

ATTACHMENT 2

RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Adapted from *"The Handbook of Nonprofit Governance"*

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

- Know the organization's mission, purpose, goals, policies, programs services, strengths and needs.
- Serve in leadership positions and undertake special assignments willingly and enthusiastically.
- Avoid prejudiced judgments on the basis of information received from individuals; urge staff members with grievances to follow established policies and procedures through their supervisors. All significant matters coming to you should be called to the attention of the executive director and/or the board's elected leader as appropriate.
- Follow trends in the organization's field of interest and keep informed.
- Bring goodwill and a sense of humor to the board's deliberations.
- Suggest possible nominees for board membership who are women and men of achievement and distinction and who would make significant contributions to the board and organization.

MEETINGS

- Prepare for and conscientiously participate in board and committee meetings.
- Ask timely and substantive questions at board and committee meetings.
- Maintain confidentiality of the board's executive sessions and any confidential information given to you. Never speak for the board or organization unless authorized to do so, but also remember that statements from board members can carry great weight with those within and outside the organization. Private opinion on any matter is often construed by others as the board's official position whether it really is or is not.
- Occasionally suggest board and committee meeting agenda items to board leaders and the chief executive to ensure that significant policy-related and strategic matters are discussed.
- Follow and support decisions of the board. Do not undermine those decisions if you disagree.

RELATIONSHIP WITH STAFF

- Counsel the executive director as appropriate, providing support through difficult relationships with groups or individuals.
- Avoid asking staff for favors including special requests for information that may take a lot of time to gather and is not part of ongoing board or committee work.
- Remember that the executive director—not board members or the board—is responsible for evaluating staff performance.

AVOIDING CONFLICTS

- Serve the organization as a whole rather than any special interest group or constituency. Even if you were invited to serve by virtue of your relationship with a certain constituency or organization, your first obligation is to avoid any preconception that you represent anything other than the overall organization's best interests.
- Avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest that might embarrass the board or the organization. Disclose any possible conflicts to the board in a timely fashion.
- Maintain independence and objectivity and do what a sense of fairness, ethics and personal integrity dictate.
- Never accept (or offer) favors or gifts from (or to) anyone who does business with the organization.

FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- At all times, exercise prudence with the board in the control and transfer of funds.
- Read and understand the organization's financial statements and otherwise help the board fulfill its fiduciary responsibility.

FUNDRAISING

- If it is expected by your organization's board, contribute financially to the organization, consistent with your personal ability to do so.
- Assist the board and staff by helping to identify potential givers and implement fundraising strategies.

AMBASSADORIAL SERVICE

- Represent your organization responsibly in the community by telling the organization's story and presenting its accomplishments as well as its needs and current challenges.
- Represent your community to your organization. Bring back concerns, ideas, suggestions and complements when you believe they have merit or possibility.