



# National Board Packet



Spina Bifida Association, 1600 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 800, Arlington, VA 22209  
(202) 944-3285 [www.spinabifidaassociation.org](http://www.spinabifidaassociation.org)

Hello,

You have received this Board application because you have been recommended by a member of the Spina Bifida community, and we would like to explore for a potential new Board member position.

We hope you will take this opportunity to learn more about the Spina Bifida Association (SBA), its mission, and the responsibilities of the Board of Directors and its members. We believe that as you further explore SBA, the more you will want to partner with our organizations in its efforts to improve the lives of people affected by Spina Bifida.

This application is just the beginning of the process in becoming a new Board member. Interviews, Board approval, and, ultimately, election by the Members of SBA will be steps in the process. Ensuring that SBA is a good fit for you and you for the organization is crucial in quality Board development and the overall success of our organization.

Should you determine that you have an interest in exploring a Board position with SBA, please complete this application and notify Sara Struwe at [sstruwe@sbaa.org](mailto:sstruwe@sbaa.org).

Thank you for your interest in a potential Board position with SBA!



## The Mission of the Spina Bifida Association

***The mission of the Spina Bifida Association is to promote the prevention of Spina Bifida and enhance the lives of all affected.***

Thank you for your interest in serving on the Board of Directors for the Spina Bifida Association (SBA). Serving as a Board member is among an organization's highest privileges. SBA is looking for individuals whose personal attributes, networks, professional skills, and expertise will enhance the Board's ability to meet SBA's mission.

## About the Spina Bifida Association

SBA is the nation's only voluntary health organization that is dedicated to helping people with Spina Bifida live long, healthier lives through:

- Research
- Advocacy
- Education
- Support



## Our Cause Defines Us

No other organization in the United States works exclusively for people with Spina Bifida (SB). We know that people with SB can lead long, productive lives, but in order to do so, they must be healthy. Working together with physicians, nurses, health care providers, families, Chapters, and adults with Spina Bifida, we can bring about a lasting change in SB health care. But we must not forget that other factors have significant impact on quality of life. We work with the larger disability community to address issues like housing, education, employment, and transportation.

## Supporting the Spina Bifida Community

With a focus on improving the health and lives of people with Spina Bifida, SBA works to increase and influence research on SB, improve and standardize the treatment of people with Spina Bifida resulting in better health outcomes; advocate to ensure the needs of people with SB are met; provide fact-based education on all aspects of living

with Spina Bifida, and offer a wide variety of ways to find support with others impacted by SB.

### How We Do It

There is no other organization that focuses solely on the needs of people with Spina Bifida. For the estimated 166,000 people with Spina Bifida in the United States, SBA is the only organization working nationally to change the paradigm for the people it serves. We do this through:

- Research: SBA, through the *Spina Bifida Collaborative Care Network*, leads research to enhance the quality of life for people with SB.
- Clinical Care: SBA, through the *Spina Bifida Collaborative Care Network*, spearheads *efforts* to improve clinical care for all people with SB.
- Advocacy: SBA advocates for positive change to the issues impacting the lives of people with SB.
- Education & Support: Empower members of the SB community with information and support to improve their quality of life.
- Network Building: SBA serves as a hub to connect Chapters, clinics, and the broader community to improve the quality of life of people affected by SB.

## How Often Does the Board Meet?

The Board meets five times a year, one time each quarter, except the final quarter when the Board meets twice. Two meetings are in person. The final meeting of the year is the Annual Meeting held via conference call on the first or second Saturday in December. It is followed by a Board meeting to discuss the upcoming year's budget.

## Board Member Responsibilities

A prospective member of the SBA Board of Directors is nominated to hold this position based on demonstrated interest, support, and commitment to the Association and its mission. In accepting the nomination, an individual agrees to fulfill the requirements and meet the responsibilities associated with board membership.

**Ensure effective planning.** Boards must actively participate in an overall strategic planning process and assist in implementing and monitoring the plan's goals.

**Ensure adequate financial resources.** One of the Board's foremost responsibilities is to secure adequate on-going financial resources for the organization to fulfill its mission.

**Protect assets and provide proper financial oversight.** The Board must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.

**Enhance the organization's public standing.** The Board should clearly articulate the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garner support from the community.

**Build a competent board.** All Boards have a responsibility to articulate prerequisites for candidates, orient new members, and periodically and comprehensively evaluate their own performance.

**Hire, support and evaluate the Chief Executive Officer.** The Board should ensure that the President & Chief Executive Officer has the moral and professional support he or she needs to further the goals of the organization.

**Ensure legal and ethical integrity.** The Board is ultimately responsible for adherence to legal standards and ethical norms.

## Board Legal Duties

**Duty of Care** requires leaders to use reasonable care and good judgment in making their decisions on behalf of the interest of the organization.

