

## About Springboard

### What is Springboard?

Springboard is a pro bono program designed to harness the collective wisdom and ingenuity in our communities to power the common good. Springboard brings together 10-15 people from across the nonprofit, corporate, and public sectors to lend their expertise to a nonprofit by brainstorming on a question posed by the nonprofit during a facilitated session. A mini think tank!

### When is Springboard?

Springboard sessions take place 4-8 times per year, usually on Fridays from 8-10am, in locations throughout Maine.

### How does a Springboard “flow”?

At the beginning of each Springboard, the facilitator frames the session and welcomes the panelists. The participating nonprofit’s Executive Director—or sometimes another key staff or board member—delivers a 10-minute presentation on a specific question or challenge faced by the agency. This is followed by a facilitated session where panelists brainstorm in response to the question.

### How do I prepare for Springboard?

The preparation process takes 6-12 weeks and consists of:

- an initial meeting with MANP staff to frame your question;
- working internally to outline, develop, and rehearse a 10-minute slide presentation;
- a one-page background on the organization to be shared with panelists ahead of time;
- 1-2 check-in meetings with MANP staff at which we’ll provide guidance and feedback as you shape your presentation.

### What kinds of questions work best for a Springboard?

The question should be...

- Timely and relevant, and one which would benefit from outside expertise.
- Broad enough for substantial discussion but focused enough to present in 10 minutes.
- Strategic or programmatic – relating to strategic focus, marketing, program design, partnership development, talent sustainability, innovation, etc.

### What should I expect to happen during Springboard?

- The Executive Director and at least one board member – preferably the Board Chair - must attend the session.
- Prepare for questions - panelists will have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions after your presentation.



“Our board members left the meeting feeling humbled by the opportunity to receive that depth of thoughtful reflection and support. We were buzzing with ideas, but revitalized and inspired. We have a long list of things to chew on and flesh out as we synthesize all of the great feedback we received, but this experience provided us with the direction and focus we need to move into Stage 2 of what we *know* is going to *change* the way we think about school volunteerism!”

**School Square**



“The preparation process was itself a kind of organizational boot camp, encouraging our team to sharpen and resharpen exactly where we were looking for input. And our panel was so well curated, that we got great input during the session and those relationships continue to pay dividends to the organization. What a win!”

**Cultivating Community**

- Be ready to engage in active listening; you're there not to convince, but to learn, and after your presentation and questions you will be asked to step fully into listening mode rather than participating in the brainstorm or being part of a dialogue.
- It may be difficult to absorb all of the ideas, and having a colleague or board member attend with you to be another listener is essential.
- Welcome 'ah ha' moments as well some challenges from independent panelists.

#### ***What happens after a Springboard?***

- The ideas coming out of a Springboard session belong to the participating nonprofit; MANP will offer tools and methods for synthesizing and prioritizing ideas generated during the Springboard and is available for a follow-up meeting at a time that makes most sense for the agency as they move forward with learning from the session.
- Within a week of the session, presenting nonprofits are expected to write a "thank you" to all panelists. Please do not solicit funding from panelists attending the session (unless invited to do so).
- Panelists are told that there is no requirement or expectation that they continue to engage with the nonprofit they saw present, but that we hope there may end up being some continued conversation or connection that results from Springboard.

#### ***Where can I learn more about Springboard?***

Learn more and request to be considered for a Springboard session at [www.NonprofitMaine.org/Springboard](http://www.NonprofitMaine.org/Springboard). Note that when selecting nonprofits, MANP members receive preference in scheduling.