



Board Governance and Planning Checklist for Nonprofit Charitable Organizations Prepared by the Kansas Arts Commission May 2009

Use this checklist as a guide to help you in good board practices. For more information, please also see the Independent Sector's Panel on the Nonprofit Sector:
<http://www.nonprofitpanel.org>

ORGANIZATION BY-LAWS	YES	NO	N/A
1. Our organizational by-laws reflect the numerical range or specific numbers of board members required.			
2. Our by-laws stipulate the length of a board term.			
3. Our by-laws stipulate limits to the length of concurrent board service.			
4. Our by-laws include a statement of qualifications for board members.			
5. The board's nomination/election procedures, as stated in our by-laws, are thorough, clear and complete.			
6. Issues of representation (geographic, professional, gender, ethnic, etc), as stated in our by-laws, are thorough, clear and complete.			

EXPECTATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS	YES	NO	N/A
1. Each board member is expected to be an active advocate of the organization.			
2. Each board member is expected to attend the programming of the organization.			
3. Each board member is expected to be a member or subscriber, if applicable.			
4. Board members are expected to attend all board meetings and to be prepared for meetings.			
5. Board members are expected to serve actively on at least one board committee.			
7. Each board member makes a personal cash contribution to the annual operating budget or helps to find a donor.			
8. Each board member is expected to assist in some way in the raising of the contributed income necessary to the implementation of the approved budget.			
9. Each board member is expected to exercise discretion in conversations with others and to honor confidentiality.			
10. Each board member is expected to exercise his/her fiduciary responsibility.			
11. Each board member is expected to avoid and declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest and signs a conflict of interest statement.			
12. The board speaks with “one voice”; while dissent during discussion is welcomed, once the board agrees by vote, all members support the decision and no one undermines other board members.			

BOARD RECRUITMENT READINESS	YES	NO	N/A
1. Potential board members are always being identified and cultivated.			
2. Several board members will soon reach their term limits.			
3. Our organization has recently lost a number of board members.			
3. Our board should expand to include new or different skills or perspectives.			
4. Recent attention to future vision calls for board changes.			
5. Our by-laws are clear and any ambiguities or deficiencies that may have a bearing on board service have been discussed and changed.			
8. We have comprehensive board policies with clear expectations.			
10. The board policies have been reviewed/revised recently.			
11. Our entire board is clear about its role with regard to its relationship with the Chief Executive and other staff.			
12. Our board reviews this subject at least annually.			
13. There is a clear understanding by board members about their role, i.e., governance vs. management.			
14. Our board has a written conflict of interest policy and board members must sign it in agreement.			
15. Our board has appropriate financial policies that have they been recently reviews and/or updated.			
16. The board has general operations and policies guidelines spelled out and readily available.			

BOARD ORIENTATION	YES	NO	N/A
1. The essential facts we convey to prospective board members include history, mission, organizational structure, programs & services, special circumstances (i.e., capital campaign, possible merger, etc.).			
2. The essential financial information we convey to prospective board members are the annual report with financial statement, annual budget, annual audit, statement of fiscal stability, special circumstances (i.e., loss of major funding, unique debt load, major expansion of services/programs).			
3. Fund raising and resource development practices and activities are shared, including sources of funding, board role in resource development and special circumstances (i.e., pending major funding drive, new strategic funding goals, unique expectations).			
4. Information about how the organization operates on a day-to-day basis is provided, including staffing and any special circumstances (i.e., staff change, organizational restructuring, unique committee issues).			
5. The essential elements are presented regarding the role and responsibilities of the board, including governance, personal commitment, committee participation, financial development, individual responsibilities, mutual expectations, general representation of the organization and any special circumstances (i.e., board culture, how the organization operates, any dysfunctions being dealt with).			
6. Various activities and goals of the organization are shared, including the strategic plan, financial development plan, technology plan, marketing plan, future vision objectives and special circumstances (i.e., plan in progress, not planning has been done, about to begin planning).			
7. Current board development/recruitment activities are shared including transition of board leadership, future needs, ongoing leadership development, specific skills, talent needs, specific knowledge of community, specific organizational objectives and special circumstances (i.e., major new strategies, internal issues of change, leadership issues).			

BOARD CULTURE	YES	NO	N/A
1. Board meetings are energetic and engaging.			
2. Board meetings are focused, with governance and policy-setting and decision-making agendas.			
3. Meetings are not dominated by long, dull reports and rambling discussion over details best left to management, staff or committees.			
4. Board agendas are tightly drawn and targeted. Meetings are led in a crisp yet inclusive manner and last just long enough.			
5. Board education is regularly included during meetings to enhance member's knowledge and capability.			
6. Board members can count on an expeditious use of their time.			
7. An effort is made to involve all board members in the meeting process.			
8. Every member is regularly given responsibilities to lead action item discussion or to give key reports.			
9. Board members are regularly asked for their opinion and input.			
10. Board members are all engaged; there are no spectators and no one person or group of people are allowed to dominate discussion.			
11. Lively and spirited discussions and dissent are encouraged, but once a vote is taken, every board member is "on board" with the decision.			
12. During board meetings, board members, volunteers and staff are acknowledged for their special achievements or overall performance.			

ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING	YES	NO	N/A
1. The organization's mission statement has been reviewed and agreed upon by all board members in the last year.			
2. The organization has engaged in strategic planning in the past three years, with the plan updated every 18 months.			
3. We know what we want to accomplish in the next five years. We have set our goals.			
4. We have revised/created our case statement in the past two years.			
5. The board discusses our mission and vision regularly.			
6. Board members have a commonly held vision.			
7. Our organization is engaged in implementing strategies established within the past three years.			
8. Our organization is currently engaged in designing new strategies to be implemented in the near future.			
9. There is a sense of energy and focus about the current or pending organizational strategies to fulfill our mission.			