

**Board of Directors
Toolkit
For
Nonprofit Sexual Assault
And
Domestic Violence Organizations**

Nonprofit Sustainability Technical Assistance (NSTA) Project



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Overview

This toolkit will assist the board of directors and staff at nonprofit domestic violence and sexual assault organizations in understanding the basic elements for building the capacity of their volunteer boards of directors. This toolkit provides a general summary of each element along with links to sample tools and resources that can be adapted to your specific organizational needs.

Additionally, this toolkit should be used in tandem with the supplemental board of directors' resources developed by the Resource Sharing Project (RSP):

- Your Board of Directors: The Basics: <http://www.resource-sharingproject.org/your-board-directors-basics>
- Board of Directors Development: Training of Trainers: <http://resource-sharingproject.org/board-directors-development-training-trainers-2010>
- E-Learning Course for Boards of Directors: <http://resource-sharingproject.org/e-learning-course-boards-directors>
- Board Development 101: Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Your Board of Directors (webinar recording): <http://resource-sharingproject.org/board-development-101-understanding-roles-and-responsibilities-your-board-directors-0>
- Empowering Your Board to Lead: Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Your Board of Directors: <http://resource-sharingproject.org/empowering-your-board-lead-understanding-roles-and-responsibilities-your-board-directors-series>

We hope this toolkit will be helpful to you and your board of directors. For more information, please feel free to contact Ellen Yin-Wycoff, Nonprofit Sustainability Technical Assistance (NSTA) Specialist at ellen@iowacasa.org or phone 515-505-2729.

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Why Do Nonprofit Organizations Have a Board of Directors?

Every nonprofit organization must have a board of directors in order to become a corporation. They serve as the legal entity that governs the organization as it hires staff, engages in business transactions, and owns property.

Unlike a for-profit corporations' board of directors, the nonprofit board of directors differs in their purpose and goals. In for-profit boards of directors, their members represent the people who hold stock in the corporation and will make decisions that will benefit the shareholders and themselves financially. In contrast, nonprofit organizations do not have shareholders but instead have stakeholders that represent the communities that they serve, including donors, funders, and survivors. The nonprofit board of directors will generally represent their varied constituency and make decisions based on these multiple interests.

Because nonprofit corporations exist to benefit society, they receive many privileges from both the federal (through the Internal Revenue Service) and state governments: exemption from paying income tax, ability to receive tax-deductible donations, eligibility for grant awards available to nonprofits, and often exemption from property taxes. Typically, these tax exemptions and government grant awards amount to billions of government and taxpayer dollars. As a result, the government requires nonprofit organizations to have a board of directors to provide stewardship and ensure that these funds are utilized appropriately and efficiently to serve the public interest.

The nonprofit board of directors has the following legal and fiduciary responsibilities in the stewardship of their organization:

- Duty of Care: taking care of the nonprofit by ensuring prudent use of all assets (e.g., staff, revenue, resources, etc.);
- Duty of Obedience: ensuring the nonprofit complies and obeys all applicable laws, regulations, and policies; that its services advance the agency's mission and purpose; and
- Duty of Loyalty: making decisions in best interest of the agency, not for personal self-interest.

The *duty of care* refers to the board's responsibility to be competent. In other words, the board must exert the care an "ordinarily prudent person" would when making a decision. Board members should read all program and financial reports and should engage in thoughtful discussions about all relevant issues. In order to show that the board has engaged in these discussions, minutes of each meeting should be taken and board members' votes should be accurately recorded.

The *duty of obedience* requires that board members be faithful to the organization's mission. Board members should refer to the organization's mission when making decisions or planning for the organization's future. The IRS gives organizations tax breaks and other special privileges for pursuing their mission; if organizations use these privileges for other reasons, they are in violation of the law. Board members are responsible for ensuring that organizations are true to their missions and meet all federal, state, and local requirements and regulations.

Lastly, the *duty of loyalty* refers to the board's responsibility to be faithful to the organization. Each board member should have undivided allegiance to the agency and should not be engaged in conversations in which they may have conflicts of interest. The duty of loyalty requires that board members always act in the best interests of the agency that they are governing. For this reason, it is imperative that all boards develop and follow conflict of interest policies, in order to minimize the impact of potential conflicts.

Boards are critical components of any nonprofit agency and their importance should not be underestimated. Serving on a board is a responsibility and a commitment. By understanding their responsibilities, board members can better serve the organization and help it meet its overall mission and goals in serving their communities.

Adapted from:

- Good Governance Practices (Internal Revenue Service):
https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/governance_practices.pdf
- A Nonprofit Board's Fiduciary Responsibility:
<https://trust.guidestar.org/blog/2014/10/17/a-nonprofit-boards-fiduciary-responsibility/>

Board's Role and Responsibilities

As your board of directors serves as the legal governing body for your agency, each board member has ten key responsibilities (noted in the following section) in serving the agency. The board members' general responsibilities are essential for the health and success of the agency along with them meeting their three legal duties of care, obedience, and loyalty,

In addition to meeting the ten key responsibilities, the board's overall role is to govern the agency by providing oversight, setting the basic decision-making process, and establishing policies in which the agency can operate and function. Typically, the board of directors should review and approve the policies in the following organizational areas for your agency: board procedures and operations (e.g., bylaws, etc.); financial management and controls (e.g., check signing, internal controls, audits, reporting, investments, etc.); personnel (e.g., diversity plan, benefits, vacation/sick and other leave policies, hiring/termination policies, etc.); fundraising (e.g., types of activities, resources needed, etc.); and public relations (e.g., designated spokespersons, etc.).

Many of these policies should be developed in conjunction with the Executive Director but should be approved by the board. Once approved, they should be implemented consistently and reviewed regularly for any updates or revisions. When revisions are made, these policies should be submitted to the board for review and approval.

Ten Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards

1. Determine the agency's mission and purpose

A board of directors is responsible for setting the course for the organization. They should establish the mission for the organization when it is conceived. The board should revisit the mission of the agency every five years to evaluate its relevance to the field and in light of any trends or issues the agency is facing. In setting the organization's purpose, the board determines the reason(s) for which the agency exists. The board should determine the agency's programs and goals based on the mission of the organization. In other words, the energy of the organization must be used to accomplish the organization's mission. The board is responsible for ensuring the organization stays true to its mission (duty of loyalty).

2. Select the Executive Director

The board of directors is responsible for hiring the Executive Director of the agency. The hiring process can be delegated to a committee of the board (such as a search committee), but the entire board should be kept informed about the hiring process and should be able to give input into the criteria by which potential executives are assessed. Staff and other agency stakeholders should be given input into the search process. When it comes to hiring the Executive Director of any agency, it is wise for the board to seek input from multiple stakeholders in order to make the best decision for the organization.

3. Support the Executive Director and assess their performance

The board must support and evaluate the Executive Director. Supporting (not micromanaging) the director includes:

- providing regular performance reviews;
- complimenting and recognizing them for jobs well done;
- giving them constructive feedback;
- assisting them when tough issues come up with other board members;
- keeping them informed of issues about which the board is aware;
- clarifying expectations the board has for them (including maintaining and up-to-date job description for them);
- encouraging the director to take care of themselves (including taking leave when necessary); and
- introducing them to community leaders.

