

## Ten Basic Responsibilities of NON-Fiduciary Boards\*

\* Commissions/Committees/Councils

In your effort of practicing Good Governance - whether you are a fiduciary or a non-fiduciary board - a critical first step is to understand what your role is as lay leaders, how it is different from the day-to-day roles of your staff, and where you overlap and partner.

- 1. Determine the organization's mission and purposes.** A statement of mission and purpose should articulate the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served. It is the board's responsibility to create the mission statement and review it periodically for accuracy and validity. Each individual board member should fully understand and support it.
- 2. Participate in the selection of the director.** Boards must have a meaningful stake in determining the director's job and in the careful search to find the most qualified individual for the position.
- 3. Support and participate in evaluating the director.** The board should ensure that the director has the moral and professional support he or she needs to further the goals of the organization. The director, in partnership with the entire board, should decide upon a periodic evaluation of his or her performance.
- 4. Ensure effective planning.** As stewards of the organization, boards must actively participate with the staff in an overall planning process and oversee implementation of the plan's goals.
- 5. Monitor and strengthen the organization's programs and services.** The board's role in this area is to determine which programs are the most consistent with the organization's mission and to monitor their effectiveness.
- 6. Ensure adequate financial resources.** One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to provide adequate funding for the organization to fulfill its mission. The board should work in partnership with the director and development staff, if any, to raise funds from the community.
- 7. Protect assets and be financially aware.** The board, in order to remain accountable to its donors and the public, and to safeguard its tax-exempt status, must be aware of the annual budget and ensure that proper financial controls are in place.
- 8. Build a competent board.** All boards have a responsibility to articulate and make known their needs in terms of member experience, skills, and many other considerations that define a balanced board composition. Boards must also orient new members to their responsibilities and the organization's history, needs, and challenges. By evaluating its performance in fulfilling its responsibilities, the board can recognize its achievements and reach consensus on which areas need to be improved.
- 9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity.** The board has a responsibility in ensuring adherence to legal standards and ethical norms. Solid personnel policies, grievance procedures, and a clear delegation to the director of hiring and managing employees will help ensure proper decorum in this area. The board must establish pertinent policies and adhere to provisions of the governing organization's bylaws and articles of incorporation.
- 10. Enhance the organization's public standing.** One of the organization's primary links 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.

Adapted from: **Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards, Third Edition** by Richard T. Ingram (BoardSource, 2015)