There are a few basic legal requirements needed to serve on a homeowner association or condominium board of directors. According to Florida Statutes, board members must meet the following criteria:

**Be 18 years or older.**

This is first on the list of eligibility criteria. Minors are not eligible for board membership in homeowner or condominium associations.

**Be a member of the association.**

Basically, you have to own a home or condo in the association to then serve on the board. There are limits on which members can serve, but they are broad. For example, anyone delinquent in payment of a fee or fine to the association cannot join the board. Another wrinkle is people who jointly own property. Co-owners cannot both serve on the board simultaneously unless they own more than one unit or there are not enough eligible candidates to fill the vacant positions.

**Pass a background check.**

Individuals with a criminal background are largely disqualified from holding a position on an association board. If you’ve had your voting rights reinstated for more than five years, you could likely join a board.
Additionally, those previously removed from a board within the state are disqualified. If the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) previously removed you from another board of directors, you are ineligible to serve on any future association boards in the state. And anyone on the board charged with a felony theft or embezzlement with the association’s funds or property is promptly removed from office.

**Complete a certification course within 90 days of being elected or appointed.**

One of the most important Florida board member requirements is to obtain a certification. This is to ensure all board members are up to speed on applicable regulations. The course is a mix of in-person and online material, and remains valid as long as you are a continuous member of your board. If you leave and become re-elected, you’ll have to take the course again.
There is an alternative to the education course. You must submit a letter to the secretary of the board stating that you have read all community governing documents, agree to uphold them, and honor the fiduciary responsibility to all association members. Understanding the rules and regulations regarding meetings and membership access to records is critical for newly appointed board members.
“In addition to these legal requirements, there are some skills and expertise that will contribute to a high-performing board member,” says Steve Harshman, vice president of FirstService Residential. “These include leadership and communication, business acumen, organization and an unbiased concern for the well-being of the community as a whole.”

**Leadership.**

As a board member, you’ll make key decisions that affect your community and planning the future of the property. It may help to understand the strengths and struggles of the association through its history and the immediate next steps to be accomplished. Some decisions may be tough, and leadership skills will help win over members to a particular vision.

**Business acumen.**

Board members oversee the business aspects of the property. As such, business savvy or at least competence is needed in individual members. Some of the duties include: selecting an attorney, an auditor, and insurance agent; meeting required insurance coverage laws; reviewing local laws to make sure new rules and bylaws abide by them; enforcing the documents, rules, and penalties; drawing up a budget; determining assessment rates and collecting them. The board also establishes fiscal policies and reserve funds, so it needs to keep precise records.

**Communication.**

Effective, clear and transparent communication is key to serving on a board. You will need to approach others with your ideas and opinions in good faith, serving the needs of the community above single interests. Solid communication skills are also critical to resolving conflicts in the needs and desires of different members of the association.

**Organization.**

There’s no end to the organizational needs of an effective board member. Consider the property’s accounting, keeping track of the association’s governing documents and related bylaws, and not to mention the state and federal laws dictating what is legal for the association. It’s a lot of data to process, so organizational skills are a necessity.
You should have a concern for the community as a whole. Ideal board members have the best interest of the entire association in mind, rather than personal gain. You will need to approach others with good faith, and dutifully serve the needs of the community above personal interests. There are laws limiting contracts or transactions with other entities tied to board members. These include letting all voting members know of any potential conflicts of interest and a two-third majority vote of the others present. Another rule forbids compensation to board members of nearly any sort (one exception is food at business meetings, which is not to exceed $25 per person.)
Being fair and transparent is a cornerstone of this approach. As there are competing desires among association members, conflict resolution may come into play as well.

 So choosing board members wisely becomes crucial, and knowing the Florida board member requirements and necessary attributes is the first step to accomplishing that goal.