

So You Are Interested in Becoming an OASIS Board Member

What Should I know About OASIS and its Board of Directors

OASIS is a volunteer-run, member-driven organization. Its member agencies serve over 65,000 of Ontario's most vulnerable citizens and employ 25,000 full and part-time staff. Its 185 member agencies currently provide more than 85% of all developmental services funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

The Mission/Vision Value Statement for OASIS (approved May 2009) are:

VISION

Strong, viable, accountable agencies who have the resources and professional competencies to provide quality supports and services to people with special needs.

MISSION

OASIS provides leadership through sharing ideas, information and knowledge, and interacts with government and other organizations on issues affecting its members.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. OASIS promotes an environment that encourages participation of the membership. It recognizes all members as equals, respects the autonomy and philosophical position of members, and, understands that agreement may not be possible on all issues.
2. OASIS promotes the collective interests of people with special needs and their families by helping to improve and extend responsive and cost effective supports and activities to its members.
3. OASIS is a volunteer driven organization.
4. OASIS conducts its business in an atmosphere of transparency.
5. OASIS interacts with government in a non-partisan manner.
6. OASIS partners with other groups when appropriate in pursuit of its vision.
7. OASIS provides information to members and government regarding best practices, emerging issues and current trends through research and other activities.

VALUES

Diversity
Integrity
Transparency
Leadership
Excellence

The Work of OASIS

OASIS works hard on behalf of its member agencies to advocate for the needs of the developmental services sector with Members of Parliament, including the Ministers of Community and Social Services, Labour, Children and Youth, and Finance, the Critics for these portfolios, and their bureaucratic staff. Bi-monthly newsletters are sent to MPPs, senior bureaucrats, community partners, and member agencies to inform them of the contributions, innovations and concerns of our member agencies. A Queen's Park Information Day is hosted by OASIS in the fall and meetings are scheduled throughout the day with key Government Officials as well as a reception for MPPs. The OASIS Board of Directors meets at least twice a year with the Assistant Deputy Ministers for Operations and Policy with the Ministry of Community and Social Services to ensure that the interests and concerns of member agencies are shared and solutions sought. This year the primary focus of the work has been to solve the unfunded Pay Equity issue, Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, labour relations, sustainability of agencies, and direct and individualized funding of individual services and supports.

OASIS believes in education and training for our member agencies. OASIS in partnership with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Oakville Foundation, and Queen's University provides a week long advanced leadership training program for Executive Directors or senior members of member agencies. In addition OASIS partnered with the Ministry of Community and Social Services to participate in a leadership training program with Rotman School of Business. Three sessions were offered this past year with over 30 participants from OASIS member agencies. The OASIS Board of Directors also offers three scholarships each year which are awarded at the Annual Conference:

- **President's Scholarship**
 - Issued once per year to an Executive Director
 - Up to \$5,000 value
 - Can be utilized for Executive Director's attendance/participation in a conference or educational program of their selection
- **George Braithwaite Scholarship**
 - Issued once per year to an Executive Director
 - Up to \$5,000 value
 - Utilized for Executive Director's attendance/participation in the National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities week-long Leadership Institute at the University of Delaware
- **Gerry Sutton Scholarship**
 - Issued once per year to an Executive Director or Senior Manager
 - Amount to be equal to the Queen's/OASIS leadership session registration fee
 - Utilized for Executive Director/Senior Manager attendance/participation in the OASIS – Queens Leadership Program

In addition this year on behalf of the Provincial Network and the Ministry of Community and Social Services, OASIS is providing five Governance training sessions to Agency Boards of Directors. These sessions are offered through webinars, and the sessions are taped so that Board Members may view them when time permits over the next year.

Key Messages

Our key messages to government and our community partners focus on four key themes this year and are:

Agencies Matter

It takes a village! OASIS member agencies provide vital support to families in need, ensuring the provision of timely and necessary resources to help them succeed now, and in the future. With years of successful provision of skill-enhancing supports provided through agencies, many individuals are living fully engaged community-based lives. While OASIS supports and appreciates the additional funding provided for direct supports to individuals the transformation agenda has yet to identify the mechanism to address more senior support that focusses on advocacy adaptation and case management while ensuring adherences to quality assurance measures and legislative requirements. With a community of experts in every part of Ontario, OASIS member agencies help to ensure that the support needed for vulnerable individuals and their families is available before, during and after a crisis, and meets the full spectrum of diverse and complex needs.

Sustainable Services Matter

The developmental services sector is a leader in equity-more than 50% of our CEOs are female. Almost 50% of agencies that have made pay equity adjustments without government funding (2009/10) have

reduced staffing levels and services in order to meet this legal obligation. Some organizations have deferred pay equity commitments when funding was frozen, in order to maintain front line levels of service. Today, agencies across Ontario are seeing a decline in the number of volunteers agreeing to sit on their boards, due to personal and agency liability, hastening the negative impact further. The province must mitigate this pressure. Make changes to the Proxy Pay Equity legislation, or amend Proxy Regulation 396/93, to allow for in-sector comparators, placing a moratorium on Proxy Pay Equity liabilities until changes are put in place, and commit to funding pay equity adjustments to completion once the changes are in place. This will prevent the loss of 3,600 full-time positions and mitigate service impacts for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Employees Matter

Strong sustainable agencies provide the backbone for transformation of the developmental services sector, and are the providers of the supports and services that minimize risk and ensure full community engagement of Ontario's most vulnerable citizens. Currently, most on OASIS' member agency employees are enrolled in defined contribution pension plans. While some have a contribution rate that is on average 3% employee/ 3% employer or greater, there are still many who cannot afford a plan at all. Many of those in plans are enrolled in group RRSP's as they offer the best low cost administration expense and permit employees to make volunteer contributions to their overall maximum as well as being highly flexible with options for education and home ownership built in. Developmental services agencies cannot afford to contribute an additional mandatory payment of 1.9% of salary to the ORPP, nor can their employees afford this surprise cost. The Government of Ontario must commit to helping developmental services agencies meet the additional obligation.

