



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES – BUILDING BOARDS PROGRAM

Board responsibilities set criteria by which boards ensure a measure of accountability and may periodically review their performance.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Establish the organization’s mission, vision, direction, and purpose, and develop policies and actions to ensure they are attained:**
 - Board creates a strategic plan that outlines: Organizational values, Mission, Vision, and Priorities and Strategies that serve the Mission
 - Asks the ED to report on progress on the strategic plan, not on operational matters

YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Evidence that the organization is true to its values.
- Who is responsible for the priorities in the strategic plan?
- The timeline for achieving the priorities in the strategic plan.
- What the success indicators are for the priorities (how will we know when we have achieved the priorities?)

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

2. Select, support, guide, and evaluate the Executive Director:

- Establishes a Personnel Committee to select and support the ED
- Develops policies that outline how the ED must manage the organization
- Appraises the Ed's performance against identified measures

YOU NEED TO KNOW

- How do we delegate our authority to the ED? What policies are in place?
- How is the organization faring in the accomplishment of its strategic priorities?
- How will the ED's performance be appraised and measured?
- What is the difference between curiosity and need to know?
How do we define what reports are actually needed for the Board's work?

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

3. Ensure the financial health of the organization by monitoring the budget and expenditures, and manage risk by ensuring there are adequate resources to carry out its work:

- Review and approve regularly provided financial statements
- With the ED, establishes the budget, approves it, and regularly reviews it for variances
- Spearhead fundraising efforts
- Assess areas of risk and develop plans to mitigate or eliminate risk

YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Are we projected to have a deficit or surplus?
- If a deficit, have we sufficient unfettered reserves to cover it? If not, how will it be covered?
- If we achieve a surplus, what will happen with it? Do we have a policy specifying how surpluses will be handled?
- How realistic are the projections to year-end? What are the assumptions that underpin those projections?
- Is there a need for action now related to operations to deal with the variances and/or projections to year-end?

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

4. Oversee the Board's operations by:

- Determining its role;
- Developing policy to govern its behaviour;
- Evaluating its progress and effectiveness;
- Recruiting, training, and evaluating individual board members

Specifically:

- Develops policies that direct how the Board will govern itself, usually kept in a *Board of Governance Manual*
- Creates intentional documentation about how it will delegate its responsibilities to the Executive Director
- Defines how the success of the organization will be measured and how the ED will report on its success

YOU NEED TO KNOW

- **What traits and skills would be helpful for new Board members to exhibit? How do we ensure characteristics are sought out in new board members?**
- **What is the role of Board Committees? What are the terms of reference for the committees? How they act in the interests of good governance? How do they report/connect to the Board?**
- **What policies are in the Governance Manual? Are there others that are missing or need to be developed? How do we review the policies? How do we change them?**
- **What policies do we have to delegate the Board's authority to the ED? What additional policies do we need?**
- **How do we measure our own success/challenges as a Board?**

RELATIONSHIP TO ED

It is the Board's job to:

- **Ensure that the ED is protected from doing work that belongs to the Board (orienting new board members, managing board succession, developing board policies)**
- **Avoid making more work for the ED than is absolutely necessary (such as reporting)**
- **Watch over the operations from a strategic standpoint, or 'Eyes on, hands off'**
- **Appraise the ED's management of the organization on predetermined criteria and measurements**