**Duty of Loyalty** requires leaders to be faithful to the organization, avoiding conflicts of interest.

**Duty of Obedience** requires leaders to comply with governing documents (i.e. Bylaws, Article of Incorporation, policies, etc.)

## **WHY SERVE?**

**HAVE AN IMMEDIATE AND LASTING IMPACT**

**GAIN EXPERTISE ON COMPLEX ISSUES**

**BUILD VALUABLE NETWORKS AND RELATIONSHIPS**

**GROW AS A LEADER THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN – THROUGH EXPERIENCE**

**COMMUNITY RECOGNITION**

**CHANNEL CREATIVE ENERGY**

**THE NEED IS GREAT, IF NOT YOU, WHO?**

## **Successful Candidate Qualities**

We seek candidates who are recognized in their community and demonstrate the following qualities:

- An interest in or willingness to learn about Spina Bifida;
- A record of accomplishments in his or her life and career or profession;
- A demonstrated ability for innovation and strategic thinking;
- An ability and willingness to leverage personal and professional relationships on behalf of the Association;
- A record of understanding of the importance of philanthropy and advocacy in ensuring organizational vitality, responsiveness, and progress in meeting private and public needs;
- The time and energy required to be a conscientious and attentive Board member;
- A capacity to function within a collegial group as a team member; a good follower as well as a good leader;
- An inquiring mind and an ability to speak articulately and succinctly, with a willingness to do so on behalf of the Spina Bifida Association;
- Willingness to forego partisan political activity in Board service that could prove detrimental to the Association's and the Board's reputation as fundamentally nonpartisan entities;
- An ability to recognize the sometimes ambiguous distinction between management and governance;

- An ability to consistently sustain a total institutional perspective in his or her and the Board's work, without allegiance or commitment to anything except the Association's mission;
- Experience with complex organizations and an understanding of how to enact exemplary governance in such organizations; and
- Intelligence, wisdom, breadth of vision, and a record of independent judgment.

SBA Board members, constituents, and staff may submit candidates for membership on the SBA Board of Directors. In addition, self-nominations are welcome. All candidates must submit a completed Board application (below). All candidates who submit an application will be contacted by the Board Governance Committee to arrange an interview to discuss the role of the Board of Directors, the legal responsibilities of being a Director, and the current objectives and goals of the SBA. All prospective candidates will be notified as to the final status of their nomination prior to the Annual Meeting.

**Applications, short bio, and headshot are Due by September 15, 2019 to:**  
**Sara Struwe, President & CEO**  
**1600 Wilson Blvd, Suite 800**  
**Arlington, VA 22209**  
**or**  
**[sstruwe@sbaa.org](mailto:sstruwe@sbaa.org) (preferred)**



**SPINA BIFIDA  
ASSOCIATION**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPLICATION**

**This form, short bio, and headshot must be received in the National Office by  
September 15, 2019**

**Contact Information**

Nominee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Information**

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

**Background and Professional Experience**

1. How would you describe yourself?

Check all that apply.

- Business Leader
- Community Leader
- Medical Professional
- Person with Spina Bifida



- Caregiver of a person with Spina Bifida
- Other. Please describe:

2. In which of the following industries are you currently employed or have you been employed previously?

Check all that apply.

- Banking/finance
- Education
- Government
- Health care
- Hotel/lodging
- Insurance
- Non-profit management
- Real estate
- Restaurant/food service
- Retail/sales
- Other. Please describe:

3. How would you describe the community leadership positions or affiliations you currently hold or have held previously?

Check all that apply.

- Business organization member
- Chamber of Commerce member
- Government/elected official
- Non-profit group member
- Professional society member
- Religious organization member
- School leader
- Other. Please describe:

4. Are you currently or have you previously served as the member of an advisory board or board of directors for an organization(s)?

- Yes
- No

A1. If YES, indicate the organization for which you served.

A2. Indicate the position(s) that you hold/ held.

- 
- President
  - Vice President
  - Secretary

Check all that apply.

- Treasurer
- Committee Chair
- Member
- Other. Please describe:

B1. If YES, indicate the second organization for which you served.

Name of Organization #2:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B2. Indicate the position(s) that you hold/ held.

Check all that apply.

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Committee Chair
- Member
- Other. Please describe:

C1. If YES, indicate the third organization for which you served.

Name of Organization #3:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C2. Indicate the position(s) that you hold/ held.

Check all that apply.

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Committee Chair
- Member
- Other. Please describe:

5. As a member of another Board, what level of donations did you give or were you able to secure for the organization(s)?

	Give	Get	Total
<b>2016</b>	\$	\$	\$
<b>2017</b>	\$	\$	\$
<b>2018</b>	\$	\$	\$

6. In which of the following areas do you have fundraising experience?

Check all that apply.

