

## Essential Governance Tasks of a Board

The primary stewardship and governance obligations of a board of directors to the organization's members, funders and the public are highlighted here. The extent to which these responsibilities are formalized in writing will depend on the size and complexity of the organization and the resources available to support the board in its work. The following responsibilities pertain, in general, to all boards:

- Define and/or safeguard the mission, the values framework and operating principles within which it expects the organization to be administered, and to review and update these periodically to ensure they remain current and responsive.
- Oversee development and approval of a long-term organizational plan and develop or approve annual budgets and operating plans.
- Monitor performance of the organization overall in achievement of its objectives, mission and strategic goals.
- Seek and secure sufficient resources for the organization to adequately finance its operational and capital requirements.
- Account to members, funders, other key stakeholders and the public, for the services of the organization and expenditure of funds.
- Ensure prudent and proper management of the organization's resources.
- Anticipate, mitigate and manage risks to the organization, its staff, board and other key stakeholders
- Establish the general values framework within which the organization's human resources will be managed and periodically monitor key human resource performance indicators.
- Approve and periodically review personnel policies within which human resources will be managed.
- Establish guidelines for negotiation of pay and benefits agreements with staff (if there are any).
- Regularly review the organization's services to ensure that they are consistent with the purpose of the organization and that its programs are effective and relevant to community needs.
- Provide continuity/stability for the organization. Preserve the corporate memory.
- Provide opportunities for citizen, stakeholder (shareholder) participation.
- Represent the organization and its programs positively to key stakeholders and the community at large. Be a good ambassador.
- Serve as an advocate for services of good quality.
- Ensure fair arbitration of complaints from consumers about services or products through a formal complaint's procedure.

The following additional governance responsibilities pertain to boards with an executive director or chief executive officer:

- Govern the organization through broad policies and planned objectives approved by the board, formulated with the executive director and staff, and reviewed periodically.
- Select and support an executive director to whom the responsibility for administration of the organization is delegated.
- Review and evaluate regularly the performance of the executive director on the basis of a specific job description and negotiated objectives.
- Provide advice and act as a resource and sounding board for the executive director or senior staff person.
- Maintain sufficient independence from management to ensure the board can make reasonably objective judgments about the reliability and validity of management reports on finances and general operations.