



Achieving diversity on Massachusetts public boards and commissions. A coalition led by YW Boston.

eliminating racism  
empowering women



# How to join a public board or commission in Massachusetts



**ANSWER THE CALL**

**JOIN A PUBLIC BOARD**

### **Why join a public board or commission?**

Public boards and commissions are governing bodies appointed by the Governor or local executives. Appointed individuals serve terms of several years and work on all aspects of governance including education, labor, public safety, and more. Public boards provide an opportunity to serve your community and develop skills that can further a career in leadership or public office.

The Governor and local executives appoint citizens to more than **700 boards and commissions** dealing with virtually every state department and public policy area. With public boards or commissions existing in nearly every facet of Massachusetts's government, there will certainly exist a board or commission to match your skills and interests.

**Sitting on a board or commission allows individual citizens to:**

- Seize opportunities to influence policy in local communities
- Build skills in policy, advocacy, leadership, team work, and more
- Greatly expand professional networks
- Take a first step towards running for office

### **Why it matters**

When women and people of color have a seat at the table, new perspectives result in better policy decisions. Diversity isn't just a goal of fairness, but a necessary step toward improving the administration of our communities. Although our pipelines are full of talented candidates, research published by The Eos Foundation found that women and people of color are underrepresented on Massachusetts's public boards.

In Massachusetts, only **39%** of board members and **34%** of board chairs are **women**. Only **6%** of board chairs are **women of color**. Help us diversify our leadership. Learn more at **[www.parityonboard.org](http://www.parityonboard.org)**

**ON PARITY BOARD** eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**yw boston**  
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You wish to answer the call for more diverse leadership in Massachusetts. What's next? Since board members are appointed by the Governor or a local executive, applying to be on a board or commission is much like applying for a job. As with any job, you should be thorough in your research and be genuinely interested in the position you are applying for.

## Step 1: Familiarize yourself with current openings and their requirements

Visit <https://appointments.state.ma.us> to learn more about the responsibilities of each role and browse opportunities that are currently available. On this website, you can search by policy area, board or commission name, and view current openings.

Carefully review the general Board and Commissions Responsibilities page, as well as individual qualifications for the particular board or commission you are interested in. While you do not need to be an expert in the policy area you are considering, you should be familiar with the issues that impact your community.

## Step 2: Choose a board or commission and prepare your application

Prepare a cover letter and resume for the position, including a notation on your resume specifying the board or commission you are applying for. Include skills and work experience relevant to the board or commission's policy area. You may also submit your cover letter and resume without specifying a board or commission and get matched by the Governor's office.

## Step 3: Submit your application

Submit your application at <https://appointments.state.ma.us/Application.aspx> or contact the Boards and Commissions Office at (617) 725-4010 for assistance. Have your references ready in case they are requested.

## Step 4: Follow up and build relationships

If you don't hear back in a while, follow up regarding your application. If you are not accepted, consider applying next time there is an opening or applying to a different position.

Referrals are an effective way of getting yourself noticed. Consider reaching out to current board members to start building relationships. Current board members can also help you get a better sense of the position's responsibilities, time commitment, challenges, and opportunities.



Help us diversify leadership in Massachusetts by applying to join a board or commission and supporting *An Act to Ensure Gender Parity and Racial and Ethnic Diversity on Public Boards and Commissions* (H.4153). Learn more at [www.parityonboard.org](http://www.parityonboard.org)



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## What is the Parity on Board coalition?

The coalition is bringing together leaders, supporters, volunteers, and partners interested in diversifying leadership and decision-making in Massachusetts. The coalition is advocating for **An Act to Ensure Gender Parity and Racial and Ethnic Diversity on Public Boards and Commissions (H.4153)**. This bill would promote diversity in leadership and governance that broadly reflects the demographics of our Commonwealth.

## How to get involved

Sign up to become a coalition partner. As a coalition partner, you will receive updates on the status of the bill, have the opportunity to be a part of coalition meetings, and be the first to know of future interventions in support of this bill. As a coalition partner, you are committing to publicly advocating for this bill.

## Wish to learn more?

Send us a message to [contact@parityonboard.org](mailto:contact@parityonboard.org) or visit [www.parityonboard.org](http://www.parityonboard.org) for more information.