

We will be a shoulder to lean on, a voice to advocate for, a space to feel safe in, an ally to trust, a guide to navigate, and a counsellor to heal for everyone affected by all forms of abuse.



Purpose: The board of directors is the legal authority for Birchway Niagara, an incorporated, non-profit, charitable organization which operates domestic violence services in South Niagara, including a 40-bed shelter in Niagara Falls and satellite offices in Port Colborne, Welland and Fort Erie. By providing effective governance and strategic leadership, and by acting as advocates for Birchway Niagara, board members ensure that the agency can effectively continue its efforts to provide safe shelter and support services to women and children fleeing abuse in our community, while also engaging allies to help end abuse.

Location: Board meetings typically take place at the agency's shelter at 8903 McLeod Rd. in Niagara Falls. Members will also be asked to participate in other events and activities throughout the agency's service area of South Niagara (Niagara Falls, Welland, Pelham, Wainfleet, Port Colborne, Fort Erie and surrounding areas).

Schedule:

Board Meetings: Board members are required to reliably and actively participate in regular board meetings, which generally occur at 6 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month (meetings may not take place during the summer). Participation may also be required at ad-hoc or emergency meetings. Members should expect to take on additional tasks to carry out the work of the board between meetings and to assist the agency in attaining its goals (e.g., attending meetings, advocating for the agency, making phone calls, sending emails, thanking donors or volunteers, asking for in-kind or monetary donations).

Committee Meetings: Board members are also encouraged to participate in at least one of the agency's fundraising, advocacy or governance committees. Committee schedules vary throughout the year, but board members should expect to attend approximately one committee meeting per month. Additional time will often be required between meetings to support the work of the committee.

Fundraising Events: As public ambassadors of Birchway Niagara, board members are required to attend fundraising events hosted by the agency (e.g., the Book Riot and Brunch, Bid & Bowl) as well as occasionally represent Birchway Niagara at fundraisers and events hosted by community partners on the agency's behalf.

In general, a board member can expect a time commitment of approximately 8–10 hours per month, with additional hours possible if more responsibility is assumed.

Number of new Board members required: 2

Key Responsibilities:

- Provide sound management and governance of the agency, ensuring that the agency is held accountable to its clients, employees, volunteers, members, funding agencies, donors and the general public
- Publicly endorse the mission, vision, and values of Birchway Niagara
- Engage in advocacy on behalf of the agency
- Review, and approve policy and other recommendations received from the board, its standing committees and senior staff (e.g., significant changes in programming and services, agency by-laws, governance policies and procedures)
- Make policy recommendations to the board
- Review and approve capital expenditures and the agency's annual budget
- Work with fellow board members to appoint an independent auditor to annually audit the agency
- Participate in strategic and financial planning for the agency, establishing long- and short-term goals and ensuring that the financial structure of the agency enables these goals to be met
- Ensure that the agency complies with all legal requirements for which the board may be held liable (e.g., employment standards, human rights, CRA requirements, occupational health and safety)
- Hire, monitor, advise, and support the agency's Executive Director
- Support the agency's fundraising initiatives through personal donations, by participating in fundraising events, activities and committee work, and by connecting with donors and potential donors on behalf of the agency
- Recommend additional members to the board as needed
- Be aware of and refrain from any conflict of interest

Reports to: President, Board of Directors

Term of Duty: Directors are elected to the board for a term of two years at the Annual General Meeting each year in June. A director may be elected for two subsequent terms of two years, for a total of up to six years.

Qualifications:

- Supportive of the mission and values of Birchway Niagara and willing to act as an ambassador for the organization in the community
- Experience with not-for-profit organizations considered an asset
- Knowledge of, skills and/or experience in one or more of the following areas: organizational management, financial management, policy development, strategic planning, accounting, government relations/advocacy, fundraising, marketing/public relations, human resources, legal experience, diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility.
- Able to reliably commit the time required to attend board and committee meetings, attend fundraising events, and complete additional tasks as delegated by the board and any committees to which the member belongs, including responding to correspondence in a timely manner
- Strong networking and communication skills
- Able to work well as a member of a team and independently, and to foster a respectful work environment
- Able to follow through with assigned tasks
- Able to perform duties in a manner that respects the confidentiality of clients, staff, and volunteers

Training: All Birchway Niagara volunteers, including board members, are expected to attend a volunteer orientation session (these sessions are offered 2–3 times per year). New board members receive an orientation manual and are assigned a mentor at the September board meeting to support their initiation into the board of directors. Board members must also be willing to participate in professional development opportunities and inform themselves about the services of Birchway Niagara and the issues of dating and domestic abuse.

Age Requirement: 18+

Additional information:

Criminal Record Check

All board members are required to obtain a satisfactory basic criminal record check. Birchway Niagara staff will provide the paperwork necessary to obtain this check. A letter confirming your intention to volunteer with Birchway Niagara will be provided. When included with your application, this letter should ensure that no fee is charged for this document. Applications processed online may incur additional charges, which we cannot reimburse.

Additional Documentation:

Volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Board members will also be asked to sign a conflict of interest form.

How to apply

Birchway Niagara strives to be a culturally competent organization, representative of Francophone, multi-cultural, Two Spirit and LGBTQ+, indigenous and other backgrounds that reflect the diverse makeup of Niagara. Participation of people with lived experience is integral to our work as Board Members.

Interested applicants should complete the [board application](#) found on the Birchway Niagara website (www.birchway.ca). All applicants under consideration will also take part in an in-person interview. References will be required. Please direct any questions to Jennifer Gauthier at jenniferg@birchway.ca or 905-356-3933 ext. 223.