

II. Governance

Board Assessment Survey

Suggestions for use

Every board should regularly step back and ask itself how it is doing. This process will always surface areas in which the board thinks that it can do better.

The survey should be anonymous so that each board member can be as candid as possible. The survey can be administered online through a service such as Survey Monkey. Feel free to delete, add or edit the questions.

The results should be compiled by either an outside party or a member of the board whose confidentiality can be relied upon, to maintain anonymity.

A summary should be discussed at a board meeting or as part of a board retreat to identify solutions to the areas identified as needing improvement.

Questions 1-34 are to be answered on a scale of one to four:

4. Strongly Agree
3. Agree
2. Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

Board member engagement

1. The Board Chair effectively facilitates board discussions and actively engages and encourages each board member in productive work
2. There is a sense of collegiality among board members and a mutual respect for the contributions of every member
3. Every board member understands what is expected of them and how they can help support the mission of the organization

Board relationship with the Executive Director (ED)

4. The Board has a clear understanding of the distinction between the oversight and support responsibilities of the board and the management responsibilities of the ED.
5. Board oversight is guided by policy decisions that include measures which guide operations and against which performance can be evaluated

6. The board conducts an annual review of the ED based on mutually agreed objectives
7. The Board Chair and the ED have an effective working relationship
8. Board members do not interfere with the authority of the ED to direct the work of staff

Board meetings and committees

9. The agenda for Board meetings promotes a maximum of engaged discussion on important mission based goals and a minimum of reporting
10. There is an annual process to establish the objectives for each committee
11. There is a clear assignment of responsibility for management of committee progress.
12. Committee meetings and work between meetings is focused on achieving specific objectives
13. The Executive Committee does not supersede or duplicate the work of the Board
14. Board meetings begin and end on time

Financial Oversight

15. Financial information is presented in a way that enables board members to understand and question the implications for organizational sustainability and mission effectiveness
16. The Board approves the annual budget
17. The Board reviews the budget actuals on a regular basis

Program Oversight

18. Program performance is guided by board approved outcome objectives
19. The board regularly reviews progress towards achievement of the objectives

Fundraising and Outreach

20. Each Board member makes an annual personal financial contribution to the best of their capacity.
21. Each board member is actively involved in utilizing personal networks for contributions, connections and expertise
22. Each Board member is involved with community activities that support the organization's mission.
23. Board members are regularly connected with the organization through program visits, staff reports, conversations with staff and program participants, etc.
24. The board participates in an ongoing learning process, gathering the information needed to guide the achievement of the organization's mission

Management by objectives

25. Board and management are guided by multi-year strategic goals.
26. Board and management are guided by an annual work plan.
27. Progress toward goals and objectives is regularly evaluated
28. The work plan includes objectives for the board as well as for management

Board Development

29. Board recruitment is based on objective criteria that address the current needs of the board and the organization
30. All necessary skills, stakeholders and diversity are represented on the board
31. The contributions of each board member are assessed on an annual basis.
32. Leadership of the board is rotated on a reasonable basis and new leadership is developed and encouraged
33. Elections are held annually and all members are encouraged to participate.

34. There is a structured process to insure that board members have direct contact with programs

Personal Engagement

35. The number of individuals I have introduced to the organization over the last year.
- a. 1-3
 - b. 4-7
 - c. 8+
36. Contributions or solicitations I have made over the last year
- a. 1-3
 - b. 4-7
 - c. 8+
37. My personal financial contribution this year was:
- a. About the same as I gave to other organizations
 - b. The largest contribution I made this year
 - c. An amount I regard as personally quite significant
38. The percentage of the financial report that I have a comfortable understanding of:
- a. Less than 25%
 - b. 50%
 - c. 75%
 - d. 100%
39. Percentage of the materials sent to me that I review to determine whether I have any questions:
- a. Less than 25%
 - b. 50%
 - c. 75%
 - d. 100%
40. Approximate hours spent monthly on board matters
- a. Less than 5
 - b. 5-10
 - c. 10-15
 - d. 15+

Fiduciary Basics:

(Yes, No, DK)

1. The board reviews the annual financial audit report and has an opportunity to ask questions about the findings.
2. The board has adopted financial controls
3. The board regularly monitors financial performance and projections
4. The board has adopted a personnel policy manual
5. The board reviews the implementation of the personnel practices
6. The board has adopted an investment policy
7. The board reviews the 990 prior to filing
8. Board meetings regularly include an Executive Session where the board meets without staff
9. There are written expectations for the responsibilities of the members of the board
10. New board members are provided with an orientation to the organization's programs and staffing, the procedures of the board and the responsibilities of board members
11. The board has adopted a policy on board member responsibilities for contributions and fundraising
12. The board has adopted a policy to allocate the authority to speak on behalf of the organization
13. There is an annual retreat to plan for the coming year and to make strategic decisions
14. There is a Board Manual that details the operational procedures of the board
15. The board has adopted conflicts of interest, whistle blower protection and document retention policies

Open ended questions

1. What were the three most important organizational achievements of the past year?
2. What were the three most important board achievements of the past year?
3. What issues should the board should address in the coming year?
4. What are the major strengths of the board?
5. What are areas in which the board can improve?
6. What are the ways in which the staff can improve?
7. How can the board and the organization better motivate and support board member engagement and learning?
8. How can communication within the board and between the board and management be improved?
9. In what ways could you be of even greater help to the board and the organization?
10. Anything else that we should know?

Executive Director's Assessment of Board Governance

	Y/N	Impact on You
1. Do your board members understand their legal governance responsibilities?		
2. Does your board set the near, mid, and long term direction for your organization?		
3. Do your board members have a clear AND shared vision of the desired future of your organization?		
4. Do your board members have a clear AND shared view of what your organization is working to achieve and for whose benefit?		
5. Has your board laid out a statement of what outcomes your organization must achieve AND do they track progress and respond when things seem off track?		
6. Does your board understand the financial resources your organization needs short, medium, and long term?		
7. Does your board work to assure adequate resources (short, medium, and long term)?		
8. Does your board work to assure that a positive public image is maintained for the organization?		
9. Does your board keep an eye on the organization's financial wellbeing and take proactive corrective action when required?		
10. Does your board monitor that plans are being implemented and goals being met?		
11. Does your board monitor your organization's programs and assess whether program results are worth the resources spent on them?		
12. Do all your board members stay adequately informed about your organization?		
13. Do all members attend meetings and actively participate in the work of the board, including special assignments?		
14. Are all your board members active "ambassadors" for your organization?		
15. Do your board members work at the right level – neither too passive (rubber stamping) nor too involved in operations (managing rather than governing)?		
16. Is your board composition right for your organization's needs today?		
17. Is every member clear about his/her individual responsibilities as a board member?		
18. Do all members respect and support decisions determined by a majority of the board?		