A committee of the board (such as the executive committee) may conduct the annual evaluation of the Executive Director. The Executive Director should know well in advance of the review and by what criteria they are being assessed. Some agencies may choose to have staff, volunteers, or community members provide input into the review process as well. It is important that the review be conducted in a confidential, professional manner. The evaluation for the Executive Director can be similar to the evaluations conducted for other agency staff.

4. Plan for the organization's development

As the board sets the mission and purposes for the organization, it should also be engaged in a planning process to determine what specific goals the agency should seek to accomplish in order to pursue its mission. Planning can happen many different ways for organizations, but it is important that every agency engage in a planning process.

The board may choose to bring in an outside facilitator to guide the agency in its planning. It is possible for the board to engage in a planning process without outside assistance, but the board may wish to examine any of the number of materials that have been published regarding strategic planning before beginning to plan.

5. Ensure adequate resources (including fundraising!)

The board sets the course for the agency, and it must ensure that the organization has access to enough resources to meet its goals. The board should be the main fundraising body of the organization. While it may require staff support to complete its fundraising, the board must not rely on staff to fundraise.

Fundraising may be delegated to a committee of the board, but it is important to note that all board members should be involved at some level with fundraising. Fundraising is more than hosting special events; fundraising includes soliciting individual donors as well. All board members should solicit donations from community members, and should make their own financial contributions to the agency.

Beyond fundraising, the board should evaluate other potential sources of revenue for the organization. The board should continuously aim to find sustainable income for the organization.

6. Manage resources effectively

Because the board is the guardian of the agency and its resources, it is the responsibility of the board to make sure these resources are used wisely. In order to determine how to allocate the organization's resources, the board should develop (in conjunction with agency's Executive Director) and approve the annual budget for the agency. After a budget is approved, the board should monitor the agency's expenses to ensure that the agency remains within the parameters of the budget.

In order to monitor the use of resources effectively, the board should receive and read financial reports on a monthly basis. It is the board's job to ask clarifying questions if the financial reports are unclear. The board must take the time to carefully read these reports in order to monitor the agency's fiscal health. In order to best manage these resources, the board should determine the financial policies for the agency. (More information about these policies is contained in the Financial Management section of this toolkit.) The board should also ensure that the agency receives an audit each year.

7. Determine and monitor the organization's programs and services

Programs exist in ever-changing environments. In order to change to meet the evolving needs of clients and communities, the board must assess any trends that would alter the needs or fundamentally change the client base. Boards should then use this information in the organization's planning processes to adapt programs to meet the new and emerging needs. For example, a community has a new agribusiness company being established in their community that will add new jobs along with a new immigrant population joining their community. The Board and staff will want to consider this new information in their upcoming strategic planning discussions.

The board is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the organization's programs and services as well. The board, in conjunction with staff, should determine when programs and services should be changed.

8. Enhance the organization's public standing

The board members are the organization's main representatives in the community. In order to promote the organization, board members should be able to speak about the mission, goals, and programs of the agency. Board members should take opportunities to promote the organization to civic, religious, community, and government groups as appropriate. The board and Executive Director should determine who serves as the official spokesperson for the agency, but all board members should be able to speak intelligently about the organization on a more casual basis.

Because board and staff cannot speak to every constituent or community member, organizations should publish an annual report that details programmatic accomplishments and financial data. By publishing such a document, the organization informs the public about its mission and successes and generates more interest in the agency as a whole. This document also serves as an additional accountability measure for the community it serves and should be sent to their funders and key community stakeholders.

9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability

As part of their duty of obedience, the board of directors is responsible for ensuring that the organization is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations along with its contracts. Similarly, the board should ensure that the agency adheres to its contracts as well as occupational, safety, health, labor, and related regulations. To establish a system that encourages ethical and legal activity, the board must set policy for the organization. Major policy areas include personnel, finance, and conflict of interest.

The board must ensure that all policies meet minimum legal requirements. Many boards choose to have an attorney review the personnel policies, for example, in order to make sure the agency stays in compliance with applicable employment law. Similarly, a board may choose to have a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) review the agency's financial policies. Because the board is ultimately responsible for ensuring the agency's compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, boards may choose to

bring in outside professionals with specific areas of expertise to guide them in setting policy.

The agency also must follow the requirements of its own by-laws and articles of incorporation. The board should understand the contents of these documents and should follow the guidelines they outline. If the board does not follow its own policies, the agency becomes vulnerable and may face a lawsuit.

10. Board Development

Boards grow and change throughout the life of an organization. In order to best meet the changing demands facing them, the board should:

- develop a new member orientation that prepares newcomers for their roles;
- educate themselves continuously;
- assess board performance;
- identify and recruit new members; and
- develop committees as appropriate.

A committee of the board, such as the nominating committee, may complete some of these tasks. All board members should identify their own needs for ongoing training and development, and be responsible for seeking out resources that will assist them in their jobs.

Adapted from:

- Boardsource – 10 Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards:
<https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/boards/basic-responsibilities-nonprofit-boards>

Resource:

- Board Roles and Responsibilities (National Council of Nonprofits):
<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/board-roles-and-responsibilities>

A Commitment to Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

As noted in the previous section on board diversity, it is essential that organizations working to end rape and domestic violence understand and demonstrate their commitment to anti-oppression and anti-racism work. As these movements are founded on the framework and philosophy of anti-oppression, many programs have embedded this philosophy into their history, core values, and philosophy of their services and programs, staffing, and volunteers. The board of directors has a critical role in this work.

Oppression is one of the root causes of sexual assault and domestic violence, and sexual violence and domestic violence have often been used throughout history to maintain oppressive systems. Oppression is the systemic and pervasive mistreatment of individuals and groups who do not occupy cultural positions of power. Institutional and interpersonal imbalances of power and privilege contribute to this mistreatment. Oppression includes all forms of racism, homophobia, sexism, classism, ageism, ableism, and any other means of marginalizing a group of individuals. Racism is one of the most structural, institutional forms of oppression as it creates inequalities in power, access, opportunities, services, and policy in our communities, our institutions, and our organizations. Because sexual and domestic violence are also tools used to perpetuate multiple forms of oppression, it is critical that we recognize that all oppressions are interlocking and dependent on one another for survival.

Oppression is an abuse of power. As our agencies work to end sexual assault and domestic violence, we are also working to end all forms of oppression. Our agencies must work diligently to address all forms of oppression, and recognize the inherent relationship between interlocking oppressions in our work to end sexual assault and domestic violence in our communities. This work includes critical self-reflection and assessment of the organization's practices and policies. Systems of oppression and privilege are often hidden, especially the systems that influence hiring, supervision, and community partnerships. Our agencies—with leadership from the board of directors—must be willing to question and challenge our current practices, policies, and procedures that marginalize, exclude, or dehumanize others, whether intentional or unintentional.

