

L'Arche USA Board Member – Onboarding and Orientation Process

These steps are geared toward a potential candidate who does not have a history with L'Arche. Steps can be adapted if the candidate has previous L'Arche experience.

- 1) The Potential Member is introduced to the Governance Committee Chairperson (GCC) via email - usually after a staff member has had some contact with the person.
- 2) The GCC reaches out and has an introductory call with the potential candidate to get a sense of the person's interests and gifts.
- 3) The candidate is introduced to another board or staff member for another call
 - a. If the GCC senses a fit for a committee, the GCC would then suggest a call with that committee chair.
 - b. If the GCC senses a fit for the National Board, a call with the board chair, another board member, or a Governance Committee member is arranged.

If the candidate lives near a community, and has not already made contact, at this point the GCC would also facilitate a visit to the community, and/or a community event.

The GCC also encourages the person to reflect on the conversation(s) and any questions or concerns he or she might have.

- 4) If the candidate is potentially a good fit for the Board, the GCC follows up with another call a couple of weeks later to listen to questions or concerns, and reflections on the conversations and experiences the candidate has had.

If there is still interest at that point, the GCC starts sending some information to review, and will follow up with another call after the candidate has had a chance to review things.

This is also a good point to suggest a call with the board chair, unless the board chair has already made the call in step #3.

With the intent to help familiarize the candidate with the size and priorities of the organization, the GCC sends:

- Some links to specific pages on our website:
 - [L'Arche USA Board of Directors page](#)
 - [L'Arche USA Multimedia News](#)
- LUSA Board Member Role Description
- LUSA Board Manual
- LUSA Identity and Mission Statement
- LUSA Current Mandate
- LUSA Current Org Chart
- The most recent Letter from Jean Vanier

- 5) The next call (the 3rd with the GCC) has the purpose to confirm mutual interest to continue with a nomination, talk about the process, answer any questions on the material already sent, and ask any specific questions the GCC may have that would help complete a Board Candidate Nomination Form for presentation to the LUSA Board.

After that call, the GCC sends another email with more attachments and links:

- An invitation to:
 - explore the [L'Arche USA website](#)
 - follow us on [Facebook](#)
 - Current L'Arche USA Board schedule of upcoming meeting dates
 - L'Arche USA Constitution
 - Key Elements of a Healthy Community
 - Charter of L'Arche
- 6) The GCC drafts the nomination form and sends to the candidate to review and edit, usually along with a few questions and requests to provide a additional clarifications.
 - 7) After board approval the GCC informs the candidate via email that the vote is now out to the National Assembly

- 8) After approval by the National Assembly, the GCC follows up with more information:

- Access to the Member Meeting Ground
- Request to sign the Conflict of Interest Statement
- Information on recent board activity:
 - board meeting minutes from previous 3-6 months
 - materials from most recent 1-2 board meetings
 - current financial reports
 - documentation on any specific current major projects or issues
- Info regarding current board activity (upcoming meeting information, etc.)

At this time the GCC also formally introduces the candidate to the board and vice versa, including term dates and contact information.

- 9) The GCC then has another call to answer any questions and provide background on the most recent information sent. At that time the GCC would also introduce the new board member to his or her mentor and put them in touch with each other.

- 10) The formal onboarding work of the GCC is done, other than checking in regularly with the mentor to make sure that follow up is happening.

- 11) The mentor calls the new board member before the first board meeting to review and educate on meeting materials, and discuss current board priorities / issues with the new board member. The mentor and new board member also meet after the first 2-3 meetings to answer any questions, translate any new language or experiences, etc. The mentorship continues as needed until the new board member feels fully integrated.

L'Arche USA
Governance Committee of the Board of Directors

Committee Mandate: 2019-2020

The Governance Committee serves as the representative of the L'Arche USA Board of Directors regarding all activities relating to board governance. In a sense the Governance Committee takes the temperature of the board and offers recommendations if the temperature needs adjustment. The Governance Committee is attentive to the needs for board development and formation. During this mandate period, responsibilities include:

- Supporting national board members to better understand the reality of L'Arche community daily life, as well as to better build relationships between national board members and local communities. This includes assigning a seasoned board mentor to new board members.
- Administering an annual board self-assessment. The Assessment includes input from stakeholders such as community leaders and/or board members of local communities. Included in the annual assessment the committee will contact each board member to obtain input on their individual role and any supports needed.
- Assisting with a process for clarifying specific board responsibilities and tasks (board commitments) annually, as well as board officer role descriptions.
- When possible, encouraging and assisting L'Arche USA Board Members to develop personal relationships with board members of local communities.
- Assisting the National Leader and Board Chair in developing profile descriptions for new board members and recruitment, nomination and onboarding of new members.
- Increasing diversity in the composition of the board and raising awareness and sensitivity to intercultural agility.
- Developing and offering opportunities for training/formation of board members during in person board meetings twice yearly and on going as opportunities arise. This includes working with the national vocational/formation staff.

Committee Functioning:

- The Governance Committee meets at least quarterly and more often as needed via conference calls.
- Committee members are also available to staff as requested.
- Committee members who are also National Board members serve on the committee as long as they are members of the National Board, or until a change is made by the Board President.
- Committee members who are not National Board members serve two-year terms. Before the end of each two-year term the Committee Chair has a dialogue with the member and they mutually decide whether the committee member will serve another term.
- Andrew Callahan, Director, Finance and Administration, serves as the staff liaison.
- The National Leader serves as an ex-officio member of the committee.
- The committee provides minutes to the Board President and National Leader following every committee meeting, and a report to the full board before each in-person meeting.
- The committee also shares email correspondence between meetings, including between the committee's work and other board members and staff.

L'Arche USA Board and Board Member Role Description

L'Arche USA is a non-governmental organization and part of the L'Arche International Federation. As such it shares a common **Identity** with other people and organizations around the world. We are people, with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in communities in over thirty countries worldwide. Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together. We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognize our need for one another.

Expectations of the Board as a Body

L'Arche USA shares the common **Mission** of L'Arche communities around the world, and as such its board is responsible for integrating and supporting L'Arche in the United States to that Mission, which is:

- to make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships;
- to foster an environment in community that responds to the changing needs of our members, while being faithful to the core values of our founding story; and
- to engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more humane society.

As the highest leadership body of L'Arche USA and to satisfy its fiduciary duties, the board is responsible for:

- actively participating in discerning, hiring and evaluating the performance of the National Leader;
- strategic and organizational planning based on the current mandate;
- ensuring strong fiduciary oversight and financial management, including financial policies regarding employee compensation;
- fundraising and resource development to support L'Arche USA's operations, including its duties to its members and the Federation;
- establishing appropriate risk-management planning, policies and practices;
- approving and monitoring L'Arche USA's budget, programs and services;
- regular and transparent communication with L'Arche USA's members and the Federation;
- enhancing L'Arche USA's public image;
- assessing its own performance as the governing body of L'Arche USA;
- working in solidarity, including financial support, with the larger family of L'Arche in the Federation.

Expectations of Individual Board Members

Informed and respectful service requires that Board Members

- know the organization's mission, policies, programs and needs;
- demonstrate respect for individuals in all manifestations of their physical, mental, cultural and linguistic diversity and life circumstances;
- respect, and give fair consideration to, diverse and opposing views;
- publicly demonstrate acceptance, respect and support for decisions legitimately taken in transaction of L'Arche USA's affairs,
- faithfully read and understand the organization's financial statements,

- understand L’Arche USA budgets for travel reimbursement of national board members for in-person meetings and required gatherings. Board members may also choose to fund their own travel and offer those expenses as an in-kind donation to L’Arche USA.

Each individual board member commits to

- serving as active advocates and ambassadors for the organization and fully engaging in identifying and securing the financial resources and partnerships necessary for L’Arche USA to advance its mission;
- leveraging connections, networks, and resources to develop collective action towards fully achieving L’Arche USA’s mission;
- helping identify personal connections that can benefit our fundraising and reputational standing, and can influence public policy;
- giving a meaningful annual personal financial donation (currently, \$1,000 is the minimum recommended amount);
- preparing for, attending, and conscientiously participating in board meetings, which include 2 three day in-person meetings (travel usually required), as well as six to eight 1 – 1.5 hour teleconferences throughout the year;
- being willing to participate fully in one or more committees or work groups;
- making every effort to participate in the life of L’Arche by creating relationships within a local community and by attending regional and national events when possible;
- agreeing to mentor new board members as assigned.

Further, board members are required to

- follow L’Arche USA’s Constitution, policies and board resolutions;
- sign an annual conflict of interest disclosure and update it during the year if necessary, as well as disclose potential conflicts before meetings and actual conflicts during meetings;
- maintain confidentiality about all internal matters of L’Arche USA.

Document approved by the Board of Directors December 3, 2016

I understand and commit to the role and responsibilities of the Board of Directors for L’Arche USA. Additionally, I commit to the following defined personal financial and engagement plan for the coming year:

I will support the work of the board and engage with L’Arche in the following concrete ways (commitment to committee work, individuals I plan to invite to join us as major donors, engagement I plan with my local community and region, other than fundraisers – dinner at a home, community or regional gathering, etc.):

My financial contribution for the coming year will be (annual gifting, intent to pay for travel, etc.):

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Current Term: 1st 2nd 3rd

**L'Arche USA Board of Directors
Nomination Form**

Date of Nomination:

Person being nominated:

Reasons for nomination:

Connections to / Previous experience with L'Arche:

Occupation / Employment *(include links to bio, resume or other relevant and useful information):*

Personal Information (for diversity matrix):

	Age:	
	Gender:	
	Ethnicity:	
Geographic location of residence:		
	Spirituality:	
	Other:	

Explanation of essential board member criteria and experience in key areas:

Professional Experience (Legal, communications, development, public relations, advocacy, etc.)

Leadership Experience:

Fundraising, development, advocacy and non-profit experience:

Demonstrated integrity and competence *(include references if helpful):*

Communication and interpersonal skills:

Commitment to L'Arche mission and values:

Access to financial resources (personal or network):

Additional information to support the nomination:

Contact Information:

Mailing Address:	
Main Telephone Number:	
Secondary Telephone (Optional):	
Email:	