Getting Appointed To Vermont State Boards and Commissions
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THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON WOMEN:

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  Insurance Coverage for Prescription Contraceptives
  Parental Notification
  Tobacco is Killing Vermont Women and Girls
  Sexual Assault of Women in Prison

You can read most of these publications on our website at www.women.state.vt.us

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You can also get this guide in large print and braille and on audiotape and diskette. Call the Governor's Commission on Women at 1-800-881-1561 to ask for a free copy. You can also read it on-line at www.women.state.vt.us.
ABOUT THE GOVERNOR’S COMMISSION ON WOMEN

The Governor’s Commission on Women is dedicated to finding long-term solutions to the problems that confront Vermont women. The Commission focuses on issues of economic well-being, health, education, and political participation that are important to women and their families. The Commission works with policymakers, special interest groups, and other state agencies to shape policy and to educate and inform the public. Founded in 1964, the Commission has operated continuously under Executive Order of the Governor of the State of Vermont.

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This booklet will help women understand the role of Vermont state boards and commissions and the appointments process. This guide also provides practical tips to help women evaluate their qualifications and develop strategies for successful appointments.
INTRODUCTION

Although women still have work to do to achieve full gender equality, during the 20th century women have made great strides towards economic, political, and social equality. Today, women are much more active and visible in civic life. Women vote, run for office and hold political positions, organize grassroots coalitions, and serve on local and state boards and commissions.

The Governor's Commission on Women supports the participation of women in the political process because it does make a difference. For example, women more often tend to support issues that affect women's lives such as education, housing, affordable health care, child and eldercare, and violence against women. Research also shows that, when women are involved, the issues they care about become the issues policymakers address. In addition, when women are involved, institutions traditionally dominated by men become more accessible to other women.

There are many ways to become active in civic life. No matter what route you choose, you can make a difference. Read on to discover whether serving on a state board or commission for you.

WHAT ARE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS?

Boards and commissions are advisory or regulatory groups that work with state agencies or professional groups. Regulatory boards and commissions set licensing standards and professional requirements for members. Advisory boards and commissions provide guidance and advice to the program or agency with which they are affiliated.

Kay Henry
Vermont Economic Progress Council
1998 - 2000

"It's important to give back to the community. If my business experience can help contribute to the growth of the State of Vermont through efforts of this volunteer board, then I am pleased to serve. It's exciting to work with a diverse group towards common goals. I enjoy the experience."

WHY SERVE ON A BOARD OR COMMISSION?

Serving on a board or commission is a great way to get involved in civic life and to make a difference. As a member of a board or commission, you can influence public policy, improve your expertise in a given area, gain recognition for your contributions, and advance your career. Many people use their seat on a board or commission as a stepping-stone to another appointed position, an elected office, or a federal advisory committee.

By serving on a board or commission, you can:

- Influence public policy
- Bring attention to the issues that you care about and help others understand why they are important
- Learn about the political process
- Serve as a role model for other women
- Gain access to policymakers

WHAT ROLE DOES THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON WOMEN PLAY IN THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS?

The Governor's Commission on Women serves as an information resource for people seeking appointments. Feel free to contact our office for information and advice as you prepare your application and pursue an appointment.

The Commission also maintains a registry of applicants seeking appointments to boards and commissions. The Governor's Office informs our office of vacancies that need to be filled. We search our registry for qualified candidates and forward them to the Governor's Office or to the appropriate appointing authority for consideration.

To obtain an appointment application, contact the Governor's Commission on Women at 800-881-1561 or 802-828-2851 or e-mail the commission at info@women.state.vt.us. You can also get a copy from the Commission's website at www.women.state.vt.us.
1. Learn all you can: Researching boards and commissions

It's important to learn as much as you can about boards and commissions before you decide whether this is the path for you. Here are some research tips:

- Contact the Secretary of State’s Office at 802-828-2363 or www.sec.state.vt.us to request a copy of Civil Government, State of Vermont. This publication includes a list of many Vermont state boards and commissions and statistical information about them.

- Review the list of boards and commissions and select the ones that interest you.

- Contact the Governor’s Office at 802-828-3333 to learn about vacancies.

