

ON THE SEAT OF A BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The role of a board is to be **caretakers** for the mission of the organization. Your mission was established to provide public service. A board stewards the resources – people, investments, time, goals and plans – towards the mission and purpose of the agency.

Fiduciary: involving trust, especially between a trustee and a beneficiary; responsibility to see that the organization is acting in the best interests of the public and the stakeholders who are served by the organization's mission. Governance is the board's legal authority to exercise power and authority on an organization on behalf of the people and community it serves.

LEGAL DUTIES

The mission is bigger than any individual's interest in the success of the mission. Obedience to the organization's central purpose must guide all decisions.

01 DUTY OF CARE

Care for the mission and the agency the way a "normally prudent person" would care for another, like power of attorney. Know what is going on. Be prepared for meetings. Volunteer outside of meetings.

02 DUTY OF LOYALTY

Remain loyal to the mission by putting the interests of the organization before personal and professional interests. Monitor conflicts of interests. Keep board composition diverse. Don't allow a major conflict of interest to dominate board. Support the decisions made by the board.

03 DUTY OF OBEDIENCE

Honor all laws: federal, state, and those you set for yourself in your bylaws. Remain guardians of the mission. Retain bipartisan. Register in states where you fundraise.

04 DUTY OF TRANSPARENCY

Conduct business "in the light" and operate a "clean" business. Make 990s publically available. Publish an annual report and clear the channels of communication for the public to contact your organization.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Must be able to count on the confidentiality of board members. A respectful and trusting board environment is needed to nurture different opinions into healthy debate and flourishing plans.



CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Prune potential conflicts of interest before they get started by having a policy and disclosure form members sign every year. Monitor who may be using their position for undue influence or personal gain. Record conflicts of interest in the minutes of meetings.



COMMITMENT

Fertilize the agency by giving to it personally and ensuring there are enough resources and nutrients for it to grow. Tend to the agency even in stormy seasons. Set goals for growth and monitor progress.



CONDUCT

Board conduct sets the tone and image of the organization, both inside and outside of meetings. Give nutrients to the agency by speaking well of it in public. Ethical and engaging meetings are the trellis upon which programs and reputation grow.

