

10 basic board responsibilities

0= we don't really do this 2= we mostly do this 5= we are awesome with this one

1. ___ Determine mission and purpose

Have we created and reviewed a statement of mission and purpose that articulates the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served?

2. ___ Select the chief executive

Do we have a written job description for the chief executive's responsibilities and have we undertaken a careful search to find the most qualified individual for the position?

3. ___ Support and evaluate the chief executive

Do we ensure that the chief executive has the moral and professional support he or she needs to further the goals of the organization? Do we conduct an annual written performance review involving the full board?

4. ___ Ensure effective planning

Does our board actively participate in an overall strategic planning process and assist in implementing and monitoring the plan's goals?

5. ___ Monitor and strengthen programs and services

How does our board determine which programs are consistent with the organization's mission and do we monitor their effectiveness?

6. ___ Ensure adequate financial resources

Does our board secure adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission?

7. ___ Protect assets and provide proper financial oversight

Does the board approve the annual budget and ensure that proper financial controls are in place?

8. ___ Build a competent board

Does our board articulate prerequisites for candidates, formally orient new members, and comprehensively evaluate our own performance every two years?

9. ___ Ensure legal and ethical integrity

How does our board ensure adherence to legal standards and ethical norms?

10. ___ Enhance the organization's public standing

Does our board clearly articulate the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garner support from the community?

Subtotal for basic responsibilities: _____

Bonus section: add 1 point for each of the following essential practices:

11. ___ Every board member makes it a priority to **attend all board meetings** and may miss meetings only under exceptional circumstances
12. ___ Our board has **term limits** (and we stick to them)
13. ___ We are strategic about **member recruitment** and define an ideal composition for the board based on the organization's priorities
14. ___ (for orgs with a budget >\$1M) We hire an **independent auditor** who reports directly to the board on an annual basis
15. ___ We **meet often enough** to ensure our fiduciary duties (more than 1x/year)
16. ___ We have a **formal process for setting appropriate compensation** for the chief executive
17. ___ Our full board **reviews the Form 990** before it is filed
18. ___ We are in compliance with **federal laws around document destruction and retention**
19. ___ Our board has a **formal, written process to deal with whistleblower complaints** and prevent retaliation

Subtotal for essential practices: _____

Extra bonus section: add 2 points for each of the following leading practices:

20. ___ We use a **consent agenda**
21. ___ We have regular **executive sessions**
22. ___ We review **bylaws** periodically and amend as needed
23. ___ The chief executive is an ex officio, **non-voting** member of the board
24. ___ We have **written job descriptions** of the full board and individual board members
25. ___ We have a **conflict-of-interest** policy and board members sign annual conflict-of-interest statements
26. ___ Every board member makes an **annual, meaningful personal contribution** to the organization based on her/his ability to give

Subtotal for leading practices: _____

My grand total:

Scoring interpretation:

55+= great work; now what do you need to do to get all 26 items in place?

40-55= pretty darn good; keep working on upping your game

30-40= you're on solid footing but need to do some work in a few areas

20-30= looks like you need to take a closer look at how your board is functioning

Below 20= maybe time for a board retreat to get some fundamentals in place