- Contact a staff member, the chair, or a member of the selected board or commission. Keep in mind that most boards and commissions do not have staff. Ask to review the minutes from meetings and other written materials such as newsletters, strategic plans, newspaper articles, and annual reports to get a sense of the group’s mission, goals, and vision.

- Request a copy of guidelines or job descriptions for board or commission members, although some may not have written guidelines.

- Talk to people who serve or have served on your selected board and commission. You can ask to meet in person or request a telephone meeting.

- Arrange to attend a scheduled meeting of the full board or commission. Prepare a list of questions. Here are a few questions to get you started.

  - Does the board or commission have guidelines for members?
  - How many members can serve on the board or commission?
  - What qualifications are required of members? For example, some boards and commissions must have a certain number of attorneys or union members.
  - How long do members serve?
  - When do the terms of other members expire?
  - How much time is required from members?
  - Are members paid?

(Note: Members of boards and commission do not earn a salary for their work. Some earn per diems which is money paid to members for attending meetings. Per diems are offered to approximately 62 percent of commissions.)
2. **Make a match: Selecting the board or commission that is best for you**

Once you have identified a board or commission that interests you, the next step is to figure out if you and the board or commission are a good match. To do this, you need to evaluate your qualifications and assess the criteria boards have set for members.

Getting appointed is often a competitive process. Since you'll need to "sell" yourself and convince others that you are the most qualified candidate, it's important to have a clear sense of your own qualifications. The following self-assessment exercise will help you identify your qualifications and strengths.

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"I really enjoy knowing what's going on in my community and helping out. My experience on boards and commissions has taught me that a small group of committed people can make a difference."

---

*Bonnie Johnson-Aten*

*Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs*

*1994 - present*
Getting to know you: A self-assessment exercise

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Highlight the experiences which pertain directly to your selected board or commission.

B. List all of the skills that were required of you or that you learned through your professional, volunteer and educational experiences

C. List honors, awards, skills, and interests.

D. Check off the qualities that describe you. Feel free to add to this list.

- Decisive
- Resourceful
- Tolerant
- Calm
- Knowledgeable
- Organized
- Self-motivated
- Cooperative
- Creative
- Flexible
- Confident
- Innovative
- Analytical
- Logical
- Goal-directed
- Self-directed
- Likeable
- Team player
- Leader
- Fair
- Reliable

Refer to this worksheet as you prepare your application and write your resume.
3. **Build your qualifications:**

**Getting the experience you need**

If you find that you don’t have the right qualifications or would like to build upon your qualifications, here are some tips for gaining more experience.

- **Serve on a local board or commission.** If a state-level appointment seems overwhelming, a local appointment may be a good place to start. To learn more about local appointments, contact your town clerk’s office, school board, and local or regional library. You can also find a list of all local positions, elected and appointed, in your town report.

- **Serve on the board of directors of a non-profit organization.** Non-profit boards, particularly those affiliated with small organizations, often are eager for committed, hardworking members.

- **Establish a track record in local affairs.** Volunteer and get involved in your community.

- **Work on political campaigns.** Supporting a candidate provides great experiences and, if your candidate wins, you’ll have a friend in a position of influence who can support your appointment.

- **Serve as an advisor to the agency in which you are interested.** This will enable you to demonstrate your abilities and expertise and to make high-level contacts within the agency.

**Political reality check:**

Once you have finished a thorough self-assessment and you have a clear idea of the type of person the board or commission requires, you should assess the political realities of the appointment. No matter how qualified you may be, there may be another candidate with the same qualifications but with more political clout. Don’t let this discourage you from applying.
4. **Get connected: Building support for your appointment**

Once you have convinced yourself that you're the right person to serve on a board or commission, the next step is to convince others.

- **Introduce yourself to members of your selected board or commission or to associates of those members.** Attend a meeting or event where board or commission members will be present. Set up “getting to know you” meetings with individual members of the board or committee.

- **Meet with the person or group who makes appointments to the board or commission you're interested in joining.** If the Governor makes the appointment, you may first want to meet with the appropriate member of the Governor’s staff. If you can’t meet directly with the person who makes the appointments, try to get to know people who can influence the decisionmaker.

