

Board Orientation and Onboarding Policy

(Last reviewed May 2026)

Policy #: 015
Created: June 2020
Amended: April 2026

1.0 Purpose and Scope:

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that new Directors to the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (“BAO”) are in a position to contribute fully, as early in their tenure as possible, to the governing work of the Board.

1.1 Definitions: For the purposes of this Policy:

- a) **Director** means a member of the Board of Directors of BAO, including newly appointed or elected Directors.
- b) **Onboarding** means the administrative and compliance steps required before or immediately upon a Director’s appointment (e.g., documentation, declarations, portal access, and required information collection).
- c) **Orientation** means the structured learning and relationship-building process that equips a Director to fulfill governance duties, including governance, financial, risk, and regulatory oversight.
- d) **Corporate Services** means the BAO department responsible for coordinating logistics, tracking completion of onboarding steps, and maintaining the orientation materials and records.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities:

Board orientation is a collaborative effort between the Board chair, CEO/Registrar, and Board of Directors.

Chair of the Board

The Board chair will play a significant role in the orientation process by contacting and providing a personal welcome to the new director, as well as lead the orientation on the Board’s role, decision making process, committees, board communication strategies, and the culture of the board. The Board chair will serve as a mentor for all new Directors.

Corporate Services (Coordination and Records): Corporate Services will coordinate scheduling and logistics for onboarding and orientation, maintain the official onboarding checklist and completion records, and ensure the Board portal and Director’s Guide materials are current and accessible to all Directors.

CEO/Registrar and Department Heads

The CEO/Registrar is responsible for providing orientation on organizational information and items for

which they are responsible including services, staff roles, financial management, core policies and procedures, and budgets. Other BAO staff may be asked to provide components of the orientation and training, as needed.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for providing mentorship to new Board members including participating in the orientation session if available.

3.0 Onboarding and Orientation:

New Directors will be contacted to schedule an orientation session by Corporate Services as soon as possible. Corporate Services will initiate contact with the new Director within five (5) to ten (10) business days of appointment, and the initial orientation session will be scheduled to occur preferably before the first Board meeting, or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter.

3.1 – Onboarding:

Immediately following their election/appointment new Directors will be provided the following documentation for review and signature:

- a) a copy of the Code of Conduct
- b) a copy of the Conflicts of Interest Policy
- c) a copy of the Indemnification Agreement
- d) a copy of the Strategic Plan
- e) a copy of the current Annual Report
- f) a copy of the Annual Business Plan
- g) a copy of the Guide to Death Care in Ontario brochure (English & French)
- h) Corporation By-Law
- i) a copy of the Funeral, Burial, and Cremation Services Act (FBCSA), Regulations and Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act (SCSAA)
- j) Administrative Agreement and related schedules
- k) New director biographies drafted for approval by the Communications Department
- l) Provide the BAO with a high-resolution photo, curriculum vitae, emergency contact information, tax, and banking information.
- m) A summary of Directors' & Officers' (D&O) liability insurance coverage

3.2 – Orientation

Once the signed documents have been returned, the new Directors will be provided with a briefing on confidential information handling and secure use of Board systems, including expectations for device security password hygiene and prompt reporting of any suspected privacy or security incident involving Board materials.

- a) the link to the Board online portal library of documentation
- b) provide training on applicable platforms
- c) a copy of the Director's Guide
- d) An overview of BAO's enterprise risks, including key strategic & operational risks (i.e. regulatory, financial, reputational, privacy and cyber) and how they are monitored and reported to the Board.
- e) A Director acknowledgment confirming completion of onboarding requirements and receipt of core governance policies (maintained by Corporate Services).

3.3 – Directors Guide

The Director's Guide is stored electronically on the Board online portal. It contains the following governing documents:

- a) Mission, vision, and organizational mandate
- b) Board member position description(s)
- c) Board calendar
- d) Committee list
- e) Audited financial statements
- f) Current budget
- g) Organizational chart
- h) Prior year of Board meeting agenda and minutes
- i) Contact list of Board member and senior management
- j) Committee terms of reference
- k) Board chair position description

- l) CEO/Registrar job description
- m) Corporate Policies
- n) Social Media, Media and Communications Policy
- o) List of abbreviations and acronyms commonly used in the sector
- p) Record of Motions
- q) Per diem claim and Expense reimbursement information/form
- r) Board and Committee annual work plan (including key decision points and recurring items)
- s) A concise risk oversight reference (risk register)
- t) A quick reference on decision records and how motions are captured (link to the record of motions)

4.0 Orientation Sessions:

Directors have a duty to be knowledgeable about the affairs of the organization. As part of orientation the BAO will provide a clear statement of Board member role expectations, including meeting preparation and attendance, committee participation and the standards of conduct to support Directors in fulfilling their governance duties. The orientation session will help new Directors maximize their contribution in the best interests of the organization.

4.1 – Internal Session

The orientation session will include:

- a) BAO Background, Mission, Vision, mandate, and distinguishing features of the organization
- b) Overview of key stakeholders (members, funders, government, other Delegated Administrative Authority and relationships to them.
- c) Strategic priorities, goals, and current challenges (sector trends, environmental scan)
- d) The Board’s role, decision procedures, culture, committees, and board-staff communications protocols.
- e) Summary of services, success measures and evaluation
- f) CEO and staff roles and human resource practices
- g) Revenues, expenses, reserves financial management and the Board role on the budgeting process
- h) By-laws and other policies and procedures in place
- i) Governing Regulation: FBCSA and Regulations
- j) Delegated Administrative Authority model
- k) Board powers and responsibilities emanating from SCSAA and the Administrative Agreement
- l) Training on accessing the board documentation electronically

4.2 – External Orientation Session

At a minimum and when reasonable and upon availability of the new director(s), a tour of sample licensee establishments will be organized, to provide direct insight into the sector. Prior to any external tour, Corporate Services will confirm i) any required health and safety requirements ii) appropriate conduct and confidentiality expectations iii) that the visit is for observational learning only and does not involve operational direction to licensees. The tour will include a cemetery, crematorium, and funeral services establishments. Those directors who originate from the sector and can demonstrate competency will indicate if they wish to participate, upon approval of the Chair.

5.0 Evaluation:

The effectiveness of the orientation process will be evaluated by the Board Chair and/or the Chair of the Governance and Nomination Committee. Evaluation will include a short feedback check in at approximately 30 days following the initial orientation to confirm the Director has the information and support needed to contribute effectively. Corporate Services will also complete an annual refresh of the orientation materials to ensure content remains current. This will be done by following up with new director(s) to get feedback on what worked well and suggestions for improvement. The orientation process will be assessed as part of the board evaluation every three years. In addition to initial onboarding, the BAO will support ongoing Director education through periodic briefings and learning opportunities aligned to the BAO’s risk environment and strategic priorities. (i.e. governance, financial, regulatory)

6.0 Amendment, Modification or Variation:

This Policy may be amended, varied, or modified after consultation and approval by the Board.

7.0 Severability:

Should any paragraph or provision of this policy be held to be void, invalid, illegal, or unenforceable in any respect and for any reason, any such provision or provisions shall be severable from this policy and the remainder of this policy shall remain in full force and effect and shall be construed as if such void, invalid, illegal, or unenforceable provision or provisions had not been contained herein.

8.0 Appendices:

Appendix A – Board Orientation Planning Matrix

Resources

Not-for-Profit Resource Centre, A Guide to Board Orientation