Practicing anti-racism and anti-oppression work is an ongoing commitment required for providing the best services to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence through sustainable organizations. The commitment to promoting racial equality and anti-oppression efforts should be implemented and integrated all levels of the organization from the board of directors, staff, volunteers, and services to survivors in our community. These efforts should be modeled by the leadership and board of the organization to promote, practice, and lead the organization's anti-racism and anti-oppression efforts. As we seek to break down barriers and work to make our services accessible to underserved and marginalized communities, we need to ensure that we also break down the barriers to promote racial equality and diversity among our staff and board to truly reflect the community that our agencies serve.

The board of directors of our agencies needs to be informed on anti-oppression and anti-racism to ground the agency's policies, practices, and governance in this intersectional approach for survivors. The diversity of the board and staff should reflect that commitment. This ongoing commitment should include initial and annual training on anti-oppression and anti-racism. Additionally, anti-oppression and anti-racism should also be included in all organizational planning efforts.

Adapted from:

- CALCASA.org – Support for Survivors: http://www.calcasa.org/wp-content/uploads/files/CALCASA-1999_Support-for-Survivors.pdf
- YWCA of Greater Flint Training Manual – Anti-Oppression Theory: <https://volunteermanual.wordpress.com/2011/03/22/anti-oppression-theory/>

Resources:

- NAESV – Racism and Rape: <http://endsexualviolence.org/where-we-stand/racism-and-rape>
- PCAR.org – Oppression and Sexual Violence: <http://www.pcar.org/about-sexual-violence/oppression-sexual-violence>
- PCADV.org – Resources About Dismantling Oppression: <http://www.pcadv.org/Learn-More/Prevention/Resources/Dismantling-Oppression/>
- PreventConnect.org – 6 Key Points for Anti-Racism Work (And Why It Connects to Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention): <http://www.preventconnect.org/2014/08/6-key-points-for-anti-racism-work-and-why-it-connects-to-sexual-violence-prevention/>

Board Composition, Recruitment and Diversity

As many nonprofit sexual assault and domestic violence programs develop their board of directors, they should be mindful of the key oversight roles and responsibilities of their board that include:

- Nonprofit management (including programmatic and fiscal responsibilities);
- Organizational planning;
- Fundraising;
- Personnel management;
- Legal responsibilities; and
- Public relations.

A key to building an effective board of directors begins with understanding who you need on the board of directors as it relates to needs and function of your agency. The board of directors for agencies in the anti-domestic violence and anti-rape movements must provide leadership in the organization's values and beliefs, in addition to providing specific skills related to the organization's functions. In this, it is essential that our board of directors also understand and reflect an anti-oppression philosophy by learning about oppression and allyship, and including board members from traditionally marginalized and underserved communities in order to build and maintain a diverse and inclusive board that is reflective of the organization's service area.

Diversifying a board of directors is not only about having board members that reflect a variety of skill sets or professions, but also about reflecting the demographics of the community it serves. Having a racially and culturally diverse board of directors strengthens your agency and enhances the accessibility and accountability of your agency to the entire community it serves.

Board diversity should be a constant priority and goal for the board, and its nominating committee should assist in building relationships with prospective board members year-round with an eye toward creating and maintaining diversity. Additionally, anti-racism and anti-oppression training (and materials) should be part of the board development and orientation processes to assure an anti-oppressive organization through the work of the diverse board.

Resources:

- Board Recruitment Tools:
<https://www.boardsource.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?webcode=Recruit-Board-Members>
- Bridgespan Group – Becoming a More Diverse Nonprofit: Make Your Values Tangible: https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/hiring/becoming-a-more-diverse-nonprofit#.VdZkn8t_Yal

- Sample Board Recruitment Matrix:
<https://www.501commons.org/resources/tools-and-best-practices/boards-governance/board-matrix-worksheet-shorthand-consulting>
- Finding the Right Board Members for Your Nonprofit:
<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/finding-the-right-board-members-your-nonprofit>
- Board Diversity: Resources on Diversifying Your Board of Directors:
<http://resourcesharingproject.org/board-diversity-resources-diversifying-your-board-directors>

Job Descriptions for Board Members

Every nonprofit board of directors should have a structure that clearly defines the roles of board members. It should clearly distinguish the different roles for the board officers from the general member's role.

The following are samples of the job duties for the following board member positions and can be adapted for your agency:

Board Officers:

President/Board Chair: This position is the chief volunteer role within the organization. The President is responsible for:

- leading the board meetings and the Executive Committee;
- assisting the Executive Director in developing the agenda for each Board meeting;
- serving as the main liaison between the board and staff;
- representing the organization to the community;
- leading board planning;
- ensuring the board acts in accordance with its policies;
- serving as the chief representative of the board; and
- creating leadership opportunities for other board members.

Vice President/Vice Chair: The Vice-President is the "second-in-command" on the board and serves as the President if they are unavailable. Because of the Vice-President's key role in working with the board, the VP should be informed of all major agency issues as the President is. The VP's duties include:

- attending all board meetings;
- serving on the Executive Committee;
- carrying out special assignments as requested by the board president;
- understanding the President's responsibilities and be able to perform the duties in the President's absence; and
- participating as a vital part of the board leadership.

Secretary: The Secretary is responsible for documenting board decisions and maintaining records of all agency governance information. The Secretary's responsibilities include:

- attending all board meetings;
- serving on the Executive Committee;
- recording the minutes of all board meetings;

- ensuring the safety and maintaining important documents, including: articles of incorporation, tax-exempt documentation, by-laws, audits, budget, and policies, meeting minutes; and
- writing correspondence for the board.

Treasurer: The Treasurer manages the agency's financial information. The Treasurer may work closely with the organization's finance staff to determine the agency's financial procedures. The Treasurer oversees the agency's financial reports and audit, and makes sure that the board receives copies of these pieces of information. The Treasurer reports on finances to the board at the regular board meetings and responds to the questions board members pose. The Treasurer serves on the Finance Committee and develops recommendations of financial policies for the board to review. The Treasurer's duties include:

- attending all board meetings;
- understanding financial accounting and reports for the agency;
- serving as the Chair of the Finance Committee;
- managing, with the Finance Committee, the board's review of an action-related to the board's financial responsibilities;
- working with the Executive Director and finance staff to ensure that appropriate financial reports are made available to the board on a regular basis in a timely manner; and
- assisting with the presentation of the proposed annual budget to the board for review and approval.

Adapted from:

- Resource Sharing Project - Your Board of Directors: The Basics:
<http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/your-board-directors-basics>
- Bridgespan Group: Board Job Descriptions:
<https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/hiring/nonprofit-job-description-toolkit/board-job-descriptions>

Sample Board Member Job Description

Position Summary:

The board of directors is responsible for ensuring that the organization is well-managed and financially responsible. The board is the governing body of the organization and is responsible for establishing the mission and goals for the organization. In addition, the board sets the organization's policies which provide the parameters for the agency's work.