- **Use your connections with political or professional organizations, unions, friends, relatives, and community-based groups.** Tell everyone you know that you're interested in being appointed to a board or commission. Because Vermont is a small state, personal connections and recommendations are an important part of the appointment process. Chances are someone you know will know someone who can help you get appointed.

- **Request letters of support from people who may have influence with the appointing authority or from experts affiliated with your selected board or commission.** Provide a copy of your resume to the person writing your recommendation. Be sure to indicate when you need the recommendation, where it should be sent, and to whom it should be addressed.

- **Build connections.** If you don’t have connections to groups relevant to the activities of the board or commission that you are pursuing, now is the time to build those relationships. For example, if you are interested in joining a board that is concerned with housing issues, you should contact housing organizations, introduce yourself, and learn about their work.
5. Prepare your application

Now that you have identified the board or commission that's right for you, it's time to prepare your application. Your application should include a resume, cover letter, and an Appointments Application Form. You can also include recommendations or provide the names and contact information for references.

The resume

- A job-hunting resume vs. a resume for an appointment

The resume you use to apply for a position on a board or commission may differ from the resume you use to pursue a job. For example, it is appropriate to highlight your political affiliations, knowledge of your community, and your experience working on a political campaign on the resume you submit for an appointment. It may not be appropriate to stress this information on a resume you use to obtain a job. Also, unlike a resume for a job, the appointment resume does not need to include a full picture of your work history but rather just the experiences that are most relevant.

- Write a winning resume

Your resume should tell a story about you, highlight your qualifications, and help convince the appointing authority that you are right for the job. Before preparing your resume, you should know your strengths, skills, and abilities and the goals of the board or commission to which you wish to be appointed. Your resume should be tailored to highlight abilities that are relevant to the work of the board or commission.

A strong resume is neat, well-organized, typed, attention-getting, easy-to-read, and printed on high-quality paper.
Resumes generally include the following information:

Contact information
At the top of your resume, include your name, address, email address, fax number, and day and evening telephone numbers.

Objective statement
This brief statement should tell the reader what you want to achieve. Be specific. Name the appointment you want. Avoid philosophical statements.

Qualifications
Describe your professional, educational, and volunteer experiences which are related to your objectives. Use action verbs such as directed, organized, and coordinated. Always state your strongest and most relevant experiences first.

Experiences
List information about your paid work experiences, educational background, volunteer activities, and special projects with which you have been involved. The most important activities should be mentioned first. For each position, list your title, duties, name of the agency, and relevant dates. Tailor descriptions toward your objectives.

References
This section may include names and contact information for references if their names or titles are well-known or influential. If they are not, simply state, “References furnished upon request.” Always include the telephone numbers of any references listed. Be sure to get permission from your references before you provide their name and contact information.

Elizabeth Courtney
Vermont Environmental Board
Member 1985-1990
Chair 1990-1994

"Protecting the health of our natural and built environment is important for all Vermonters. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve on the Environmental Board and to make a contribution to the effort to maintain the quality of the Vermont we know and love."
Charlotte Lotte

622 Women’s Way
Montpelier VT 05602
Phone 354-7688 Fax 229-3274
Email charlee@mindnet.com

Objective • To serve as a member of the Montpelier Parks and Recreation Commission

Qualifications • Five years experience planning and supervising athletic programs for children and adults

Experiences • Director of the Barre Junior High School after-school sports program; the program has an enrollment of 146 students

Education • B.A. Physical Education from California State College in 1972
Additional course work at University of Vermont:
Motor Skills and Coordination in Preschool Children
Traditional American Folk Dance
Getting Back in Shape - Physical Exercise for the Middle-aged
Rehabilitation for Stroke Victims

Memberships • Montpelier Junior Women’s Club
American Association of University Women
American Red Cross

References • References furnished upon request
SAMPLE RESUME

ANN HOPE
1776 Victory Drive
Burlington VT 05401
Phone 658-4242 Fax 658-4343
Email Rachel@mindnet.com

GOAL Appointment to the Vermont Economic Development Authority

QUALIFICATIONS Qualified to assume responsibilities in the areas of administration, research, public relations, legal analysis, technical writing, group organizing, counseling, program planning and evaluation, and liaison as field representative

BACKGROUND

Highlights

• Administered evaluation unit of a training program in 7 states

• Researched and wrote a successful $2 million dollar funding proposal for agency on aging

