



THINKING ABOUT JOINING A NONPROFIT BOARD?

If you are considering board service, make sure you have the answers you need. Ask about...

The board's relationship to the staff

Is the board satisfied with the performance of the executive staff?

How do board members and senior staff typically work with each other?

The organization's programs

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?

The structure of the board

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 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?

The organization's clients or constituencies

Whom does the organization serve?

Are these clients or constituencies satisfied with the organization?

The organization's financial status

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.)

Individual board members' responsibilities

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?

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