General Responsibilities (for entire board):

1. To ensure the organization is responsibly managed (in accordance with the organization's bylaws and policies) and is compliant with legal and contract requirements.
2. To ensure that the organization has the resources it needs to pursue its goals. In order to fulfill this responsibility, board members must determine how the organization will raise funds, participate in fund-raising events, donate money, recruit and solicit donors, and identify potential funding sources.
3. To ensure that the resources of the organization are raised and spent in a responsible manner. Board members must help create or approve the agency budget, set financial policy, acquire adequate insurance, and arrange for an annual financial audit.
4. To hire and supervise the Executive Director.
5. To serve as the organization's representatives in the community.
6. To determine the program priorities for the organization. To fulfill this responsibility, board members must establish the organization's strategic plan and long term goals. In addition, the board must evaluate the organization's progress towards its goals.
7. To evaluate and assess board composition, identify and recruit potential board members.

Individual Responsibilities:

1. To make a personal commitment to the mission of the organization.
2. To regularly attend board and committee meetings.
3. To disclose any conflicts of interest as they arise.
4. To stay informed about the goings-on of the organization, including reading financial and program reports.
5. To donate financial resources to the organization and to identify potential donors/funding sources.
6. To participate in special events of the organization.
7. To attend board training events in order to obtain continuing education.
8. To work with the board and staff to strive towards the goals of the organization.

Reprinted from:

- Resource Sharing Project - Your Board of Directors: The Basics:
<http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/your-board-directors-basics>

Sample Board of Directors Application Form

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email: _____

Preferred Method of Contact: _____ Email _____ Phone _____ Mail

Organization Affiliations/Memberships:

Please list any other board of directors you have served on:

What skills or areas of interest do you bring to (Agency Name)?

Which board committees are you interested in joining?

___ Fundraising ___ Finance ___ Personnel ___ Nominating

___ Board Development/Training

(list other committees)

Why are you interested in becoming a member of the board of directors at (Agency Name)?

For Board Use

- | | |
|--|------------|
| ___ Nominee has had a personal meeting with either Executive Director, board President, or other board member. | Date _____ |
| ___ Nominee reviewed by the committee. | Date _____ |
| ___ Nominee attended a board meeting. | Date _____ |
| ___ Nominee interviewed by the board. | Date _____ |

Action taken by the board

Adapted from:

- Free Management Library – Sample Board of Directors Application Form:
<http://managementhelp.org/boards/application.htm>

Sample Board Member Contract

I agree to serve the board of directors of the (Agency Name). I understand that I have a responsibility to ensure that the organization is well-managed and financially sound as it pursues its mission and goals.

As a board member, I will:

1. Commit my support to the mission of the (Agency Name).
2. Attend at least 75% of board meetings, committee meetings, and special events.
3. Disclose any conflicts of interest as they arise.
4. Stay informed about the work of the organization. I will regularly read programmatic and financial reports and request additional information or ask questions as necessary.
5. Donate financial resources to the (Agency Name) and will work to identify potential donors and funding sources.
6. Obtain on-going training to increase my ability to serve the (Agency Name) as a board member.
7. Work with the board and staff to strive towards the goals of the organization.

Signed:

Member, Board of Directors

Date

President, Board of Directors

Date

Reprinted from:

- Resource Sharing Project -Your Board of Directors: The Basics:
<http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/your-board-directors-basics>

Financial Management

The board of directors is the legal governing body for your agency. It has the fiduciary and legal responsibility to maintain the integrity and accountability of the organization. This means the agency must use the funds efficiently and in compliance with the funding restrictions and regulations as it fulfills its program goals.

Many boards seek an accountant or someone with financial expertise to serve on their board as their treasurer or other board role to assist with the financial management or lead their Finance Committee. However, boards might not have an accountant as a member. In these cases, it is recommended that the board considers seeking an accountant or CPA to provide paid or pro bono consultation services in reviewing the agency's financial policies or procedures.

Each board member is responsible for maintaining the financial integrity of your agency. It is important that every board member review the regular financial reports and be willing to ask questions on items they do not understand in the agency's financial and/or audit reports. All board members need to work together to accomplish the following financial tasks:

- Review and approve the agency's financial policies;
- Establish and approve the agency's annual budget (in conjunction with staff);
- Review and approve regular financial reports and ask questions for clarification;
- Make investment decisions for agency's assets;
- Establish the audit committee to conduct the agency's independent audit (in conjunction with staff);
- Ensure the agency completes and files its annual tax return (i.e., 990's) and other required regulatory reports/forms (i.e., charitable trust registrations, business licenses, etc. in conjunction with staff); and
- Review financial procedures and/or manual on a periodic basis with staff.

Financial Policy Checklist:

The minimum financial areas that need specific policies to ensure internal controls for your agency include:

- Segregation of duties;
- Receiving cash;
- Cash deposits;
- Bank reconciliations;
- Authorizing expenses;
- Check signing;
- Personnel authorizations (hiring/terminations, changes in employment status, timesheets);
- Payroll preparation;

- Collecting and recording receivables;
- Petty cash; and
- Recording payables.

For additional information on financial policies, please review RSP's Financial Management Manual, which can be adapted to your agency's needs (<http://resourcesharingproject.org/financial-management-manual>) and additional resources on the NSTA project page (<http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/nonprofit-sustainability>).

Additionally, below are sample questions that board members may consider to determine the financial health of the agency:

- Is our financial plan consistent with our strategic plan?
- Are we regularly comparing our financial activity with what we have budgeted?
- Is our cash flow projected to be adequate?
- Are our key sources of income rising or falling? If they are falling, what are we doing?
- Are our expenses appropriate?
- Are any specific expense areas rising faster than their sources of income?
- Do we have the appropriate checks and balances to prevent errors, fraud, and abuse?
- Are we meeting guidelines and requirements set by our funders?
- Are we running a gain or a loss?
- Are our key expenses, especially salary and benefits, under control?
- Are we filing on a timely basis all the reporting documents we are supposed to be filing?
- Are we fulfilling all of our legal obligations?
- Has the board adopted a formal policy for the establishment of cash reserves? Do we have sufficient cash reserves? Do we have or need to apply for a line of credit with our bank?

Adapted from:

- Resource Sharing Project - Your Board of Directors: The Basics: <http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/your-board-directors-basics>

Conflict of Interest and Whistleblower Policies

Conflict of Interest Policy:

Every nonprofit should have a conflict of interest policy. The conflict of interest policy typically addresses situations when a board member or staff person can gain a financial benefit through an “insider” connection (i.e., the relationship with your agency). Examples include the board member who owns a print shop that wants to print your agency’s brochures, or a board member who wants the Executive Director to hire a family member to work at the agency. The potential conflict of interest is when the board members can use their influence (as an insider) on these decisions for their personal gain. Both actual and perceived conflicts of interest should be fully disclosed, addressed, and/or avoided. The conflict of interest policy should provide guidance on how these potential conflicts can be addressed within your agency.

As best practice, nonprofits should create a conflict of interest form to be completed by all board members and key staff (e.g., Executive Director, Finance Director/Manager, and other management staff) on an annual basis. As your agency files its annual federal tax return (IRS Form 990 for nonprofits), the tax form will have questions about whether your agency has this policy in place. IRS Form 990 specifically asks about annual disclosures of conflict of interest from your Board of Directors and staff.