Collaboration Matters

The Government of Ontario must consider how the developmental services sector can be included within an integrated strategy to address poverty and the need for accessible and affordable housing, in order to help address the waiting list of more than 20,000 vulnerable adults and aging families waiting for services. Part of this integrated strategy must include the formation of an inter-ministerial working group – the first recommendation in a report from the Select Committee on Developmental Services. This would enable Ontario's ministries to work with agencies to develop integrated long-term solutions. The government recognized the complexity of the sector and noted that the coordinating and integrating services is one of its priorities.

Composition of the Board of Directors

The OASIS Board of Directors consists of seven (7) Volunteer Board Members and five (5) Executive Directors from Member agencies. The Volunteer Board Members may each receive support from a Supporting Executive Director.

Role of the Board of Directors

Volunteer Board Members

The OASIS Board of Directors consists of seven (7) Volunteer Board Members from Member agencies. The Volunteer does not need to be a member of the Board of Directors of the member agency, however they must have experience participating on a not for profit board of directors and be aware of the issues facing the developmental services sector. The Volunteer should have the interest, passion, willingness,

and expertise to further the interests of the work of OASIS. The Volunteer nomination must be supported by the Board of Directors of the member agency whom they will represent on the OASIS Board of Directors.

The Volunteer Board Members may each receive support from a Supporting Executive Director. The purpose of the Supporting Executive Director is to be a resource to the Volunteer Board Member, providing their advice, experience and knowledge of the sector, and Ministry priorities and directives. The Supporting Executive Director is a non-voting position. The Volunteer Board member will normally receive support from the Executive Director from the home agency where they are a board member, and/or member in good standing. Where circumstances exist that the Executive Director of the Volunteer Board member's agency be unable to act as the Supporting Executive Director, the Volunteer Board member may recruit another Executive Director to fulfill this role. Recruitment of the Supporting Executive Director will be from the same region as the Volunteer Board member, whenever possible. The final decision shall be at the discretion of the Volunteer Board member.

Executive Director

In accordance with the bylaws of OASIS, the Board of Directors will include five (5) Executive Directors representing Member agencies. Member agencies have many titles for the Senior representative responsible for overseeing the Developmental Services services and supports of their organization within the Province of Ontario including, but not limited to:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Executive Director
- Administrator
- Vice President

The following will identify the key responsibilities that will be acceptable for nomination as an Executive Director to the OASIS Board of Directors:

- Provide overall management leadership to the service, human resources, financial and information components of the member's organization
- Provides oversight and direction to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, regulations, building codes and zoning bylaws, and established quality standards
- Ensures policies and procedures are in place to respond to the requirements specified in legislation and regulations
- Ensures the Strategic Plan of the organization is driven by priorities and guides the direction of the services of the member's organization
- Responsible to work with Senior Management teams to plan, develop, coordinate, and evaluate the implementation of services and supports of the member's organization consistent with agreed upon priorities

Functions of the Board of Directors

The functions of the Board of Directors reflect their governance responsibilities, accountability and trusteeship for the membership and the developmentally disabled individuals they support.

The functions of the Board of Directors are as follows:

- **Planning Function**
To articulate the mission, vision, values, principles, strategic priorities and overall direction of the organization
- **Development Function**
To develop policies to establish a framework for the actions and decisions of the organization
- **Monitoring Function**
To monitor the effectiveness, quality, efficiency and financial stability of the organization as a means of ensuring accountability to the OASIS members
- **Advocacy Function**
To promote the needs of its member agencies and the developmentally disabled
- **Governance Function**
To promote effective governance through board recruitment, orientation, development and evaluation

Recruitment and Selection of Board of Directors

The Board of Directors will implement a recruitment process to ensure the ongoing viability of the governing body.

- 1.0 Annually, the board will identify the skills, abilities and/or areas of expertise desired in new board members to maintain or advance the effective functions of the board.
- 2.0 The Board of Directors will recruit annually members to the Board of Directors to fill vacant positions. Potential candidates will demonstrate the following characteristics:
 - Commitment to the sector and to the well-being of developmental service agencies and the individuals they support.
 - Ability and eagerness to deal with values, vision and the long term goals. Board members should be able to look beyond single events and even beyond systems in order to facilitate effective planning.
 - Ability to participate assertively in deliberations: It is not enough to have the potential to be a good board member; the potential must be manifested through participation.
- 3.0 The Board of Directors will form a nominating committee who will identify potential board members that would complement the collective skill, knowledge and perspectives of the governing body.
- 4.0 The Nominating Committee will develop a strategy to approach potential candidates to determine their interest and support for the mission and values of the organization.
- 5.0 Potential candidates for the Board of Directors will be scheduled for an interview with the Nominating Committee.
- 6.0 Candidates for the Board will be recommended by the Nominating Committee to the Board of Directors for their approval at the scheduled Board meeting at least one month prior to the Annual General Meeting. The Board of Directors as a whole will decide on the person's suitability for nomination.
- 7.0 The Board of Directors will present a slate of Directors to the membership at the Annual General Meeting.