

Top 10 Duties of Nonprofit Board Members

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People that have a passion for a cause typically make good non-profit board members. That's no surprise since they tend to know a lot about the organization already. What's even better is that they bring a lot of their own knowledge and expertise about the organization's purpose and network. More importantly, new board members often bring a contagious excitement with them to board meetings. Passionate new board members can breathe life into any nonprofit board. Board recruiters will do well to make sure new board members understand that serving on the board comes with important responsibilities and to help them understand *what those responsibilities are*, so that the new board member can plug into the board in the most helpful ways. Here are 10 duties that every board member should be pay attention to:

1) HIRE AND SET COMPENSATION FOR THE CEO OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

The board's most important duty is to *hire* a competent Executive Director or CEO and set compensation for the position. This duty is ultra-important because the *Executive Director or CEO* has a key role as the primary communicator between the board and management. Important qualities for the Executive Director or CEO are trust, respect, and a willingness to have a good working relationship with the board chair and executive staff.

2) BOARD MEMBERS HAVE LEGAL AND FIDUCIARY DUTIES.

Board members need to learn how to read and interpret financial statements so they can be good stewards of the organization's funds. This includes reviewing and approving budgets to protect the organization's assets. Board members will approve major organizational decisions including planning for programs and related expenditures. Working cooperatively with management, board members will need to communicate their plans and any progress to management and other stakeholders.

3) BOARD MEMBERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ADVANCING THE MISSION OF THE ORGANIZATION.

Much of the work that board members do during meetings is related to guiding and directing the mission of the organization. Part of that work requires working with management and making sure the organization has the resources to advance the mission.

4) GOVERNANCE IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF A BOARD MEMBER'S DUTIES.

Board members need to have insight regarding the industry's trends. They need to monitor and communicate those trends to the members of management and membership. While keeping a pulse on industry activity, board members need to oversee the day-to-day operations and have foresight in planning programs and operations.

Reference: <https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/top-10-duties-of-non-profit-board-members/>

5) BOARD MEMBERS SERVE AS ADVOCATES FOR THE ORGANIZATION'S MISSION.

Spreading word about the organization helps it grow and flourish. Board members are the frontline people who publicly advocate for the non-profit's mission. This includes public relations and interacting or interviewing with media.

6) BOARD DEVELOPMENT IS AN ONGOING PROCESS FOR BOARD MEMBERS.

There is much to learn about serving on a board. Board members need to become acquainted with Robert's Rules of Order. Recruitment needs to be a continual process to ensure that the board's seats remain full and that new members have the full benefit of orientation and membership to provide for continuity.

7) BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD SERVE ON AT LEAST ONE COMMITTEE.

Board members should be aware that most of the board's work is done in [committees](#). There isn't time for the board to have lengthy discussions or get involved in researching issues in detail. Every board member should serve on a committee to steer the committee towards the information that the board needs. Committees should be structured with a chair, and possibly a co-chair, and involve input from all committee members. Committees give full recommendations and results to the full board and make themselves available to answer questions about their findings.

8) FUNDRAISING IS A DUTY OF EVERY BOARD MEMBER.

Board members should be expected to become involved in some facet of [raising funds](#) for the organization. Board members typically know prospective donors and they should be willing to use their personal or professional networks to grow the non-profit financially. It's helpful for board members to learn how to tell stories that led to the success of the organization. A two-minute elevator speech goes a long way towards telling the organization's purpose. Board members should make every effort to attend public fundraisers and encourage their friends to attend. At least annually, board members should make a personal financial contribution to the organization.

9) OVERSEEING THE DOCUMENTATION OF AGENDAS AND MINUTES.

While the secretary bears the main responsibility for preparing minutes and [agendas](#), the entire board has a responsibility to make sure they are reported accurately. Accurate documentation protects the organization from potential legal issues.

10) BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD PLAN FOR THEIR SUCCESSORS.

It sounds a bit ironic that board members should [plan for their replacements](#) as soon as they are elected into office, but they soon find that their board term goes fast. Long-range planning and continual recruitment are effective ways to ensure the board's continuity.

There's no need for board members to feel overwhelmed by their duties. The rest of the board should help them ease into the position over time. Fellow board members can help them along by mentoring them and helping them find the best ways to use their talents and abilities towards the goals of the organization.