Most policies usually have the following two elements in addressing these conflicts of interest:

1. Disclosure: Requires all board and key staff members to disclose any possible conflicts in terms of affiliations with businesses that the agency may do business with and other boards on which they serve; and
2. Exclusion from board discussion and vote: The board member who has the potential conflict should recuse themselves from the discussion and vote. This should also be recorded in the board minutes.

Additionally, if a conflict of interest does occur and the board proceeds to do business with a company that a board or key staff member has a financial interest, it is recommended that the agency should be fully aware of any requirements to disclose this conflict to funders to ensure compliance.

Whistleblower Protection Policy:

It is considered best practice for every nonprofit to adopt a whistleblower protection policy and create a whistleblower form to be signed by every employee upon their hire. A whistleblower protection policy prohibits retaliation against employees “who blow the whistle” by reporting their employer’s improper accounting practices. As your agency files its annual federal tax return (IRS Form 990 for nonprofits), the tax form will have a question about whether your agency has an existing whistleblower policy.

By having a good whistleblower/anti-retaliation policy in place, your agency is demonstrating good governance and willingness to address concerns when they are reported.

Adapted from:

- Internal Revenue Service – Form 990: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f990.pdf>
- Blue Avocado – Nonprofit Conflict of Interest: A 3-Dimensional View: <http://www.blueavocado.org/content/nonprofit-conflict-interest-3-dimensional-view>
- Blue Avocado – Model Whistleblower Policy for Nonprofits: <http://www.blueavocado.org/content/model-whistleblower-policy-nonprofits>
- National Council of Nonprofits – Conflict of Interest: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/conflict-of-interest>
- National Council of Nonprofits – Whistleblower Protections for Nonprofits: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/whistleblower-protections-nonprofits>
- Nonprofit Risk Management Center – Whistleblower Protections in the Nonprofit Sector: <https://www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/articles/employment091005.shtml>

Sample Conflict of Interest Statement for Board Members and Staff of (Agency Name)

Policy:

No board member or board committee member, or any member of their family should accept any gift, entertainment, service, loan, or promise of future benefits from any person who either personally or whose employees might benefit or appear to benefit from such board or committee member's connection with (Agency Name), unless the facts of such benefit, gift, service, or loan are disclosed in good faith and are authorized by the board. Board and committee members are expected to work out for themselves the most gracious method of declining gifts, entertainment, and benefits that do not meet this standard.

No board or committee members should perform, for any personal gain, services to any (Agency Name) supplier of goods or services, as employee, consultant, or in any other capacity which promises compensation of any kind, unless the fact of such transaction or contracts are disclosed in good faith, and the board or committee authorizes such a transaction. Similar association by a family member of the board or committee member or by any other close relative may be inappropriate.

No board or committee member or any member of their family should have any beneficial interest in, or substantial obligation to any (Agency Name) supplier of goods or services or any other organization that is engaged in doing business with or serving (Agency Name) unless it has been determined by the board, on the basis of full disclosure of facts, that such interest does not give rise to a conflict of interest.

This policy statement is not intended to apply to gifts and/or similar entertainment of nominal value that clearly are in keeping with good business ethics and do not obligate the recipient.

Any matter of question or interpretation that arises relating to this policy should be referred to the president for decision and/or for referral to the board of directors for decision, where appropriate.

I have received, read, and fully understand the Conflict of Interest Statement and will comply with the statement by bringing any potential conflict of interest situations to the board for consideration.

Date

Signature

Adapted from: The Center for Nonprofit Management – Sample Conflict of Interest Statement for board and staff members: <http://cnmconnect.org/>

Sample Employee Protection (Whistleblower) Policy

Policy:

If any employee reasonably believes that some policy, practice, or activity of (Agency Name) is in violation of law, a written complaint must be filed by that employee with the Executive Director or the board president.

It is the intent of (Agency Name) to adhere to all laws and regulations that apply to the organization and the underlying purpose of this policy is to support the organization's goal of legal compliance. The support of all employees is necessary to achieving compliance with various laws and regulations.

An employee is protected from retaliation only if the employee brings the alleged unlawful activity, policy, or practice to the attention of (Agency Name) and provides the (Agency Name) with a reasonable opportunity to investigate and correct the alleged unlawful activity. The protection described below is only available to employees that comply with this requirement.

(Agency Name) will not retaliate against an employee who in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of (Agency Name), or of another individual or entity with whom (Agency Name) has a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law, or a clear mandate of public policy.

(Agency Name) will not retaliate against employees who disclose or threaten to disclose to a supervisor or a public body, any activity, policy, or practice of (Agency Name) that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, or a rule, or regulation mandated pursuant to law or is in violation of a clear mandate of public policy concerning the health, safety, welfare, or protection of the environment.

My signature below indicates my receipt and understanding of this policy. I also verify that I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions about the policy.

Employee Signature

Date

Adapted from: Nonprofit Risk Management Center – Sample Employee Protection (Whistleblower) Policy: <https://www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/articles/samplewb.pdf>

Executive Director Compensation

The board of directors is responsible for reviewing and establishing the salary or compensation for its Executive Director. It should be reviewed on an annual basis and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS Form 990) provides nonprofit boards a three-step safe harbor process for compensation comparison process for its Executive Director. Each year, the nonprofit is required to respond to this question about Executive Director's compensation on the agency's federal tax returns (IRS Form 990). Additionally, funding sources may require certification and/or documentation about the agency's use of the three-step safe harbor process.

The three-step safe harbor process requires the following:

1. Create a Compensation Committee: The board should develop an independent body (that does not include the Executive Director or anyone with a potential conflict of interest) to conduct a "comparability review" of comparable salaries for Executive Directors in your field and/or community. The independent body can be your Executive Committee or another committee consisting of your board members.
2. Review "Comparable Salary and Benefits" Data: This committee's role is to research and review comparable salary and benefits data for Executive Directors in similar nonprofits in your field (e.g., domestic violence and sexual assault centers in your state, etc.) and/or community. This can include reviewing recent salary surveys from your state sexual assault and/or domestic violence coalitions, nonprofit state or regional centers, and/or other national entities such as Guidestar, Nonprofit Times, Charity Navigator, etc. This review can also consist of contacting similar nonprofits in your community or state to request information about the salaries and benefit for their Executive Directors. This information should be documented and retained in the committee's minutes.
3. Complete Appropriate Documentation: The Compensation Committee should report and submit their recommendation (along with their meeting minutes) to the board for their review and approval of the Executive Director's salary (as it may be increased or adjusted on an annual or bi-annual basis, as appropriate). As part of the board's recordkeeping process, it is essential that this approval is recorded in the board minutes (noting specifically the yes, no, and abstention votes) and retained in the agency's records. Additionally, the board should establish and approve a written policy for their Executive Director compensation process (see sample policy following this section).

Of agencies not complying with the three-step safe harbor process, some have experienced their funding sources placing a "hold" on their funds until they have implemented this process and provided documentation of this process. Other agencies have been audited by their state or IRS to verify their compliance. The IRS can levy fines for noncompliance and possibly revoke the nonprofit's tax exempt status as well.

