

FORGE Operational Guidelines

HISTORY

The Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce (hereafter referred to as Chamber) launched the young professionals group called Fast Forward in 1999 to provide a forum for young professionals in Topeka and to develop the next generation of leadership. In 2016, Fast Forward became Forge to address challenges facing Topeka in attracting and retaining young talents.

ARTICLE 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1. Name
The name of this association shall be Forge (hereafter referred to as Forge).
- 1.2. Policy
Forge shall operate in conformity with the procedures, rules, and guidelines set forth in this Operational Guidelines.
- 1.3. GoTopeka
Forge is an association of GoTopeka and will work within the procedures and guidelines of GoTopeka. The creation and funding of Forge by GoTopeka is an ongoing component of attracting and retaining young talents.
- 1.4. Governance
Forge shall be governed by the Forge Board of Directors.
- 1.5. Mission
The mission of Forge is to make Topeka a place where all young talent want to live, work, play, connect, and lead.
- 1.6. Staffing
Forge will be supported by staff members employed by the Greater Topeka Partnership to include a Forge Executive Director and additional staff as necessary. Staff adjustments may be made at the discretion of the Greater Topeka Partnership.

Organizational Structure
The Forge Board of Directors is the decision-making body for Forge, responsible for providing direction and strategic focus for the organization. The Forge Board of Directors is ultimately accountable to the GoTopeka Board of Directors.
- 1.7. Calendar
Forge fiscal year shall operate on a calendar year beginning January 1 and ending December 31.
- 1.9. Finance and Budgets
All Forge operating budgets and payables will be allocated and approved by the GoTopeka Board of Directors and managed by the Forge Executive Director.

ARTICLE II FORGE MEMBER

Amended 3/21/2019

2.1 Application

An individual at or over the age of 18 may join online at the Forge Website. Members under the age of 21 are welcome to join Forge and get involved in a herd, but may be limited in events they may attend or in the degree to which they may participate due to specific event venues and applicable law.

2.2 Code of Commitment

All Forge members shall be members in good standing. To be a member, a member shall provide all relevant information requested on the membership application and adhere to the procedures, rules, and guidelines set forth by these Operational Guidelines.

2.3 Attendance

A member has the flexibility to be involved as much or as little as they choose; however, active membership through service on a herd and attendance at events is encouraged.

Number of Members

The number of members that choose to be involved with Forge is unlimited.

2.4 Herd members

Every member may be a part of a herd. Members are welcome to sign up for more than one herd, but should first consider the time commitment and determine if it is acceptable with their schedule.

ARTICLE III

Forge Herds

3.1 Establishment

The Board of Directors established herds necessary to accomplish the mission and purpose of Forge. The purpose of the Herds shall be as follows:

3.1.1 Play

Purpose: To provide fun and unique experiences leading to deeper, more meaningful connections with the community and other young professionals in Topeka.

3.1.2 Leadership

Purpose: To develop Topeka's young talent into tomorrow's leaders by providing them with leadership development resources that will help them shape, change and influence their community.

3.1.3 Diversity & Inclusion

Purpose: Working to build awareness, education, respect and acceptance of underrepresented and marginalized groups in Topeka; while also striving to ensure Forge membership is a representation of the broader community.

3.1.4 Business Development

Purpose: Encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit in young professionals and to support the existing business community.

3.1.5 Health

Purpose: Working out with a group increases commitment to a fitness routine, pushes for harder work, diversifies workouts and boosts your mood. Forge wants to take this passion to play and dedicate time to improving the health and well-being of Forge members.

3.1.6 Inspire

Purpose: Working to provide monthly volunteer opportunities for Forge members, as well as connecting them with organizations and causes they care about and helping Forge members find ways to give back to the community and build a culture of service among young professionals.

3.1.7 Forge Your Future

Purpose: Forge Your Future is the civic engagement arm of Forge. The goal is to improve Topeka young professionals' engagement and commitment to the civic process.

3.2 Adding and Disbanding Herds

Adding or disbanding herds requires a vote from the Board of Directors with a majority needed to add or disband a herd.

ARTICLE IV

FORGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

4.1 Members of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall be comprised of a Chair, Chair-Elect, Immediate Past Chair, and other board members. The Forge Executive Director shall also sit on the Board of Directors, along with Past Chairs (see 4.4.5), but as non-voting members.

4.2 Number of Board members

The Board of Directors shall have up to 30 individuals on it. The Nominee Committee (4.4.1) will make the recommendation on the number of board members in each year to satisfy the responsibility of having a diverse group of young talents represented on the board throughout the Greater Topeka area.

4.3 Board Member Terms

Forge board member terms shall operate on a calendar year beginning January 1 and ending December 31. A slate of new board members shall be approved by the board in the fall. Once approved, the new slate of board members shall begin their term on January 1 of the following year. New board members are eligible to serve two 3-year terms. No board member may serve more than 2 terms, unless elected to the Executive Board. A benefactor board member term will be the same as all the other board members.

4.4 Board of Director Guidelines

The Board of Directors

Board members are encouraged to personally attend as many Forge events as possible. The Board of Directors is the face of the organization and it is important for them to have a presence at Forge events.

Board members are required to attend ALL board meetings – Three absences are allowed in the year for special circumstances as long as the executive director is notified in advance. Exceeding three absences will result in a conversation with the Chair and Executive Director on the leader's engagement and could result in that board member's removal from the board upon a majority vote of the other board members.

