

10 Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards

1. **Determine the organization's mission and purposes and advocate for them.** It is the board's responsibility to create, and periodically review, a mission statement that articulates what specific benefits the organization is attempting to accomplish for what specific beneficiaries. The board should also "stand for their mission" by communicating with the public and advocating to policy makers and decision makers.
2. **Select the chief executive.** Boards must determine the chief executive's responsibilities, conduct a thorough search, and select the most qualified individual.
3. **Support and evaluate the chief executive.** The board should ensure that the chief executive has the moral and professional support he or she needs to accomplish the organization's goals and to raise funds. The board should annually evaluate the executive based on measures that are defined and communicated to the executive in advance of the period that is being evaluated.
4. **Ensure effective organizational planning.** Boards must participate in planning and should monitor the achievement of the plan's goals. This includes gathering information from the organization's constituents, supporters, donors, clients etc. so that the board is well informed about community needs.
5. **Monitor and strengthen programs and services.** The board is responsible for monitoring performance of the organization's goals and for ensuring program effectiveness.
6. **Ensure adequate resources.** One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to provide adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission. **All** board members must participate in resource development in order to fulfill this responsibility.
7. **Protect assets and provide financial oversight.** The board must ensure that financial controls are in place and monitor how the organization is managing its money. The board should select the auditor, if one is engaged, and receive the auditor's report.
8. **Build and sustain a competent board.** Boards have a responsibility to articulate the characteristics that will make a person an effective member of the board. This should focus on the candidate's ability to contribute effectively as a member of the board and not primarily on the person's professional expertise or skills.
9. **Ensure legal and ethical integrity.** Ensure that the organization is adhering to legal standards and ethical norms and is attentive to legal risks.
10. **Enhance the organization's public standing.** By clearly articulating the organization's mission, goals and its impact, the board can garner support from the community.