- Event planning
- Gifts, donations
- Grant writing
- Information management
- Raffles or auctions
- Telemarketing
- Walk-a-thons/races
- Other. Please describe:

7. In which of the following areas do you have financial experience?

Check all that apply.

- Accounting
- Auditing
- Bookkeeping
- Budget development
- Financial statement development
- Other. Please describe:

8. In which of the following areas do you have communications experience?

Check all that apply.

- Brochure design/development
- Media relations
- Press releases
- Radio interview
- Television interviews
- Website design/development
- Other. Please describe:

9. In addition to the areas indicated above, please indicate other areas in which you have knowledge or expertise relevant to serving as a member of SBA's Board of Directors.

Check all that apply.

- Financial management
- Human Resource management
- Legal
- Marketing
- Program development
- Sales
- Strategic planning
- Other. Please describe:

## Personal Characteristics

10. Are you female or male?
- Female
  - Male
11. What is your current age?
- 18-25 years
  - 26-35 years
  - 36-45 years
  - 46-55 years
  - 56-65 years
  - 66 years or more
12. What is your racial background?  
Check all that apply.
- American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Other
  - Don't know
13. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?
- High school graduate or GED
  - Some college or technical school
  - College graduate
  - Post graduate study (MA/MS/MBA, PhD, MD, JD, etc.)
14. What is your current employment status?  
Check all that apply.
- Self-employed
  - Employed full time
  - Employed part time
  - A homemaker
  - Retired
  - Other. Please describe:

*As a member of the Board of Directors of the SBA, you will be expected to uphold the Mission and Purposes of the SBA and at all times represent the SBA in a manner that promotes all those affected with Spina Bifida. Your signature below witnesses your desire to become a member of the Board of Directors of the SBA as well as your commitment to uphold the Mission and Purposes of the SBA at all times and in all places.*

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Nominee  
Signature

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Date



## 2019 BOARD MEMBER AGREEMENT

*The mission of the Spina Bifida Association is to promote the prevention of Spina Bifida and enhance the lives of all affected.*

Each Board member of the Spina Bifida Association (SBA) affirms the expectations outlined here and strives to perform accordingly. We treat all Board members the same when it comes to these expectations.

Specific performance expectations are:

1. Believe in and be an active advocate and ambassador for the values, mission, and vision of SBA.
2. Work with fellow Board members to fulfill the obligations of Board membership as articulated in the job description of the Board of Directors; in these performance expectations, and in keeping with all other policies.
3. Act in a way that contributes to the effective operation of the Board – and work with fellow Board members and staff to ensure that the Board functions well. This includes – but is not necessarily limited to the following:
  - a. Focus on the good of the organization, independent of personal agenda, self-interest, or the influence of others.
  - b. Maintain confidentiality of Committees, Board, and SBA work unless authorized otherwise.
  - c. Support Board decisions once these are made.
  - d. Participate in appraisal of own performance and the performance of the Board and its Committees.
  - e. Support SBA's policies and procedures for conducting business.
4. Regularly attend Board and Committee meetings. Prepare for these meetings by reviewing materials and bringing the materials to meetings. Use conversation as a core business practice, asking strategic questions and participating in dialogue.
5. Keep informed about SBA, its issues, and its connection to the community through active participation within the organization and conscientious connections outside the organization.
6. Help support the charitable contributions operation of SBA. Specifically:

- a. Reach into diverse communities and help identify and cultivate relationships to support the organization as donors, volunteers, and advocates.
  - b. Give an annual financial contribution to the best of personal ability. Consider this organization one of your top two – three charitable commitments. If the organization launches a capital program, give to that, too.
  - c. Challenge yourself to participate in fund development in ways you may not feel comfortable at first.
7. Agree to abide by the SBA Board of Director’s Operating Principles.
  8. As appropriate, use personal and professional contacts and expertise to benefit SBA, without compromising ethics or trespassing on relationships.
  9. Be available to serve as a Committee or task force chair or member. Be a prepared and active participant.
  10. Inform the Board of Directors of the organization of any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, and abide by the decision of the Board related to the situation.
  11. Respect the role of the Chief Executive Officer and staff and support their efforts; and, adhere to the limitations of the Board, its Committees and individual Board members.
  12. Agree to step down from Board position if unable to fulfill these expectations.

In signing this document, I am making a statement of commitment to the SBA and every other Board member that I will carry out the above agreement to the best of my ability.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Print Potential Board Member Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Potential Board Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**Submit application, short bio, and headshot by September 15, 2019 to:**  
**Sara Struwe, President & CEO**  
**1600 Wilson Blvd, Suite 800**  
**Arlington, VA 22209**  
 or  
[sstruwe@sbaa.org](mailto:sstruwe@sbaa.org) (preferred)