

**Board Member Terms of Office** are four years and members may not serve more than three full terms (12 years or a maximum of 14 years if having served a partial term). All terms expire December 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **What is the role of a board member and how are they appointed?**

### **Questions and Answers for Prospective Board Members**

#### **1. What is the Seneca County Board of Developmental Disabilities?**

The Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 5126, prescribes that each county shall have a county board of mental retardation and developmental disabilities consisting of seven (7) members, five (5) of whom shall be appointed by the County Commissioners and two (2) appointed by the Probate Judge. Two (2) of the County Commissioner's appointments and one (1) of the Probate Judge's appointments shall be family member of an individual eligible for service.

#### **2. What service does the Board provide?**

The role of the Board in service delivery continues to change. In 1967, when the Boards were first established, the role was to provide special education and adult services for individuals with mental retardation. The State was also involved in direct service and directly managing some local services. Today, the State depends on the County Boards to coordinate and manage local services to a broader definition of disabilities. The County Boards, in turn, are contracting with local agencies and businesses to actually deliver more of the services.

#### **3. What are the requirements and qualifications for a board member?**

Board members must be residents of Seneca County. Certain board seats are designated for family members of individuals eligible for service. Other board seats are to be filled by individuals who represent the citizens of the county and who have an interest in developmental disabilities. It is helpful to have board members who have knowledge in other areas that relate to the board's services. This might include such fields as law, education, medicine, finance, facilities operation, transportation, real estate, insurance, social work or management.

#### **4. Are some individuals disqualified to be board members?**

Yes. The following are disqualified:

- a. Some elected public officials and immediate family members.
- b. Members of the immediate family of another board member.
- c. Board employees and the immediate family of board employees.
- d. Former board employees within one (1) calendar year of the termination of employment.
- e. Where there is a conflict of interest with the board member or their immediate family doing business with the board.

#### **5. Is there any compensation for serving on the Board?**

No, however, board members may be reimbursed for necessary expenses such as attending conferences and training programs.

**6. What are the time commitments?**

There are usually 12 board meetings per year, traditionally held on the second Tuesday of each month. Meetings begin at 5:00 p.m. Board members are required to complete four (4) hours of training per year. The first hour of each meeting is set aside for training purposes. In addition, members may attend statewide conferences that are held on a regular basis. Only the regular meetings and board training are required. Board members who do not complete training or miss four (4) meetings will be removed from the Board. Board members serve four (4) year terms and may serve three (3) terms.

**7. What is the role of a board member and the Board as a whole?**

Responsibilities and authority of a board member are limited to actions taken in public meetings conducted in accordance with Ohio's public meeting laws. The Board hires a Superintendent who operates as the chief executive officer of the Board. The specific responsibilities and authority of the Board and Superintendent are defined in Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 5126.

**8. This all sounds like a big job. I do not know if I have the experience, qualifications or knowledge to be a board member.**

It is an important job but you will have a lot of help from other board members and staff. It is common for a new board member to feel overwhelmed at first. It takes one (1) or two (2) years just to become familiar with all the programs and terminology. The Superintendent and staff are responsible for running the programs. The role of the individual board members is to ask questions and make decisions based upon their own common sense and judgment. In the first month after you are appointed, the Superintendent will schedule an orientation program for you. If your schedule permits, it will include a tour of the programs and services.

**9. How are the programs funded?**

Approximately 80% of the funds come from a countywide property tax. The rest comes from a combination of state and federal dollars.