



## Board of Directors Service Overview

### About VELA

When told that your child has a disability, your life is forever changed. Research shows parent involvement to be the greatest indicator of positive health and educational outcomes for children with disabilities, yet parents report feelings of confusion and powerlessness when navigating doctors, therapies and special education for their child. This is especially problematic for the majority of families served by VELA, who are underserved, live below the poverty level and experience language and cultural barriers. Without an informed and supported parent, the child will miss key developmental, academic and community-based resources resulting in limited opportunities and marginalization as an adult. In response to this immense gap in services, VELA was founded in 2010 with a mission to empower underserved Spanish and English-speaking parents of children with disabilities.

Through interactive and culturally responsive courses and wraparound services, families gain knowledge, empowerment, resilience and community to ensure that their children thrive. Regardless of income, language, and/or culture, our families share a powerful commonality; they want to create the best possible outcomes for their child. In the last 13 years VELA has grown from a 100% volunteer run agency to having 10 staff, a strategic and diverse board, and a community of committed volunteers. In 2023, VELA served over 2,500 individuals across 302 zip codes through both in person and virtual program offerings, at no cost to families.

VELA just completed an Equity Centered Strategic Planning process that will set our roadmap for the future. In keeping with our values of community-centered approaches to work, our strategic plan is being co-designed with community members, clients, board members, staff, and other stakeholders. Our strategic plan will help us plan for the future and navigate our growth trajectory. Board members will help advise the organization on this growth trajectory,

### Board Member Duties

VELA Board Members are charged with the following duties as part of their service.

- **Engagement:** Attend board meetings and engage in committees to fulfill our [duty of care](#) obligations for VELA. Board members may engage in committee work and provide input on organizational growth strategies.
- **Advocacy:** We support parents in their own advocacy journey for their children. And so we also hope that board members will be an advocate for VELA. Advocacy may include creating connections for the organization and raising awareness of VELA within a board member's network.
- **Fundraising:** As with many board service opportunities, VELA board members are fundraisers for the organization. Fundraising is not only about securing gifts, but also about relationship building and stewarding. Throughout the year, board members can introduce prospective partners to staff, thank and connect with donors and support and establish a connection on behalf of VELA. We strive to ensure that fundraising is not a barrier to service. While some fundraisers are able to secure major gifts and sponsors, many of our board members engage with fundraising by raising awareness for VELA, inviting people to events, and making a meaningful personal contribution.

## Service Information

Terms and Personal Growth	
Board Terms of Service:	Board members serve for three-year terms and are eligible to serve two terms. Officers serve in their roles for two years.
Personal Growth:	Service on VELA's board is an opportunity for personal growth and fulfillment. We hope that service is an opportunity to rally those closest to you around a philanthropic cause. Board members are also encouraged to seek out leadership opportunities through chairing committees and seeking officer positions. Board members can also select committee work that expands their professional experiences.
Meeting information	
Meeting Schedule:	Third Tuesday of the Month (January, March, May, July, September, November)
Meeting Time:	5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
Meeting Location:	Four virtual meetings (January, March, July, September) and two in-person meetings (May and November). Additional engagement opportunities (relationship building, full/part day retreats, special meetings, etc.) are added as needed.
Committee Service information	
Committees:	VELA maintains a standing finance committee that meets 2-4 times per year. Occasionally, other committees are formed to conduct business. Previous examples include governance and strategic planning committees.
Fundraising Information	
Major fundraisers that involve board members:	Be the Light (September) End of Year Campaign (Nov-Dec) Amplify Austin (March)
Fundraising expectation:	Board members are encouraged to make a contribution that is meaningful to them. There is no minimum contribution. All board members are involved in stewardship activities.
Insurance:	VELA maintains Directors and Officers Insurance and General Liability Insurance

VELA is committed to diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging and strongly encourages diverse applicants to apply for leadership roles. We actively pursue being a culturally responsive organization and believe that the diversity of our board, staff, and volunteers is an invaluable asset.