

## How to Develop a Board Member's Job Description

Many board members serve for months before they really understand their roles and responsibilities. This confusion can waste valuable time and energy for your organization. Clearly written job descriptions help to clarify board member expectations as they relate to their position on the board.

It is important to develop a job description for the general board member **as well as** the officers of your organization. The general job description applies to every member of the board.

The following categories and questions can be used to guide you in the development of job description for your board members and officer positions. Remember, once the contents are agreed upon, the board must approve the job descriptions.

Everyone involved in the organization should have a job description.

The job description should contain the following sections:

- Position: What is the job title?
- Authority: What authority does the position have?
- Responsibility: To whom is the position accountable? What are the broad areas of responsibility?
- Term: How are board members elected and for how long? How do board members leave the board?
- General Duties: What are the typical duties board members are responsible for?
- Evaluation: How will board members effectiveness be assessed?
- Review Date: When will this job description be reviewed?
- Approval Date: When was this job description last approved?
- Qualifications & Skills: What specialized or practical skills are needed to do the job? What human relation skills (e.g. communication, problem solving) are needed?
- Benefits: What benefits can a board member expect to receive? (e.g. satisfaction of making a difference in the community; opportunity to work with individuals of diverse backgrounds; development of effective decision-making skills; increased understanding of group dynamics and relationships)
- Time & Financial Requirements: What is realistic estimate of the time required as a board member? What will it cost to be a board member?

## **Role of the Board**

Many boards are dedicated and skilled in their work, and provide clear and consistent leadership to their agency. Others, however, are not so effective. Virtually all boards raise concerns at some time that their job is not clear and their work is at times difficult and confusing.

As boards have diversified, the structure and responsibilities and the work they have assumed to accomplish together has changed. Boards now perform a wide range of tasks. However, there are some roles that all boards must assume.

The board's role in any voluntary organization can be broken down into two categories:

1. The mandatory role based on the minimum legal requirements for all board members and;
2. The chosen role boards elect to perform because of the board model they elected.

Cyril Houle defines the board's role and responsibilities based on the three different activities of the organization:

- 1. Governance: The policies developed by the board that give overall direction to the agency.**
- 2. Management: The board takes actions and makes decisions to ensure there are sufficient and appropriate human and financial resources for the organization to accomplish its work.**
- 3. Operations: These are the activities, services or programs of the organization. The board has no mandatory role in this area. Many boards see this work as the responsibility of the board and staff.**

However, dependent on the Board Model, used some boards choose to actively participate in the operations due to philosophy or limited resources.

When determining the role of the board, it is important to address two key facets:

1. To identify the Areas of Board Responsibility as a collective of individuals
2. To identify the General Responsibilities of Individual Board Members

## **Board Responsibilities and Planning**

The board is responsible in five key areas:

1. To establish the organization's mission, vision, and direction

- \* vision and values
- \* mission and philosophy
- \* strategic planning
- \* programs and services
- \* evaluation

2. To ensure the financial health of the organization

- \* responsible for ensuring there are adequate financial resources for the work of the organization

3. To ensure the organization has sufficient and appropriate human resources

- \* responsible for the working conditions in the organization
- \* responsible for hiring, giving direction to and evaluating the senior staff person
- \* responsible for ensuring the capability, suitability and vitality of its membership
- \* responsible for ensuring the existence of a Nominating Committee

4. To direct organizational operations

- \* responsible for ensuring that the organization and its directors are in compliance with its legal requirements
- \* responsible for ensuring that the board works effectively
- \* oversees organizational structure and agency administration

5. To ensure effective community relations

- \* respond to changing needs/pressures in the community
- \* find new ways to meet needs
- \* use marketing and public relations

Useful Tools in Determining Roles and Responsibilities for Board Members:

- \* Developing Board Member Job Descriptions
- \* Mandate of Authority – Responsibilities Matrix

# BOARD MEMBER

## AUTHORITY/RESPONSIBILITY:

The Board of Directors is the legal authority for\_\_\_\_\_.

As a member of the Board, A Director acts in a position of trust for the community and is responsible for the effective governance of the organization.

## QUALIFICATIONS/SKILLS:

Knowledge and skills in one or more areas of Board governance: policy, finance, programs, and/or personnel.

## TERM:

Directors are elected by the membership at the Annual general meeting. Directors serve for a two-year term. Directors may be re-elected for two additional terms.

## REQUIREMENTS:

- \* Commitment to the work of the organization
- \* Knowledge and skills in one or more areas of Board governance: policy, finance, programs, and/or personnel
- \* Willingness to serve on at least one committee and actively participate
- \* Attendance at monthly Board meetings
- \* A time commitment of five hours per month, (includes Board preparation, meeting and committee meeting time)
- \* Attendance at Annual General Meeting
- \* Be informed of the services provided by\_\_\_\_\_and publicly support them
- \* Prepare for and participate in the discussions and the deliberations of the Board
- \* Be aware and abstain from any conflict of interest

## MAJOR DUTIES:

- \* Governing\_\_\_\_\_by the broad policies developed by the Board
- \* Establish overall long and short term goals, objectives and priorities for \_\_\_\_\_in meeting the needs of the community
- \* Recommend policy to the Board
- \* Promote\_\_\_\_\_membership through community networking, etc.
- \* Being accountable to the funders for the services provided and funds expended
- \* Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of\_\_\_\_\_through a regular review of programs and services
- \* Being accountable and seeking nominations for election to the Board when appropriate
- \* Prepare for and participate in the discussions and the deliberations of the Board
- \* To foster a positive working relationship with other Board members, and \_\_\_\_\_staff

\* Be aware of and abstain from any conflict of interest

**REVIEW/APPROVAL DATE:**

The Board Development Committee annually reviews the Board member job description. Recommended changes are presented to the Board.