Adapted from:

- Blue Avocado – How Much to Pay the Executive Director?: <http://www.blueavocado.org/content/how-much-pay-executive-director>
- Charity Lawyer – Setting Nonprofit Executive Compensation: <http://charitylawyerblog.com/2011/03/08/setting-nonprofit-executive-compensation/>
- Guidestar – What You Need to Know About Nonprofit Executive Compensation: <https://www.guidestar.org/ViewCmsFile.aspx?ContentID=3890>
- National Council of Nonprofits – Executive Compensation: What should a nonprofit pay its chief executive?: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/executive-compensation>
- One Justice – Executive Compensation: <http://www.one-justice.org/templates/System/details.asp?id=53135&PID=844588>

Sample Policy for Board Approval of Executive Compensation

The Executive Director of (Agency Name) is the principal representative of (Agency Name), and the person responsible for the efficient operation of the agency. Therefore, it is the desire of (Agency Name) to provide a fair yet reasonable and not excessive compensation for the Executive Director (and any other highly compensated employees and consultants).

The annual process for determining compensation is as follows: (Agency Name) shall [either the full board or a compensation committee/executive committee] annually evaluate the Executive Director on their performance, and ask for their input on matters of performance and compensation.

Board Approval. The [human resource or executive committee] will obtain research and information to make a recommendation to the full board for the compensation (salary and benefits) of the Executive Director (and other highly compensated employees or consultants) based on a review of comparability data. For example, the [human resource/executive/compensation] Committee will secure data that documents compensation levels and benefits for similarly qualified individuals in comparable positions at similar organizations. This data may include the following:

1. Salary and benefit compensation studies by independent sources;
2. Written job offers for positions at similar organizations;
3. Documented telephone calls about similar positions at both nonprofit and for-profit organizations; and
4. Information obtained from the IRS Form 990 filings of similar organizations.

Concurrent Documentation. To approve the compensation for the Executive Director (and other highly compensated employees and consultants) the board must document how it reached its decisions, including the data on which it relied, in minutes of the meeting during which the compensation was approved. Documentation will include:

- a) A description of the compensation and benefits and the date it was approved;
- b) The members of the board who were present during the discussion about compensation and benefits, and the results of the vote;
- c) A description of the comparability data relied upon and how the data was obtained; and
- d) Any actions taken (such as abstaining from discussion and vote) with respect to consideration of the compensation by anyone who is otherwise a member of the board but who had a conflict of interest with respect to the decision on the compensation and benefits.

Independence in Setting Compensation: The Chair of the (Agency Name's) board of directors, who is a volunteer and not compensated by (Agency Name), will operate independently without undue influence from the Executive Director.

No member of the Executive or Human Resources Committee will be a staff member, the relative of a staff member, or have any relationship with staff that could present a conflict of interest.

Date approved by (Agency Name) board of directors: _____

Adapted from:

- National Council of Nonprofits – Executive Compensation: What should a nonprofit pay its chief executive?: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/executive-compensation>

Understanding the Differences Between the Board and Staff Roles

The board of directors serves as one entity and provides general oversight and governance for the nonprofit agency. It serves as one body in supervising and managing one employee, the Executive Director. The board is responsible for hiring, supervising, and evaluating the Executive Director. Typically, the board president may serve as the designee and liaison for the board in communicating and meeting with the Executive Director on a regular basis.

The Executive Director is responsible for the daily operations of the nonprofit and supervision of the staff. The board provides guidance, priorities, and direction to the Executive Director in managing the agency but should not be involved in the supervision of staff or daily operations of the organization. If the board has concerns about the agency's services or operations, they should communicate and discuss them with the Executive Director to allow them to address and resolve the problem. The board should serve in a supportive role to assist the Executive Director when they request assistance or guidance on an issue or concern.

Adapted from:

- Resource Sharing Project - Your Board of Directors: The Basics:
<http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/your-board-directors-basics>

Resources:

- Blue Avocado – Should Staff Contact With the Board Be Restricted?:
<http://www.blueavocado.org/content/should-staff-contact-board-be-restricted>
- Nonprofit Network – Dividing Duties Between Board and Staff:
<http://nonprofnetwork.org/Resources/Documents/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Dividing%20Duties%20Between%20Board%20and%20Staff.pdf>

Determining Board and Staff Roles

Topic Area	Board Responsibility	Staff Responsibility
Mission	Set mission of agency	Give input on mission
Accountability	Constitute legal entity of corporation, ensure organization adheres to policies and by-laws, ensures agency is well-managed and complies with legal requirements.	Ensures contract compliance. Regularly reports to funding agencies. Regularly reports to board.
Planning	Establish organization's strategic plan and long-term goals. Assess trends in field to determine future of organization. Evaluate organization's progress towards goals.	Lend expertise to board in developing strategic plan and goals. Develop programs and activities that strive to meet long-term goals and mission. Provide regular reports to board. Give input to evaluation process.
Finances	Set financial policy, approve budget, and review financial statements. Legally responsible for financial obligations of organization. Oversee annual audit.	Manage daily finances, develop budget. Develop financial reports for board. Complete financial activities in accordance with policy.
Personnel	Select, monitor, and evaluate Executive Director. Set all personnel policy. Establish levels of compensation (and benefits) for all positions.	Manage human resources beyond ED, in accordance with policy. Establish hiring/termination procedures. Ensure staffing of corporation.
Board Development	Evaluate and assess board composition. Identify training needs, set board meetings, identify and recruit potential board members.	Help identify potential board members. Assist in training and orienting board. Provide staff support to board activities.
Public Relations	Represent agency in community. Determine agency's marketing plan.	Represent agency in community. Ensure that connections are made between the agency and community.
Fundraising	Ensure adequate organizational resources: develop funds, donate money, identify new resources, and cultivate donors.	Identify new resources, assist in fund-raising, track donations, send receipts, and write grants.

Adapted from: The Action Handbook for Boards, created by the Support Center for Nonprofit Management/National Minority AIDS Council. 1995.

Fundraising

As one of their key responsibilities, the board of directors is responsible for ensuring the agency has sufficient resources to operate in order to fulfill its mission. Aside from monitoring the financial health of the agency, every board should have a fundraising plan. Fundraising is vital to every nonprofit agency as grant sources can be limited and may also have restrictions for its use. As many sexual assault and domestic violence agencies receive grants, these grant funds are used to cover specific programmatic costs, which is generally considered restricted funds. Every nonprofit agency needs “unrestricted funds” to help offset costs not covered by your grant awards.

Every board member has a role in fundraising for the agency. These responsibilities include:

- Making an annual gift or donation to the agency (it should be an amount that the board member can afford and it is recommended that the board set a yearly date (or month) for all board members to make their annual pledge). By having every board member make an annual gift, it serves as a model for other potential donors;
- Assist in the planning of an annual fundraising plan for the agency (if your agency has a fundraising committee, board members should be willing to serve on it or help develop this committee), including assisting or serving in the planning and staffing of fundraising events and campaigns;
- Help solicit potential donors/supporters for monetary and in-kind gifts for the agency; and
- Provide and build contacts/relationships of potential donors, funders, and supporters for the agency.

