

The Roles of the Nonprofit Board of Directors

To be effective, a nonprofit organizations needs a strong board of directors that understands its roles and pursues them with passion and a mission orientation. The following outline provides an overview of board roles and responsibilities to guide discussion between the Executive Director and board members seeking to define their place within the organization.

1. To define, protect, and advance the mission of the organization

- Mission vs. "what we do"
- What business are we in?
- Who do we serve?
- What value do we bring to the community?

2. To safeguard the assets (human, financial, and property) of the organization

- The fiduciary responsibility of the board
- Self-dealing transactions by board members
- Conflict of interest by a board member

3. To recruit, hire, support, review and, if necessary, remove the executive director

- The relationship of the board to the executive
- Who is the boss?
- Governance vs. management
- The special relationship of the board chair and the executive director

4. To be ambassadors to the world on behalf of the organization

- Talking up the organization
- Abiding by the decisions of the board
- Keeping the organization in the front of your mind

5. To ensure adequate resources to carry out the mission

- Give, get, or get off
- 100% board giving
- Seeking funds from others