

Staffing the Board

Typically, much of the seismic safety advisory board's initial work will be performed by board and committee members, drawing on their experience and expertise and providing their own support. As the board's responsibilities expand, however, members will probably no longer be able to provide the time and effort that may be required. The efficiency of a board made up of high-level, successful people requires support. Adequate staff support may have to be added.

The board will require both administrative and technical support. Beyond the obvious need to make meeting arrangements, do correspondence, reports, keep financial records, and so on, the board's planning effort should determine which avenues of expertise are needed and which staff positions are required. This section will provide suggestions about staffing a seismic safety advisory board and using personnel effectively. Appendix F contains model duty statements for the positions described.

Staff and Director

Staff work can be done by employees from supportive state or federal agencies, by college-level interns, or volunteers. If funds are available, contractors may be a good way to provide staff and retain flexibility.

A board will probably need to hire a director to plan, direct, and organize administrative matters related to the board's functions and responsibilities. These responsibilities would include hiring and supervising other staff and managing the board's office. The director would prepare grant proposals, and administer the budget.

The director can also assist the board in searching for qualified personnel to serve on committees and

for ex officio members. The director would be a primary contact with the public, media, governmental officials, and other entities. The director also will need to maintain contact with decision makers in the public and private sectors. The director will oversee the preparation and publication of reports and dissemination of information pertaining to the board's work.

Probably most important, the director must be able to coordinate the day-to-day activities with those of other agencies with the intent of providing the leadership and coordination of public and private efforts necessary to attain higher levels of seismic risk management. These responsibilities will include meeting with and advising directors and officials of other state agencies as well as maintaining working relationships with other public or private organizations to further an effective seismic safety program.

Technical and Professional Staff

The mix of personnel needed on staff will depend on a board's strategic and risk management plans, the issues and tasks given highest priority, and the groups and entities that will be involved. The board does not need a large bureaucracy to function effectively. Some professional staff will, however, probably be essential. The need for staff positions must be documented and justified in terms of the work to be performed to maintain financial support.

The board's staff will gather information, support the work of committees, help draft reports, and assist in disseminating ideas. This may mean taking technical data from scientists and engineers and translating

it into easily understood and usable policy information. Therefore, staff members not only need to be conversant with specialized disciplines, but must also be generalists who can bridge between the technical community and policy makers. They will need strong writing and speaking skills and credibility among their peers. Preferably, staff members will have developed networks within their professions.

Because of the multi-disciplinary nature of a board's work, it will require the assistance of skilled professionals in a number of areas. If the board's fiscal and organizational means are limited, it may be necessary to rely on the technical and professional resources of other public-sector agencies or those donated by the private sector. This may require full-time staffers to perform more than one of these functions or outside professionals to perform such work.

Particularly at the outset, staff members may need to be generalists who can deal with the myriad issues associated with the board's start-up. However, the board may require assistance of the following professional and technical personnel:

- Legal counsel
- Engineering geologist
- Structural engineer
- Architect
- Legislative specialist
- Emergency response specialist

- Recovery specialist
- Public information officer
- Research writer and editor
- Land-use planner
- Budget/financial analyst
- Grant writer

Support Staff

The board will need support staff to provide secretarial support for the board and the staff. Tasks include arranging meetings, responding to routine inquiries, handling correspondence, completing travel claims, making travel arrangements, and dealing with other fiscal and administrative matters.

The support staff would also be responsible for screening calls and visitors, keeping appointment schedules, and referring calls to appropriate staff members or advisory panel members. The support staff may include, if the staff is large enough, an office manager responsible for supervising the support staff.

Another support staff duty is taking and transcribing the minutes of meetings and hearings as well as assisting with arrangements for locations, organizing and assembling meeting materials including agendas, minutes, reports, and background information for mailing. The support staff would typically make quorum checks and report advisory board members' attendance at meetings.