching program, please click [here](#).

Board Mentors

A board mentor is a director (male or female) on the Young Director’s matched governance board who will be the Young Director’s main contact for the duration of their term and facilitates their on-boarding process.

¹ OnBoard Canada. (2018). Girls on Boards: Sign-up Guide.

Responsibilities

- Assist with the onboarding process, e.g. provide the Young Director with their board manual and/or bylaws, facilitate introductions to fellow board directors, provide background information on the organization, etc.
- Setting up regular discussions (before or after meetings) to provide any insight or explanation to meeting proceedings and to address any questions or concerns the Young Director may have;
- Maintain an ongoing, open, and accessible relationship with the Young Director for their whole term

For more information on participating boards program, please click [here](#).

Are all Young Directors matched with a board?

Girls on Boards actively recruits and receives applications from governance boards in all major Canadian cities throughout the year and works to match all Young Directors in the relevant cohort with a board. G(irls)20 works to achieve alignment with a Young Director's location, interest, and skill-set which can take some time.

However, Young Directors are encouraged to support the matching process, and not all Young Directors are guaranteed a match within the 18-month program.

What is the time commitment for Young Directors, Coaches, and Boards?

Young Directors are asked to:

- Attend the Girls on Board Forum (2 full-days in June 2019)
- Work through the Coaching program (in the first 3 months - twice monthly meetings for 2 hours each; 1-2 hour per month for ensuing year)
- Complete the onBoard Canada (12 hours from April-May 2019)
- Complete Gender-based Analysis Training (at the Forum in June 2019)
- Participate in each Board meeting (number and length of meetings vary)
- Join approximately 1-2 Board Committees (number and length of meetings vary)
- Participate in Girls on Boards' ongoing evaluation (surveys and one focus group)

Coaches are asked to:

- Work through the Coaching program with their Young Director (twice monthly over the first 3 months and then 1 hour per month for the rest of the year)
- Participate in Girls on Boards' ongoing evaluation (surveys and one focus group)
- Optional: Attend the Girls on Boards Forum (2 full days in June 2019)

Boards are asked to:

- Welcome a Young Director (minimum 1 year, beginning approximately May 2019)
- Identify a board mentor to on-board and support the Young Director (1-2 hours before or after each Board meeting)
- Complete Gender-based Analysis training (3 hours in June 2019)
- Attend the Girls on Boards Forum (2 full days in June 2019)
- Participate in Girls on Boards' ongoing evaluation (surveys and one focus group)

See below for a complete breakdown of mandatory Girls on Boards program activities:

Program Requirements	Time Commitment	Dates	Young Directors	Coaches	Board mentors
Board meetings (excluding Committee work)	The number of board meetings vary according to the organization; however meetings typically range between 1-3 hours	One year	✓		✓
Board mentorship	4-12 hours	One year	✓		✓
Coaching program	12-21 hours	One year	✓	✓	
onBoard Canada Training	12 hours	April-May 2019	✓		
Gender-based Analysis Plus Training	3 hours	June 2019	✓	✓	✓
Girls on Boards Forum	2 full days	June 22-23 2019	✓	✓	✓

Where are Young Directors located in proximity to their coaches and their matched Boards?

Young Directors are based across major Canadian cities.

Coaches and Young Directors are not required to be located in the same city and can work together virtually via phone, email, or Skype.

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

Eligibility Criteria

Who can apply to be a Young Director?

- Woman-identifying young person living in Canada
- Must be between 18 and 25 years old at the time of application (on February 7th, 2019)
- Eagerness to contribute to their community and country
- Demonstrated leadership experience
- Willing to participate fully in the program

Who can apply to be coaches?

- Professional Canadian women with some mentorship experience
- Able to dedicate 1 year to supporting a Young Director

What types of boards can apply?

- Social profit, not for profit, and/or volunteer board based in Canada (can operate internationally)
- Able to welcome a young woman to serve for a minimum term of one year;
- Agree to designate a member of your Board (male or female) to serve as a mentor to the incoming young woman
- Committed to inclusion and diversity, and as such, agree to participate in a 3-hour Gender Based Analysis Training (provided by G(irls)20).

Applications

When will I hear back from you?

All applicants will be notified of their application status by April 2019.

Why do I have to apply under a city?

Many participating boards are located in major Canadian cities. When applying, applicants will identify the city they will be committed for the next 18 months. If you do not live near any of the major cities identified, you may be placed remotely on you a board.

Boards

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.

How are Young Directors assessed in order to match them with a Board?

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

- An in-depth application form measuring their leadership abilities and skill-sets
- An interview with the Girls on Boards Steering Committee

Before being matched to a Board, Young Directors are also required to:

- Complete an intensive 3-month coaching program – with an assigned coach – to develop her personal and professional goals
- Take a board governance course from Ryerson University’s Onboard Canada Program
- Attend a Gender-based Analysis workshop

We use the information from their application and interview, as well as any feedback from their coaches, to match Young Directors with a Board that is 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 she 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 her specific role can be decided during or after her 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 a representative of the Board and G(irls)20, 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?

G(irls)20 will work 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, G(irls)20 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 her?

Before submitting a Board 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. Once submitted, you have committed to placing a young woman on your Board.