

**Page: Entry Information**

**Chapter**

CAI-NJ

**Chapter Size**

Extra Large (1201+)

**Category**

Membership Engagement

**Program Name**

Online HOA Board Leadership Training

**If this was a joint program with another chapter, please list the chapter.**

**Each question is worth 20 points and will be scored using the following rubric:**

**(1-5) Poor** Didn't effectively answer the question

**(6-1) Fair** Answered the question

**(11-15) Good** Answered the question with more detail

**(16-20) Excellent** Went above and beyond with proven results and visible data

**Describe the program and why it fits the category. (20pts)**

"Leaders don't force people to follow. They invite them on a journey." – Anonymous.

The New Jersey Chapter, and the New Jersey – Legislative Action Committee (NJ-LAC) saw a need to get ahead of proposed legislation, A2449 – HOA Board Member Training. This would require board members to engage in at least 3 hours of online training, completed within 180 days within taking office, and the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner can remove board members that fail to complete training. As a chapter, we did not want to be behind the eight ball as this potential legislation could move quickly, and to ensure we are putting out quality education for our homeowner members, we spent an entire year creating and launching the Online HOA Board Leadership Training Program, which is now copyrighted by the New Jersey chapter to protect the value and to own the content creation of the program.

"The Online HOA Board Leadership Training Program was initially crafted as a response to proposed legislation mandating three hours of board member training upon the initial election of a director to a board. The original legislation called for a training program to be set up by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), but through the diligent efforts of the CAI-NJ Board of Directors and others who participated in creating the program, we were able to convince the bill's sponsor to permit organizations like CAI to provide the training. While the bill has not yet been passed, the training program is excellent, and I have been directing my clients to it as a resource and encourage all of you to do so as well. Kudos to the team that spent many hours putting it together!" – Matthew Earle, Esq., NJ-LAC Chair 2025

This course not only elevates the membership experience, by offering our homeowner leaders free, self-paced training that awards them a certificate of completion, but it exemplifies the value of CAI. By creating our own separate program, we are expanding on an already offered CAI National Board Leadership Training but focuses on New Jersey specific learning material that only helps propel boards in the right direction for our communities.

**How did this program meet the mission and vision of the chapter and CAI as a whole including fostering an inclusive environment that reflects and serves our diverse community? (20pts)**

The mission of CAI is clear, to educate and advocate for common interest communities by giving our members the best resources for success. Community Associations Institute – the New Jersey chapter saw an opportunity through legislative efforts to create a free, 3-hour, self-paced training program developed especially for homeowner leaders. Whether they have served on the board for years or just coming in with fresh eyes – the information provided to them is a huge best practices member benefit that will only enhance their knowledge of what it's really like to live in a common interest community and is a great prerequisite for the in-person CAI Board Leadership Development Training. Allowing HOA boards to take this course virtually, on their own time, with exam questions to pass before moving on to the next module, ensures the certification process for our members.

Using original content developed by the NJ-LAC and CAI-NJ Board of Directors, this program breaks down the key components of effective community association governance into clear, New Jersey specific modules. Our homeowner members have an opportunity to take this free course, which enhances the membership benefit structure giving value to CAI.

The modules are:

- The Role of the Board
- Responsibilities, Duties and Limitations
- Legal and Ethical Responsibilities
- The Board's Relationship with Management
- Community governance, governing documents and local laws
- Financial management and budgeting
- Property Maintenance
- Risk Management and Insurance Matters

CAI-NJ believes that knowledge is power and supplying board members with best practices at their fingertips is the sole purpose of the chapter.

"As anyone who has ever served on a community association board can attest—this is not a spectator sport. Board members are expected to navigate a maze of legal requirements, budgetary responsibilities, resident concerns, and long-term planning. And while most board members volunteer with the best of intentions, good intentions alone don't balance a budget, interpret state law, or resolve an architectural dispute. That's why education is not just a "nice-to-have" – it's essential." – Steve Mlenak, Esq – 2025 CAI-NJ President

**What was the impact on the chapter and its members after completing the program? (Growth of membership, financially, public awareness, membership value, better chapter/member relationship, chapter operations, etc.) (20 pts)**

The impact on the chapter after launching the Online HOA Board Leadership Training Program has been helpful for membership and brand awareness for New Jersey. In 2026, the CAI-NJ Board of Directors has made it a requirement to take this program in order to serve on the Homeowner Leader Committee – and to encourage other board members to participate.

If they are non-members, it's a great tool to get them on board by joining CAI-NJ and a resource for them to get involved right away with this training course. We also use this program as an incentive for our Wendell A. Smith Awards Celebration participants for "Best Board of the Year." In order to be considered for this honor at our Awards Celebration, the boards who have been nominated must complete this program.

We understand that the homeowner leaders within our membership are the hardest to engage, and by offering them this self-paced tool, we have set out to give them every opportunity possible to have best practices at their fingertips.

From a legislative standpoint – this program sets our state up for mandatory board member training, providing the blueprint for when this program gets passed into legislation, copyrighted by New Jersey. Our Legislative Action Committee (LAC) members are also encouraging their boards to work to take advantage of this tool to better endorse CAI and to spread awareness as to the additional resources we provide.

**Provide quantifiable data supporting the rationale for success. Include why this data is significant. (20pts)**

The HOA Online Board Leadership Training Program is specifically tailored for homeowner leaders, but the involvement included all member types to ensure accurate representation across the platform. This program took over a year to evolve, from platform discovery testing with YouTestMe, to collaborating and writing the modules, recording the voice over material, beta testing the application with the homeowner leader committee, to launching it out into the industry. This was no small task for the chapter and those members who were involved. In the 8 months this program has been active, it has drawn in a 153% increase than the current in-person trainings we provide at the office.

The chapter budgeted for this program is \$5,000, which comes from hosting the program on the platform YouTestMe and assigning each user at a per person rate, that the chapter incurs as this is a free program we offer to Homeowner Leader members.

In June of 2025, we had 2972 members, 2061 of them our homeowner leaders. Today, we have 2983 members and 2090 of them are our homeowner leaders. The continued growth of this program directly affects the growth of our chapter, but more importantly, the best practices and education that is brings to our HL member type.

We also see income back into the chapter as non-members can pay \$50 to take the course. Currently, we've made \$100 on this program, seeing that we've been able to convert non-members to members and provide this member benefit to those who have already joined the chapter.

We also received our copyright certificate attached in the documentation to show that this is a stand-alone, brand-new program in which New Jersey now owns the content provided. This is to protect the content and value of this program, showing the professionalism and importance of this Online HOA training to our membership.

**What are your plans to maintain the momentum of this program moving forward? (20 pts)**

Our board member leaders are setting the roadmap for this program, assisting with the growth and awareness of the importance of best practices for our communities. With this program, we are streamlining our communication and education, making it easier for all of our members living and working in common interest communities.

We continue to market our program by:

- Sending the link to join the training to all new HOA board members who join
- Working with our Homeowner Leader Committee to encourage their residents to take the course
- Educating our Manager and Vendor Members that this program is available to our homeowners and to familiarize themselves with the modules to promote cross training
- Direct email marketing to all homeowner members and managers to push this program to their boards
- Social media engagement to all members to spread awareness of the program

We truly believe in this program and the benefits it has to enhance the value of CAI and to push the New Jersey chapter forward with growth and development

Supporting documents including flyers, postcards, pictures, videos etc. can be uploaded below. While they aren't required for your submission we certainly encourage it.

**Would you like to upload additional documents?**

Yes

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