# TREASURER

## AUTHORITY/RESPONSIBILITY:

The Board of Directors is the legal authority for \_\_\_\_\_.

As a member of the Board, a Director acts in a position of trust for the community and is responsible for the effective governance of the organization.

## QUALIFICATIONS:

Completed one year of Board membership term and have the ability to read/understand/interpret financial statements.

## TERM:

The Treasurer is appointed by the Executive Committee to serve a two-year term.

## REQUIREMENTS:

- \* Commitment to the work of the organization
- \* Knowledge and skills in one or more areas of Board governance: policy, finance, programs and personnel
- \* Willingness to serve on at least one committee
- \* Attendance at monthly Board meetings
- \* A time commitment of five hours a month, (includes Board preparation, meeting, committee and meeting time)
- \* Attendance at Annual General Meeting
- \* Be informed of the services provided by \_\_\_\_\_ and publicly support them
- \* Prepare for and participate in the discussions and the deliberations of the Board
- \* To foster a positive working relationship with other Board members, and the general staff
- \* Be aware and abstain from any conflict of interest

## MAJOR DUTIES:

- \* Establish overall long and short term goals, objectives and priorities for \_\_\_\_\_ in meeting the needs of the community
- \* Ability to read/understand/Interpret financial statements for Board members
- \* Chair the Finance Committee
- \* A signing authority on behalf of the Board for financial matters
- \* Ensure audited financial statements are presented to the Board on an annual basis
- \* Calls the motion at Annual General Meeting to appoint the Auditor
- \* Act as a resource to other committees
- \* Adhere to general duties outlined in the Board member job description

## REVIEW/APPROVAL DATE:

Annually reviews the Treasurer's job description. Recommended changes are presented to the Board.

# Secretary

## AUTHORITY/RESPONSIBILITY:

The Board of Directors is the legal authority for \_\_\_\_\_.

As a member of the Board, a Director acts in a position of trust for the community and is responsible for the effective governance of the organization.

## QUALIFICATIONS/SKILLS:

Good communication and written skills.

## TERM:

The Secretary is appointed by Executive Committee for a two year term.

## REQUIREMENTS:

- \* Commitment to the work of the organization
- \* Knowledge and skills in one or more area of Board governance: policy, finance, programs and personnel
- \* Willingness to serve on at least one committee
- \* Attendance at monthly Board meetings
- \* A time commitment of five hours per month, (includes Board preparation, meeting, committee and meeting time)
- \* Attendance at Annual General Meeting
- \* Be informed of the services provided by \_\_\_\_\_ and publicly support them
- \* Prepare for and participate in the discussions and the deliberations of the Board
- \* To foster a positive working relationship with other Board members, and \_\_\_\_\_ staff
- \* Be aware and abstain from any conflict of interest

## MAJOR DUTIES:

- \* Establish overall long and short term goals, objectives and priorities for \_\_\_\_\_ in meeting the needs of the community
- \* Prepare and maintain minutes and records for all board meetings
- \* Reviews/monitors and verifies accuracy of the meetings minutes, and circulates to all Directors
- \* Adhere to general duties outlined in the board member job description

## REVIEW/APPROVAL DATE:

Annually reviews the Secretary's job description. Recommended changes are presented to the Board.

# PRESIDENT

## AUTHORITY/RESPONSIBILITY:

The Board of Directors is the legal authority for \_\_\_\_\_.

As a member of the Board, a Director acts in a position of trust for the community and is responsible for the effective governance of the organization.

The President is also responsible and accountable to the membership.

## QUALIFICATIONS/SKILLS:

Completed two years of Board membership term and have an understanding of parliamentary procedures.

## TERM:

The President serves for a two-year term.

## REQUIREMENTS:

- \* Commitment to the work of the organization
- \* Knowledge and skills in one or more areas of Board governance: policy, finance, programs, and/or personnel
- \* Willingness to serve on at least one committee
- \* Attendance at monthly Board meetings
- \* A time commitment of 5-8 hours per month, (includes Board preparation, meeting, committee and meeting time)
- \* Attendance at Annual General Meeting
- \* Be informed of the services provided by \_\_\_\_\_ and publicly support them
- \* Prepare for and participate in the discussions and the deliberations of the Board
- \* To foster a positive working relationship with other Board members, and \_\_\_\_\_ staff
- \* Be aware and abstain from any conflict of interest

## MAJOR DUTIES:

- \* Establishes overall long and short term goals, objectives and priorities for \_\_\_\_\_ in meeting the needs of the community
- \* Be the primary spokesperson for \_\_\_\_\_ to the media and community at large
- \* Address Annual General Meeting
- \* Chair the Executive Committee
- \* Report to Board on status of major programs
- \* A signing authority on behalf of the Board for financial and legal purposes
- \* Represent the organization to Government and Municipal officials
- \* Provides leadership and direction to the Board



- \* Arrange for Vice to Chair meetings in the absence of the Chair
- \* Represent the \_\_\_\_\_ at community functions
- \* In conjunction with the Executive Committee set monthly Board meeting agenda
- \* Enhance relationships with other community groups and agencies
- \* In conjunction with the Executive Committee provide guidance and leadership
- \* Ensure Board members receive agenda and minutes in a timely manner
- \* Adhere to general duties outlined in the board member job description

**REVIEW/APPROVAL DATE:**

Annually review the President's job description. Recommended changes are presented to the Board for ratification.