• Created administrative manual and administrative efficiency system

• Acted as liaison for area committees and corporations

• Analyzed, evaluated, and edited legal, financial, and real estate documents for management and company attorneys

• Developed community improvement plan by designing questionnaire, conducting fact-finding meetings, analyzing data, and writing plan

• Edited college textbook manuscripts

• Worked effectively with people from various backgrounds, including politicians, business managers, professional personnel, and racial and cultural minority groups

EDUCATION B.A. English, Temple University, 1965
M.A. English, Pennsylvania State University, 1968

REFERENCES Available upon request
The cover letter

- Write an effective cover letter
Always include a cover letter with your resume. Cover letters should be typed, brief, and printed on high-quality paper. Cover letters are generally organized into three parts.

The first paragraph should state your reasons for submitting the resume.

Example: For the past ten years, I have been involved in community health care. I am delighted that a position on the Board of Health is currently available. Please consider this letter an application for this position.

The second paragraph should state your qualifications but should not repeat those listed in your resume.

Example: As a minority woman who has worked for more than 20 years to improve health in my community, I am well-qualified to advise our local government on these matters.

The third paragraph should indicate your interest in pursuing the appointment.

Example: I am very interested in assisting the Board of Health toward its goal of good health for all Vermonters. I look forward to talking with you to further discuss my qualifications and interest in serving on the Board of Health.

The application form

- Complete the Appointment Application Form
To request an Appointment Application Form, contact the Governor’s Commission on Women at 800-881-1561 or 802-828-2851 or email the Commission at info@women.state.vt.us. Contact the Commission if you have any questions about completing the form.

Martha H. O’Connor
Vermont State Colleges Trustee 1999-2005
Vermont Lottery Commission 1996-present
Vermont Literacy Board 1991-1994
Vermont Board of Education 1983-1989

Talk to friends and others who have served. It's really not that difficult and it's a great way to make a difference. If you're thinking about running for office, serving on a state board or commission is a great way to get started.
6. Submit your application

- Make three copies of your application.
- Send a copy of your application to the appropriate appointing authority.
- Send a copy to:
  Governor's Commission on Women Appointments
  126 State Street
  Montpelier VT 05633-6801
- Keep a copy for yourself.

* Waiting to hear

It usually takes between one and six months for a decision to be made regarding an appointment. If you are selected to serve, the appointing authority will notify you. If you are not selected, your application will be kept on file at the Governor's Commission on Women for three years.

To ask about the status of an appointment, contact the Governor's Office at 802-828-3333.

- After the appointment is made
  
  *If you get appointed:* Congratulations on your successful efforts!
  
  - Think back over your campaign and evaluate it.
  - Analyze what you did. What worked? What would you do differently?
  - Thank all those who helped you.
  - Help others who are interested in seeking an appointment. Now that you have been through the process, you have valuable information to share.

  *If you don't get appointed:* Be aware that the most qualified person is not always appointed, as political issues and other factors such as geographical requirements can influence the decision.
  
  - Try to discover the reason you were not selected.
  - Decide if you want to be considered for the next vacancy.
  - If so, continue to keep current with the work of the board or commission to build support for yourself.
  - Become more involved in civic activities, and next time you may be the successful applicant!

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Nancy Waples

Hinesburg Zoning Board of Adjustment
1993-1999

Environmental Board
1999-present

"Serving on a statewide board provides an opportunity to serve the entire state rather than just your immediate community."
**CONTACTS**

**Governor’s Commission on Women**
126 State Street, Montpelier VT 05633-6801
tel: 802-828-2851 or 800-881-1561
fax: 802-828-2930
email: info@women.state.vt.us
website: www.women.state.vt.us

Contact the Commission to request an Appointments Application Form, for additional copies of this booklet, and for information about getting appointed. You can read this booklet and download an Appointments Application Form from our website.

**Secretary of State’s Office**
Redstone Building
26 Terrace Street
Montpelier VT 05609-1101
tel: 800-439-8683 or 802-828-2363
website: www.sec.state.vt.us

Contact the Secretary of State’s Office to request *Civil Government, State of Vermont.*

**Governor’s Office**
109 State Street
Montpelier VT 05609
tel: 802-828-3333
fax: 802-828-3339
www.state.vt.us/governor/index.htm

Contact the Governor’s Office to inquire about vacancies and the status of appointments.

