

BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES



While boards have specific roles to play in governing a nonprofit organization, board members have their own set of responsibilities. Some are governance related, carried out within the context of the board as a governing body. Others are carried out as individuals or within committees and project task forces. These are activities that support the work of the organization, and are a crucial part of the work of effective board members.

Best practices of board members occur when both sets of responsibilities come into play.

Board members have the following **board governance** responsibilities:

- Faithfully attend board meetings.
- Prepare for and participate in board meetings.
- Take committee and task force assignments.
- Participate in board development activities.
- Observe the organization's work first-hand.
- Support the chief executive as a partner.

Board members have the following **organizational service** responsibilities:

- Be an ambassador for the organization's mission.
- Be a donor of record each year.
- Assist with fund-raising activities.
- Use individual skills and talents on behalf of the organization.
- Use connections to move the organization forward.
- Encourage and appreciate the staff, volunteers, and donors.

Sometimes a board will use the word *expectations* instead of responsibilities. That makes good sense when a requirement has a qualitative or quantitative measurement. For example, it is an *expectation* that a board member attend at least two-thirds of the board meetings, or that every member serve on at least one committee. So it is up to each board to establish its own set of expectations and, as a result, be clearer about its work.

When placing in writing the responsibilities of members of your board, you may want to include some specific measurable expectations.