Federal funding cannot be used to support staff time spent on fundraising, and organizations should review any limitations or restrictions set by state and local funders. Any time spent on fundraising must be paid by unrestricted funds, making it essential that board members lead fundraising efforts for the agency.

Adapted from:

- Grantspace – What is the Board’s Role in Fundraising?:
<http://grantspace.org/tools/knowledge-base/Nonprofit-Management/Boards/boards-and-fundraising>

Resources:

- Free Management Library - Role of the Nonprofit Board Fundraising Committee:
<http://managementhelp.org/blogs/boards-of-directors/2011/01/19/role-of-the-nonprofit-board-fundraising-committee/>

- Guidestar – No-Ask Fundraising: Six High Impact Jobs for Board Members:
<https://trust.guidestar.org/no-ask-fundraising-six-high-impact-jobs-for-board-members>
- Guidestar – The Fired-Up Board: Preparing Your Board for Fundraising:
<https://trust.guidestar.org/the-fired-up-board-preparing-your-board-members-for-fundraising>
- Zimmerman-Lehman – Boards that Love Fundraising: Specific Responsibilities:
<http://www.zimmerman-lehman.com/specificresponsibilities.htm>

Board Development and Ongoing Education

A key responsibility of the board of directors is ensuring appropriate training and education for every board member, so they can provide well-informed oversight for the agency. Every board member has a responsibility to seek out training and education both as an individual and collectively as a board to ensure they have the information and knowledge to carry out their board duties.

There should be training during the orientation process of the board and opportunities for continuing education throughout the year. Ongoing education can be integrated into board meetings or planning retreats.

When new board members begin their terms, it is important to give them an orientation to their roles. This orientation is a crucial part of helping board members understand their responsibilities to the organization. Because many board members have not served in this capacity previously, they may need training and orientation on topics such as:

- the roles and responsibilities of board members;
- board and staff roles and boundaries;
- what new board members can expect from staff and other board members;
- what the agency expects from new board members (should be discussed prior to becoming a board member); and
- board processes and procedures.

In addition, new board members should receive training and information about the agency, including the current budget and strategic/long-range plans. Board members should receive a board handbook containing these items and other pertinent information for future reference. Board members should also receive information about the organization's key values including background on trauma-informed services, anti-oppression, and anti-racism. These foundational elements guide our work in this field.

After board members receive their initial orientation, their training should continue throughout their terms. They may require on-going training on topics, such as fundraising, organizational trauma, legal responsibilities. A regular board assessment will help identify the topics to focus on for board training. It is the responsibility of the board to assess their performance, to seek training as needed, and to seek additional advice as appropriate.

Adapted from:

- Resource Sharing Project - Your Board of Directors: The Basics:
<http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/your-board-directors-basics>

Resources:

- BoardSource – Board Orientation and Board Member Development: <https://www.boardsource.org/eweb/dynamicpage.aspx?webcode=Orient-and-Develop-Board-Members>
- Bridgespan Group – Give New Board Members the Training You Wish You’d Had As A Newcomer: <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/boards/new-board-members-training>
- E-Learning Course for Boards of Directors: <http://resourcesharingproject.org/e-learning-course-boards-directors>

Board Assessment and Evaluation

Nonprofit board of directors should conduct an annual performance assessment of the board to ensure accountability to the community that the agency serves. The discussion about the board's performance in meeting its expectations and goals can help determine if board members understand their roles.

The board assessment process can be assigned to a committee, such as the board development or governance committee, to lead the annual assessment process. A self-assessment for each board member (see sample form that can be adapted for your board's use) may be completed and returned to the committee for review and compilation. These self-assessments can further assist the committee in determining the training topics needed to further develop the board members' skills for overall board effectiveness.

An overall board assessment can be conducted to help the board discuss and review its overall performance in terms of key responsibilities:

- mission and purpose;
- selecting/evaluation of the Executive Director;
- planning the organization's development and planning process;
- ensuring adequate resources (i.e., fundraising);
- managing resources effectively;
- determining and monitoring the agency's programs and services;
- enhancing the agency's public standing; and
- ensuring the board's development (See sample tool following this section).

The board can also engage in seeking feedback from funders, community members, survivors, and staff through surveys or stakeholder meetings to help provide input on ways it can improve its performance.

It is important to remember that the board of directors is accountable to its community, survivors/clients that the agency serves, funders, the federal, state/territorial, and/or tribal governments for the good management of the agency. Overall, the board assessment process is a key internal step for the board to review its performance in order to ensure they are benefitting the agency and the community it serves.

Adapted from:

- Resource Sharing Project - Your Board of Directors: The Basics:
<http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/your-board-directors-basics>

Resources:

- BoardSource – Successful Board Self-Assessments:
<http://leadingwithintent.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SuccessfulBoardSelf-Assessments.pdf>
- Center for Nonprofit Leadership – Board of Directors Assessment:
<http://www.adelphi.edu/wp-content/blogs.dir/91/files/2012/09/Board-of-Directors-Assessment.pdf?t=1379703205-148802>
- Maine Association of Nonprofits – Is Your Board Ready for Self-Assessments?:
<http://www.nonprofitmaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Is-Your-Board-Ready-for-Self-Assessment-Acrobat-Pro-version.pdf>
- National Council of Nonprofits – Self-Assessment for Nonprofit Boards:
<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/self-assessments-nonprofit-boards>

Sample Board Member Self-Evaluation

Use the following questions for individual board member evaluation. Board members answering “yes” to these questions are likely to be fulfilling their governance responsibilities.

Questions	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. Do I understand and support the mission, purpose and philosophy of my agency? Do I understand my agency’s philosophy and commitment to anti-racism/anti-oppression as it relates to board, staffing, and services to the community?			
2. Am I knowledgeable about my agency’s programs and services?			
3. Do I follow trends, important developments, priorities, and needs related to my agency?			
4. Do I assist with fund-raising and/or give a yearly monetary gift/donation to my agency? Do I ask people in my circle of influence (e.g., friends, business colleagues, etc.) to contribute/donate to my agency?			
5. Do I review and understand the organization’s regular financial statements?			
6. Do I have a good working relationship with my Executive Director/CEO?			
7. Do I recommend and nominate individuals to join my board and/or committees (as it relates to board diversity and inclusion)?			
8. Do I prepare for and actively participate in board meetings and committee meetings?			
9. Do I act as a good-will ambassador (i.e., help promote) for my agency?			
10. Do I find serving on the board to be a satisfying and rewarding experience?			

