

QUESTIONS TO ASK ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS AS A PROSPECTIVE BOARD CANDIDATE

As a prospective board member, you will make a positive impression if you show you are serious about the commitment and ask some basic questions when communicating with the organization's representatives. Asking questions also ensures that your board service experience will be a good fit because you will understand the organization's background and expectations.

Your questions should focus on the organization's programs, financial status, and clients/constituents, and on the board's structure, current members, and responsibilities.

Questions about the organization:

- How do current programs relate to the mission?
- May I visit the organization to observe a program firsthand?
- Does the organization have a strategic plan that is reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis?
- Is the financial condition of the organization sound?
- Does the board discuss and approve the annual budget?
- How often do board members receive financial reports?
- May I see the organization's three most recent Form 990s? (These are "tax returns" for nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations.)
- Whom does the organization serve?
- Are these clients or constituencies satisfied with the organization?
- Is the board satisfied with the performance of the executive staff?
- How do board members and senior staff typically work with each other?

Questions about the board:

- How do you think I can contribute as a board member?
- How much of my time will be required for meetings and special events?
- How are committee assignments made?
- What orientation will I receive to the organization and to the responsibilities of board service?
- Does the organization provide opportunities for board development and education?
- What is the board's role in fundraising?
- Will I be expected to make a specific annual financial contribution?
- What role will I play in soliciting donors?
- How is the board structured? Are there descriptions of the responsibilities of the board as a whole and of individual board members?
- Are there descriptions of board member responsibilities and board committee functions and responsibilities?
- Who are the board members? Is there a system of checks and balances to prevent conflicts of interest between board members and the organization?
- Does the organization have directors' and officers' liability coverage?
- Does the board regularly assess its own performance?
- Does the board assess the chief executive's performance on an annual basis?

For more board service resources, visit the [BoardSource Board Recruitment Center](#).