

What is the Role of a *Board of Directors?*

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THE ASSOCIATED's Agency Excellence Committee

Every board has a fundamental responsibility for self-management: for creating a structure, policies, and procedures that support good governance. The term "board organization" encompasses a variety of tasks, from routine matters such as preparing a schedule of board meetings to actions with broader consequences such as developing a policy about terms of service.

When aligned with the strategic priorities of the organization, an efficient structure allows board and staff to apply their skills in concert to fulfill the mission. Those that follow this formula find that effective governance takes time, flexibility, intention, and attention; it makes all the difference in the world to the nonprofit organization and community being served.

To set the stage for efficient board and committee work:

- Prepare a written job description for individual board members.
- Develop an annual schedule of meetings, determined a year in advance.
- Circulate clear and thorough information materials, including an agenda, to all members two to three weeks before each meeting.
- Maintain complete and accurate minutes of all meetings.
- Keep meetings brief and well-focused. Stimulate the broadest possible participation by members.
- Ask each board member to serve on at least one board committee or task force. (For new members, one committee assignment is sufficient.)
- Acknowledge members' accomplishments and contributions in a variety of ways in the organization's newsletter, at meetings, in minutes.

Example Description of Board of Directors:

1. The Board of Directors shall have each of the following responsibilities:
 - a. Actively support the Mission of the organization
 - b. Be a current Member.
 - c. Support the Annual Campaign and participate in Annual Campaign activities during the course of the year.
 - d. Join and actively participate in at least one committee
 - e. Serve as ambassadors, representing the organization in various formal and informal ways throughout the community.
 - f. Attend meetings of the Board of Directors.

2. The Board of Directors shall have not less than sixty (60) or more than one hundred eighty (180) Directors and consist of the following members:

a. Members of the Board of Governors.

b. The President of each Agency during his/her term of office as President, or such other person as may be designated by such Agency.

c. Directors-at-Large, who may serve for renewable four (4) year terms.

d. All Life Directors.

3. The terms for Directors-at-Large shall be staggered so that no more than one-half of the Directors-at-Large shall be replaced in any one year.