



Grassroots Guide to New York's **COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

In addition to elected public offices and political party positions, New York offers a variety of volunteer leadership opportunities for residents to help shape local public policy. These opportunities include: Neighborhood Advisory Boards (NABs), the Community Action Board (CAB), Precinct Community Councils (PCCs), and Community Boards (CBs).

1. NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY BOARDS

Overview:

Neighborhood Advisory Boards (NAB) are important vehicles through which local community residents can participate in community development planning processes in New York City. Low-income neighborhoods that are designated as “needing community development activity” are called **Neighborhood Development Areas (NDA)**, and are represented by NABs consisting of residents who are appointed by **Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)** and elected officials. There is a citywide adjunct organization known as the Community Action Board, discussed in more detail later in this document, which advises the DYCD in the overall operation of this program.

Role and Responsibilities:

NAB members are responsible for identifying the service needs of their local communities, a process which guides the City in its allocation of federal **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)** funding to support community-based programs in areas such as education, employment, health, housing, immigrant services, senior citizen services and youth development. The NAB member selection process is designed to maximize community participation and is governed by the CSBG Program’s Plan for the Restructure of Community Participation.

Each NAB may have up to 12 members, with up to six selected by DYCD and up to six nominated by public officials. The terms for NAB members are for **three years**. The following public elected officials may also nominate NAB members: City Council Members, State Assembly Members, State Senators, Members of Congress, and your Borough Presidents.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Residency in the Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) for at least six months
- Over 18 years of age at the time of applying
- Have a record of community involvement, specifically related to poverty issues

- No potential or actual conflicts of interest, arising from personal, business or professional affiliations.
- Neither the applicant nor any family member may be an employee of DYCD or by an organization that receives NDA funding.

How & When to Apply:

Applications are accepted on an on-going basis, so call DYCD to get an application at 1800-246-4646. Or, go to the DYCD website (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/pdf/cbo-nab-application.pdf>) and download an application.

2. COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD

Overview:

The **Community Action Board (CAB)** is the citywide body that oversees community initiatives in all boroughs and serves as a resource for policymaking efforts in the community development arena. The CAB membership includes 22 residents of low-income communities (elected by DYCD), 15 elected public officials, and eight representatives from the private sector. CAB members have a **three-year term of service** and are elected through a democratic selection process managed by DYCD.

Role & Responsibilities:

CAB members participate in the development of program priorities and the selection of contractors that carry out program initiatives. CAB also oversees the administration of all CSBG Program policies adopted by DYCD. Members can provide input to DYCD to facilitate ongoing improvements. In addition, the CAB can make recommendations to the DYCD Commissioner regarding the removal of individual members of NABs, or the withdrawal of recognition from entire NABs.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Full-time resident of New York City for at least one year
- At least 18 years of age
- Have a record of community involvement, specifically related to poverty issues
- Live in an area where development is occurring

How & When to Apply:

- To get an application call 212-442-5880. They will then ask you for your home address to learn if any development is happening in the area where you live.
- If development is happening in your area, and a CAB vacancy exists, someone from the DYCD office will return your call and mail you an application. Complete the application, mail it back to DYCD, and they will screen your application.

- If your application passes the screening, DYCD will inform you about any further required steps to become a CAB member.
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3. PRECINCT COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Overview:

Precinct Community Councils (PCC) are open to all members of the public and include residents, business owners, clergy, and civil rights groups. The goal is to encourage cooperation between civilians and police. Currently, there is a PCC in each precinct and patrol service area. The PCC is an effective way to build stronger relationships between local precincts and communities.

Role & Responsibilities:

The PCC votes on issues they want the precinct to focus on. The PCC typically meet monthly with the precinct commander, where they present their views to the police officials.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Residency in the police precinct of the PCC that you would like to join.

How & When to Apply:

There is no formal application process to join a PCC, you simply call your local police precinct (for precinct phone numbers, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/home/precincts.shtml>) and ask to be connected with the **Community Affairs Department** and request information about their monthly PCC meetings. The meetings are open to any member of the community. Ask to be registered to attend the monthly meeting, or simply show up.

After attending a few meetings, you will be allowed to vote on issues the PCC is working on. As a result, you become an active member of the PCC. Once an active voting member, you can seek more responsibility by holding one of the Executive Board offices.

