

## Are You Ready to Be a Board Member?

Give careful consideration before making the commitment to board service. Awareness of the crucial role the board and board members play in governing nonprofit organizations is essential.

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### TEN BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF NONPROFIT BOARDS

The Board of Directors is a group of volunteers legally responsible for making sure the organization remains true to its mission, safeguards its assets, and operates in the public interest.

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| 1 | Determine the organization's mission and purpose.  | 6  | Manage resources effectively.  |
| 2 | Select the CEO.                                    | 7  | Determine, monitor, and strengthen the organization's programs and services. |
| 3 | Support the CEO and review his or her performance. | 8  | Enhance the organization's public standing.                                  |
| 4 | Ensure effective organizational planning.          | 9  | Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability.              |
| 5 | Ensure adequate resources.                         | 10 | Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance.           |

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

As a Board Member, you also have specific responsibilities and expectations to fulfill in order to safeguard your legal and fiduciary role and the well-being of the organization.

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| 1 | Make a personal financial contribution to the organization.                     | 7  | Suggest possible nominees to the board who can make significant contributions to the work of the board and the organization.       |
| 2 | Attend all board and committee meetings and functions, such as special events.  | 8  | Keep up to date on developments in the organization's field.   |
| 3 | Be informed about the organization's mission, services, policies, and programs. | 9  | Follow conflict of interest and confidentiality policies.  |
| 4 | Review agenda and supporting materials prior to board and committee meetings.   | 10 | Refrain from making special requests of the staff.   |
| 5 | Serve on committees and offer to take on special assignments.                   | 11 | Assist the board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities, such as reviewing the organization's annual financial statements. |
| 6 | Inform others about the organization.   |    |  |

### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS TO CONSIDER

**Ability to** listen, analyze, think clearly and creatively, and work well with individual people and groups.

**Willingness to** prepare for and attend board and committee meetings, ask questions, take responsibility and follow through on assignments, contribute personal and financial resources in a generous way according to circumstances, open doors in the community, evaluate oneself, coach and advise the CEO, and make tough decisions.

**Possess** honesty, sensitivity, and openness to differing views, a friendly, responsive, and patient approach, community-building skills, personal integrity, a developed sense of values, concern for your nonprofit's development, and a sense of humor.

**Willingness to** develop certain skills if you do not already possess them, such as – cultivate and solicit funds, cultivate and recruit board members and other volunteers, read and understand financial statements, learn more about the substantive program area of the organization or the community it serves.