

Overview: Sobrato Governance Cohort

October 2026 - June 2027

In alignment with our goals to center Multilingual Learners in systems change and sustain it by building strong organizations in the field, Sobrato Philanthropies is offering a series of learning opportunities focused on developing the governance capacity for a cohort of partners in the Educational Equity portfolio.

Why: Several partners in our portfolio have told us they are focusing on board governance, making sure their boards evolve alongside their growing organizations. Strong boards help organizations stay steady through uncertain times, make sound strategic and financial decisions, and support their executive leaders to achieve their ambitious goals. To that end, we are investing in organizations ready to take their governance to the next level.

Our goals for this cohort learning experience are to support leaders and boards to:

- Build a shared understanding of governance best practices
- Reflect on their own organization's alignment to those best practices
- Take concrete steps toward their priority areas of growth, creating the systems, structures, and relationships they need for long-term sustainability
- Strengthen the partnership between Executive Directors and board chairs
- Build Executive Director confidence in managing up to their boards
- Set board-level goals aligned to the organization's goals

Who: This cohort is designed for the Executive Director, board chair, and all board members of each participating organization. Effective governance is a team effort, and we are excited for the whole leadership team to learn together. We expect five to six organizations (roughly 45 participants) to take part, including both membership and non-membership organizations.

What: Participants will receive a mix of cohort-wide virtual trainings and board-specific supports. The program is facilitated by Simmons Covington of [Simmons Covington Consulting](#). Topics for Trainings 2-4 are subject to change based on trends we see in the self-assessment data across organizations.

Trainings: 90-minute virtual, interactive trainings for Executive Directors and all board members		
Session Title	Description/Goals	Date/Time
Training 1: Overview of governance best practices and the governance support program	Review program goals, connect with the cohort, learn nonprofit governance best practices, and preview the governance self-assessment	November 4, 2026 12:00-1:30pm PST
Training 2: Oversight and Management	Explore best practices in oversight versus management	Mid-late January 2027 12:00-1:30pm PST

	and identify who holds decision-making rights in which areas.	
Training 3: Board Composition and Recruitment	Identify strategic recruitment practices and tools.	March 2027 12:00-1:30pm PST
Training 4: Financial Oversight and Fundraising	Explore what financial data and questions the board should review regularly and the board's role in fundraising.	May 2027 12:00-1:30pm PST

Support Tailored to Your Board			
Opportunity	Description/Goals	Who Attends	Date/Time
Launch call with Simmons	Share your board's current reality and vision, set initial priorities, and confirm coaching cadence	Executive Director and board chair	One hour Late-October 2026
Governance self-assessment	Complete survey benchmarking your governance to best practices	Executive Director and all board members	20 min survey November 2026
Self-Assessment Discuss results preview and discussion at board meeting	Simmons previews results with ED/board chair and leads a discussion of findings with the full board to identify three high-priority areas for coaching and technical assistance	Executive Director and all board members	By end of December 2026, at a regular board meeting or retreat
1:1 coaching	Six monthly one-hour sessions focused on your board's priority areas and the Executive Director-board chair partnership	Executive Director; board chair optional	Monthly, January-June 2027
Technical assistance	Four hours of hands-on support per board to jumpstart your priorities (i.e. drafting key documents, codifying board processes, or creating onboarding materials)	Executive Director and board leads for each priority	December 2026-June 2027
Closing conversation	Review progress and	Executive Director and	June 2027

	draft board goals for FY28	board chair	
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Expectations for Cohort Members

Executive Directors and board chairs:

- Commit to the full arc of the nine month program beginning in fall 2026 by responding to the invitation email
- Attend the launch call, all four trainings, the results preview, and the closing conversation
- Share board materials as available including board roster, meeting dates, most recent board deck and minutes, bylaws, strategic plan, and FY26-27 organizational goals
- Champion board participation, including reaching at least 80% self-assessment completion and putting the results discussion on a board meeting agenda
- Executive Directors attend all six coaching sessions; board chairs join as needed
- Complete closing survey and closing call to review progress and possible implications for FY28 board goals
- Estimated time commitment: 16 hours for Executive Directors, ~8-10 hours for board chairs

All board members:

- Attend as many trainings as possible. We aim to have at least 75% of board members attend at least two trainings
- Complete the governance self-assessment
- Participate in the board results discussion and help move your board's priority areas forward

Confidentiality: We want boards to reflect openly. Your board's individual self-assessment results and coaching conversations stay between your organization and Simmons Covington Consulting. Sobrato will receive participation information and cohort-wide themes that do not identify any one organization.

Important Dates

- Commitment by Executive Director and board chair, intake surveys completed: October 12, 2026
- Launch calls: late October 2026
- Training #1: November 4, 2026, 12:00-1:30pm PST
- Governance self-assessment: November 2026
- Results previews and board results discussions: November-December 2026
- Coaching and technical assistance: December 2026/January 2027 through June 2027
- Training #2: mid-late January 2027 (date TBD)
- Training #3: March 2027 (date TBD)
- Training #4: May 2027 (date TBD)
- Closing conversations and final survey: June 2027