4. COMMUNITY BOARDS

Overview:

The chief function of the **Community Board (CB)** is to serve as a vehicle for resolving citizen complaints as they relate to city government and the residents of the community. In addition, community boards serve an important advisory role regarding land use and zoning matters, transportation, budgets, and municipal service delivery, among other issues. There are 59 CBs throughout the city, each consisting of up to 50 unsalaried members. CB membership terms are

limited. The term ends every two years, but members can be reappointed thereafter. Once a CB member you must serve one year in order to become an officer. A member who becomes an officer of the CB may not serve more than three consecutive terms as an officer.

Role & Responsibilities:

CBs meet once each month to discuss and vote on community issues pertaining to their district. At these meetings, members raise and address a variety of community topics, including but not limited to the areas mentioned above. Each CB operates with a budget to hire a full-time district manager, secretarial staff and other staff, as deemed appropriate the CB. The staff is charged with the responsibility of carrying out the policy of the CB.

Meetings are open to the public, and a portion of each is reserved to hear from members of the public on issues of concern. When problems arise dealing with such city issues, the Community Board contacts and meets with the various city agencies to resolve the problems within the community. In addition to general CB meetings, members typically serve on at least one more specialized committee (i.e. education, land use, etc.)

Eligibility Requirements:

The requirements to become a member of a specific district include:

- Must work, reside in, or have some other significant interest in the particular community district.

How & When to Apply:

The applicant can take the following steps to apply to become a CB member:

- First, go to your **Borough President's (BP)** website and click on the Community Board link. Then, print and complete the application. Most CB applications are due between February and May, so check your BP's website for specific due dates.
- Applicants will be screened and interviewed by a representative from the BP's office.
- An alternative way to join a CB is to be appointed by a NYC Council Member. Applicants should plan to meet with that Council Member for the interview. In any event, the BP will make the final decision on the appointment of all applicants.

5. COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCILS

Overview:

There are 32 **Community Education Councils (CEC)** in New York City. Each CEC oversees a Community School District that includes public elementary, intermediate, and junior high schools. Each CEC has 11 voting members including nine parents of students in public elementary,

intermediate and/or junior high schools in the district. There are two additional voting members who are appointed by the borough presidents and must be residents of or own or operate a business in the district. The community superintendent will also appoint a non-voting high school senior residing in the district that is an elected student leader. The Council members will be active for a **two-year term of service**. The President, Secretary and Treasurer of every Parent- and Parent-Teacher Association (PA/PTA) in the district select members.

There is also **one Citywide Council on Special Education (CCSE)** and one **Citywide Council on High Schools (CCHS)**. The CCSE advises and comments on citywide special education services. Members of the CCSE are parents of students receiving citywide special education services. The CCHS advises and comments on educational policies involving public high schools in New York City. Members are parents of students in public high schools – one parent from each region.

Role and Responsibilities:

Community Education Council members are representatives of the parents and community-at-large. Their role is to reflect the needs and wishes of the community regarding the education of the children within the district. Community Education Council members are consulted on many important matters, and in turn, must consult with parents. The Councils are responsible for promoting the achievement of educational standards and objectives and should establish a positive working relationship with the community superintendent and local instructional superintendents. Council members must hold quarterly meetings with PA/PTA officers and provide assistance to School Leadership Teams. Members also have a voice in establishing educational policy for the district and in evaluating the community superintendents and the local instructional superintendents. In addition, a Community Education Council member is responsible for approving zoning lines submitted by the community superintendent, consistent with the Chancellor's Regulations.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a parent of a child enrolled in the public school system (9 of 11 voting members)
- Residency or Business within the Community Education Council District (2 of 11 voting members)
- May **not** be PA/PTA officers, employees of the Department of Education, or elected or appointed public officials.
- May **not** have been removed from a Community School Board for “an act of malfeasance” directly related to your service
- Anyone determined to have a financial conflict of interest by the Department of Education's Ethics Officer is ineligible

How & When to Apply:

If you are interested in serving on a Community or Citywide Education Council should complete a self-nominating application form. These applications are posted on the Department of Education's website, but the next cycle for applications won't be until 2009. Interested parents can also contact local Parent Coordinators for an application or more information.

For more information visit the Community Education Council's website at:
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Councils/CouncilMemberSelectionProcess/default.htm>

If you have any questions please contact the Councils Hotline at (800) 850-6443 or contact your school's Parent Coordinator or your regional/district office.