

## **Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards**

- **Determine the Organization's Mission and Purpose**
  - A statement of mission and purposes should articulate the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served. It is the board of directors' responsibility to create the mission statement and review it periodically for accuracy and validity. Each individual board member should fully understand and support it.
- **Select the Executive**
  - Boards must reach consensus on the chief executive's job description and undertake a careful search process to find the most qualified individual for the position.
- **Support the Executive and Review His or Her Performance**
  - The board should ensure that the chief executive has the moral and professional support he or she needs to further the goals of the organization. The chief executive, in partnership with the entire board, should decide upon a periodic evaluation of the chief executive's performance.
- **Ensure Effective Organizational Planning**
  - As stewards of an organization, boards must actively participate with the staff in an overall planning process and assist in implementing the plan's goals.
- **Ensure Adequate Resources**
  - One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to provide adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission. The board should work in partnership with the chief executive and development staff, if any, to raise funds from the community.
- **Manage Resources Effectively**
  - The board, in order to remain accountable to its donors, the public, and to safeguard its tax-exempt status, must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.

- **Determine and Monitor the Organization's Programs and Services**
  - The board's role in this area is to determine which programs are the most consistent with an organization's mission, and to monitor their effectiveness.
- **Enhance the Organization's Public Image**
  - An organization's primary link to the community, including constituents, the public, and the media, is the board. Clearly articulating the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public, as well as garnering support from important members of the community, are important elements of a comprehensive public relations strategy.
- **Serve as a Court of Appeal**
  - Except in the direst of circumstances, the board must serve as a court of appeal in personnel matters. Solid personnel policies, grievance procedures, and a clear delegation to the chief executive of hiring and managing employees will reduce the risk of conflict.
- **Assess Its Own Performance**
  - By evaluating its performance in fulfilling its responsibilities, the board can recognize its achievements and reach consensus on which areas need to be improved. Discussing the results of a self-assessment at a retreat can assist in developing a long-range plan.

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