Reprinted from:

- National Council of Nonprofits – Sample Individual Board Member Self-Evaluation:
https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/sites/default/files/documents/Individual%20Board%20Member%20Self-Evaluation_0.pdf

Sample Board Assessment Tool

Responsibility	Yes/no/ maybe/ unsure	What needs improvement?	Who is responsible?	Deadline
1) Determine agency mission and purpose				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the mission statement accurate? Has it been updated in the last three years? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the organization have a clearly stated philosophy and/or values statement? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board regularly refer to the mission statement and the organization's values/philosophy? 				
Plans for development:				
2) Select the Executive Director				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the ED's job description been updated in the past three years? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the goals of the ED position clear to the board and to the ED? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a succession plan in place in order to sustain the agency during an ED transition? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the board's personnel actions in line with the agency's personnel policies and current employment law? 				
Plans for development:				

Responsibility	Yes/no/ maybe/ unsure	What needs improvement?	Who is responsible?	Deadline
3) Support and supervise the ED				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board president or other designee regularly supervise the ED? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board provide continuous support to the ED in order to help them achieve the goals in their job? Has that support been tailored to meet the unique challenges and areas of growth for the agency's current ED? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board strongly encourage self-care for the ED? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board provide timely feedback (positive and constructive) to the ED? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board clearly state and review the expectations of the ED with the ED? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the ED's evaluation criteria clearly stated and in line with the expectations of the job? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board ensure that all employees are compensated fairly and receive a reasonable benefit package? 				
Plans for development:				

Responsibility	Yes/no/ maybe/ unsure	What needs improvement?	Who is responsible?	Deadline
4) Plan for the organization's development.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the board developed a strategic plan or strategic goals for the agency? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the board providing adequate support in the pursuit of those goals? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the board monitoring the agency's progress towards those goals and amending the plan/goals as necessary? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the plan or set of goals shared throughout all levels of the organization? 				
Plans for development:				
5) Ensure adequate resources				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board raise funds for the agency? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the full board support the agency with personal contributions (in kind or otherwise)? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board ensure that there are enough funds to meet the agency's commitments? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board have a fundraising plan? 				
Plans for development:				

Responsibility	Yes/no/ maybe/ unsure	What needs improvement?	Who is responsible?	Deadline
6) Manage resources effectively				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board approve the agency's annual budget? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board review the agency's budget during the course of the year? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board (or finance committee) review regular financial statements from staff? Does the board understand the agency's financial statements? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board ensure that there are financial policies for the agency and that the agency operates within them? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board ensure that the agency receives and reviews an annual financial 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board ensure that the agency has appropriate levels of liability, director & offer, and other appropriate insurance? 				
Plans for development:				

Responsibility	Yes/no/ maybe/ unsure	What needs improvement?	Who is responsible?	Deadline
7) Determine and monitor the agency's programs and services				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board assess trends in the service area and uses this info to plan? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board have a system in place to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services? Does the board use this data to inform the development of future programs? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do programs and projects fit within the agency's mission statement? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board have a complete understanding of the organization's programs? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board examine trends in the field to help develop future services? 				
Plans for development:				
8) Enhance the organization's public standing				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can all board members articulate the purpose of the agency? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do board members provide connections between the agency and the community? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are board members clearly proud to represent the agency? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do all board members participate in the rape crisis center's key events? 				
Plans for development:				

Responsibility	Yes/no/ maybe/ unsure	What needs improvement?	Who is responsible?	Deadline
9) Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the board members adhere to bylaws, policies, and state laws regarding agency governance? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are board members are aware of and disclose potential conflicts of interest? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do board members ensure that agency policies meet all legal requirements? 				
Plans for development:				
Responsibility	Yes/no/ maybe/ unsure	What needs improvement?	Who is responsible?	Deadline
10) Ensure board development				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do all board members have job descriptions and have they agreed to responsibilities of being board members? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have all board members received updated copies of all board policies and information (e.g., manual)? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have all board members receive an orientation to the agency board when they begin? Does this orientation include information specific to SA/DV work, such as what the role of a rape crisis center is and what sexual assault survivors might need? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board have a plan to receive annual training? Do they receive annual training? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board (or a committee of the board) work to identify and recruit new members? 				

Responsibility	Yes/no/ maybe/ unsure	What needs improvement?	Who is responsible?	Deadline
10) Ensure board development (cont.)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board utilize a committee structure effectively? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board as a whole fully represent the richness and diversity of the community the agency serves? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board have a shared commitment to anti-oppression/anti-racism work? Is there an agreement across the board about what this means for the organization? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the board's structure provide meaningful opportunities for input from communities the agency serves? Are historically marginalized groups provided with meaningful opportunities to influence the board? 				
Plans for development:				

Reprinted from:

- Resource Sharing Project - Your Board of Directors: The Basics:
<http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/your-board-directors-basics>

Organizational Trauma

At anti-domestic violence and anti-sexual assault organizations, our daily work is centered on the trauma of violence. When we choose to fight systems of oppression and help those who have been victimized, we might become weary or emotionally changed from the weight of the work. Feelings of burnout and stress in helping professions are a result of vicarious trauma, and are not only normal, but to be expected. Vicarious trauma comes from the nature of the work we do, so our workplaces have a responsibility for caring for employees.

Organizational alleviation of vicarious trauma is grounded in our policies and supervision practices. A good working environment provides clear guidelines, structures, roles, and policies for members of the board, staff, and volunteers. Providing sufficient orientation and professional training helps staff to feel comfortable and supported in their jobs. Most importantly, a healthy organization provides staff a living wage and good benefits. Staff cannot give survivors their full attention if they are worried about paying their electric bill. Ample vacation and sick leave is important to the quality of care we give survivors, and it is vital for agency leaders to openly value and support vacation and sick leave.

In all organizations, there are lifecycles, crises, and potential for trauma. Lifecycles are normal developmental stages of organizational growth and change, such as expansion of staff or transition from a membership-based to community-based board of directors. Crises are disruptive occurrences that create anxiety, uncertainty, and opportunity, like the departure of a long-term executive director or loss of a funding stream. Traumas—such as a tornado, embezzlement, working in a hostile community, or unaddressed and widespread vicarious trauma—can debilitate an organization, temporarily or long term.

As our field is focused on trauma-informed services and healing for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, our agencies also need to promote healing on a staff and organizational level. Moreover, the agency's leadership and board of directors should integrate regular training on organizational trauma and vicarious trauma, so they can more readily develop and learn ways to address organizational trauma and promote wellness and healing for the organization and staff. Taking care of the organization will ultimately benefit survivors and the community. Addressing both individual vicarious trauma and organizational trauma is a challenging process that requires commitment from the agency at all levels, including its board of directors, to provide the appropriate training, consultation, and resources to create an organizational culture of healing and well-being for their staff and the survivors they serve.

Adapted from:

- NSVRC & RSP - Organizational Trauma and Resilience:
<http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/nsac-2014-handouts-organizational-trauma-resiliency.pdf>

- NSVRC & RSP – Self Care and Trauma Work: <http://www.nsvrc.org/publications/nsvrc-publications-articles/self-care-and-trauma-work>
- RSP – Standing Strong Together: Addressing Vicarious Trauma in Rural Rape Crisis Work: <http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/nsac-2014-handouts-rural-vicarious-trauma.pdf>
- RSP – Organizational Trauma and Resilience: <http://resource-sharingproject.org/organizational-trauma-and-resilience>