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Heather Dale Porter
Vermont Emergency Calling System Board
1993-present

"Being a part of the Enhanced 9-1-1 Board has taken me all over Vermont. I have had the pleasure of meeting people from all walks of life, from the streets to the State House. Participation on a state board is an enriching experience, worth the time and energy spent. The rewards are many."
VERMONT STATE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Access Board
Act 264a Advisory Board
Acupuncturist Advisors
Administrative Coordination Committee
Adult Education Board
Aging and Disabilities Advisory Board
Agricultural Development Commission
Agricultural Extension Service Special Committee
Agricultural Finance Program Advisory Panel
Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council
Allied Mental Health Practitioners
Alternative to Incarceration Board
Appeals Panel
Apple Marketing Board
Apprenticeship Council
Architects Board
Architectural Barrier Compliance Board
Armory Commissioners Board
Asbestos Policy Committee
Athletic Trainers
Bar Examiners
Barbers and Cosmetologists
Boxing Control Board
Breeder’s Stake Board
Capital Area Study Commission
Capital Complex Commission
Capital Debt Affordability Advisory Committee
Center for Geographic Information, Inc.
Certificate of Need Appeals Board
Certified Clinical Social Worker Advisors
Child Care Services Advisory Board
Children and Family Council Prevention Programs
Children with Emotional Disturbances Advisory Board
Chiropractic Board
Citizens Advisory Committee on Lake Champlain Future
Claims Commission
Commission on Interstate Cooperation
Community Development Board
Comprehensive Health Education Advisory
Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission
Connecticut River Bridge Advisory Commission
Connecticut River Valley Flood Control Commission
Cosmetology Board
Council for Families of Children with Significant Disabilities
Council on Family Violence
Council of Regional Commissions
Council on the Arts
Criminal Justice Training Council
Current Use Advisory Board
Dairy Industry Council
Dairy Promotion Council
Day Care Facilities Advisory Board
Dealers Advisory Registration Board
Dental Examiners
Developmental & Mental Health Board
Developmental Disabilities Council
Developmental Services State Program Standing Committee
Dietitians Advisory Committee
Displaced Homemaker Policy Council
District Environmental Commission
Drug Rehabilitation Commission
Economic Development Authority
Economic Progress Council
Education Board
Educational and Health Buildings Financing Agency
Educational Bias Committees
Electricians Licensing Board
Emergency Board
Emergency Management Board
Emergency Response Commission
Emotionally Disturbed Children Advisory Board
Employment and Training Advisory Council
Employment Security Advisory Board
Employment Security Board
Endangered Species Committee
Energy Planning Advisory Commission
Enhanced 911 Board
Environmental Board
Environmental Commission
ETV Board
ETV Public Advisory Board
Family Court Rules Advisory Commission
Families of Children with Significant Disabilities Council
Film Commission
Fire Service Training Council
Fish and Wildlife Board
Forest Resources Advisory Council
Forests, Parks and Recreation Board
Formulary Committee
French Cultural Commission
Funeral Service Board
Gender Inclusive Language Study Commission
Governor’s Advisory Committee on Native American Affairs
Governor’s Advisory Council on Worker’s Comp
Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
Governor’s Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities
Governor’s Commission on Vermont’s Future
Governor’s Commission on Volunteers
Governor’s Commission on Women
Governor’s Committee on Children and Youth
Governor’s Council of Economic Advisors
Governor’s Council on Affirmative Action
Governor’s Snowmobile Advisory Council
Health Board
Health Care Authority Board
Health Insurance Plan Board
Health Policy Council
Hearing Aid Dispensers Board
Higher Education Facilities Commission
Higher Education Planning Commission
Historic Preservation Advisory Council
Historical Records Advisory Board
Home Mortgage Guarantee
Hospital Data Council
Housing and Conservation Board
Housing Authority
Housing Finance Agency
Housing Roundtable
Human Resources Investment Council
Human Rights Commission
Human Services Board
Hunger Task Force
Independence Board
Independent Panel of Mental Health Care Providers
Indian Affairs Commission
Industrial Development Authority
Infrastructure Bank Board
Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules