

**Board Co-commitment Letter for CEO/Executive Director Applicants:  
CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE APPLICATION**

Dear Board Chair,

The success of your CEO/executive director in the NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program (Achieving Excellence) will be aided by strong support from the Board. This program requires an intensive commitment to solve one of the most critical issues facing your organization in the coming years. It will bring changes to the organization and perhaps even major transformations. The CEO will be the organizational representative in the program, but the entire organization will be involved. Therefore, the Board's commitment to supporting the participant in this program is critical. Note that we are not asking for a "nomination letter" for your CEO to participate in the program—we are seeking your commitment to the work that the organization will undertake as part of this program and your support of the CEO as he/she does so.

***Considerations for Boards of Directors with a President/CEO/ED  
participating in Achieving Excellence***

- Make sure that the performance challenge that the participant(s) will work on has your full support, that you know this is who you want working on that challenge and that you will authorize the participant(s) to make transformational change in your organization
- Be sure that the rest of the organization knows that the AE participant has your full support in pursuing this challenge
- Encourage open communication and specific feedback about what you can do – or stop doing - to be more helpful in supporting performance challenge goals
- Check in with your participant(s) on their progress
- Encourage and support their ongoing learning and growth
- Allow time and space for their performance challenges and coaching calls
- Welcome this opportunity to strengthen your governance team and to model honest and useful communication even when the going gets tough. To realize adaptive challenges participants may need to raise difficult issues with you – how can you work to create a "safe space" for this conversation – perhaps even being explicit about it.

**Board Co-commitment Letter for Executive Director Applicants:  
COVER SHEET**

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Recommending Board member(s) (Your name) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

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**ANONYMITY & HONESTY**

Please note that we are seeking candid responses to the questions below and an even-handed assessment of your CEO's abilities from your perspective. This information will never be shared with the applicant unless YOU choose to share it.

The NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program is comprised of a diverse group from across the nonprofit sector, including different lines of business, strengths and weaknesses, organizational sizes, backgrounds, etc. Your honest responses will help us select a diverse group of various talents that will help each other achieve even greater success across the field.

We recognize that you may want to avoid sharing any 'opportunities for improvement' in case they would negatively influence our decisions, but everyone has areas for improvement and knowing these will help us better match the applicant with a coach and appropriate peer group to actually achieve improvement in those areas.

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**INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1.) Please include in your letter at least the following information:
  - Three most significant professional assets, especially how he/she demonstrates leadership in the organization;
  - Three of his/her professional limitations;
  - In as much detail as possible, please tell us specifically how you plan to provide support to the candidate during their time in the program working to accomplish the organizational performance challenge
- 2.) If at all possible, please convert your letter to PDF
- 3.) If at all possible, please combine this cover sheet WITH your letter so they are 1 PDF document
- 4.) **When you submit, please use this naming protocol:**  
**NomineesLastName\_NomineesFirstName\_Nomination\_YourName** (for example, Smith\_John\_Co-commitment\_Sally Jones)
- 5.) **Submit by email to [aeprograms@nw.org](mailto:aeprograms@nw.org)** (you can also use this contact if you have any questions)
- 6.) Note that you should receive a response immediately or very soon after your email. If you do NOT get a confirmation email within 24 hours, feel free to contact [aeprograms@nw.org](mailto:aeprograms@nw.org) to get confirmation that it was received.
- 7.) If you would like further information about the NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence Program, please go to [www.NeighborWorks.org/ae](http://www.NeighborWorks.org/ae)