4.4.1 Board of Directors Election Process

A nomination committee should be developed and confirmed by the Board of Directors at the beginning of the calendar year. Nomination Committee shall include the following:

- Immediate Past Chair – Leader of Nomination Committee
- Current Chair
- Current Chair-Elect
- Executive Director (non-voting)
- Two active Forge members, (non-board members) which should be at large– selected by the current Chair and Chair-elect

After approval of the nomination committee, it is the responsibility of the nomination committee to make recommendations to the board to satisfy the responsibility of having a diverse group of young talents represented on the board throughout the Greater Topeka area.

Nomination committee should meet as needed or at least bi-annually to discuss potential board members.

If nominees accept, they must complete the Forge Board of Directors member application.

Nomination committee reviews nominee information. Selected nominees may be interviewed by a nomination committee member. The committee must come to a majority decision. An email vote is appropriate for the vote.

The committee then provides the Board of Directors with its recommendation. Background materials on the candidate should be given to the board in advance of the board vote.

Board members have the opportunity and responsibility to contact the candidates and/or ask questions of the nomination committee in advance of the board vote, if desired.

The Board of Directors will then vote to accept the recommendations of the nomination committee. The board must have a majority decision. Members of the board not able to attend that meeting may be able to submit their vote prior to the meeting to the current Chair of Forge. Under certain circumstances, an email vote is appropriate.

4.4.2 Chair-Elect Election process

Nomination process will be between September and October's board meetings. A chair-elect candidate must be on the Board of Directors. You can nominate yourself or someone else. To nominate a candidate, email in your nominations to the executive director. After the October board meeting there will be an email vote conducted. Every voting member of the board gets one vote. The nominee with the majority of the votes will become chair-elect. If there is a tie and there are more than 2 nominees, a revote will occur with just the 2 nominees who tied. If only 2 nominees and they tie or every nominee ties, the current Chair's vote will break the tie.

4.4.3 Chair

The Chair shall serve for a period of one year.

The Chair's responsibilities include: (1) Leading all board meetings (2) participating and planning all long-range Forge planning efforts (3) keeping GoTopeka apprised of Forge activities (4) serving on the GoTopeka board and on the Greater Topeka Partnership's Chair's Council (5) working with the Forge Executive Director (6) soliciting new sponsors (7) soliciting new members of Forge (8) developing community partnerships (9) keeping all parties up to date (10) attending as many Forge events as possible and (11) serving as a liaison to the Business Development, Play, Diversity & Inclusion, and Leadership herds.

The Chair must adhere to working requirements (outlined for chair). If the Chair is not fulfilling their duties, the Chair can be removed from office by a vote of a majority of the Board of Directors. Past chairs are not eligible to run for the Chair position after serving the organization in this capacity.

4.4.4 Chair-Elect

The Chair-Elect shall serve for a period of one year and then will become the Chair of Forge, unless they elect not to serve as Chair or are not fulfilling their duties as Chair-Elect.

The Chair-Elect's responsibilities shall include: (1) assisting the Chair with the Chair's responsibilities (2) participating and planning all long-range Forge planning efforts (3) serving as the Chair in the Chair's absence (4) soliciting new members of Forge (5) working with the Chair to build community partnerships (6) attending as many Forge events as possible (7) actively promoting Forge (8) serving on the Topeka Chamber board and (8) serving as a liaison to the Inspire, Health, and Forge Your Future Herds.

The Chair-elect must adhere to working requirements (outlined for chair-elect). If the Chair-elect is not fulfilling their duties, the Chair-elect can be removed from office by a vote of a majority of the Forge Board of Directors. Past chairs are not eligible to run for the Chair-Elect position after serving the organization in this capacity.

4.4.5 Immediate Past Chair

The Immediate Past Chair's responsibilities shall include: (1) participating and planning all long-range Forge planning efforts; (2) providing historical perspective on Forge issues; (3) soliciting new member of Forge; and (4) actively promoting Forge.

The Immediate Past Chair must adhere to working requirements (outlined for immediate past chair). If the Immediate Past Chair is not fulfilling their duties, the Immediate Past Chair can be removed from office by a vote of a majority of the Board of Directors. Past chairs may serve an additional term on the Board of Directors following their term on the Executive Committee, if they are so entitled.

4.5 Meetings

The Board of Directors shall meet each month to discuss the progress of the herds in fulfilling the mission and purpose of Forge along with being the decision-making body for Forge, responsible for providing direction and strategic focus for the organization.

4.6 Executive Committee

Consisting of the Forge Chair, Chair-Elect, Immediate Past Chair and Executive Director. The Executive Committee is an advisory committee to the Chair and Executive Director. The executive committee should meet monthly.

4.6.1 Responsibilities

The members of the Board of Directors should (1) advise on the continuity of Forge strategic objectives and goals, (2) take on strategic objectives as defined through strategic planning process of the Board of Directors, (3) review and track goals for the year and (4) advise on the finances and budgets.

4.7 Amendments

These operational guidelines may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors provided a copy of the proposed amendment(s) are sent electronically to each board member at least 7 days prior to the scheduled vote on such amendment.

4.8 Quorum

A "Quorum" of the Forge Board of Directors shall be defined as fifty percent (50%) of the current voting members of the Forge Board of Directors.