



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

BOARD ROLES AND COMPETENCIES

The Role Of The Board – General Areas Of Responsibility

The importance of Boys & Girls Club leadership cannot be overstated. Across America, volunteer leaders represent the strength and diversity of local Club boards. They are a reflection of the communities in which they live and work. Their depth of understanding about Clubs is crucial to their power as advocates and to preserving young lives.

The board of directors (or, in some organizations, an administrative committee or board of governors or trustees) serves four primary roles:

- Trusteeship: The board is the active governing body of the Boys & Girls Club. Above all else, it is solely responsible for all Club actions, from protecting the mission to ensuring public accountability. It serves as the public face and persona of the Club.
- Planning: Working in partnership with the chief professional officer (CPO) as the leadership of the Club, the board must carefully set direction and plan for the future.
- Policy and Evaluation: The board is responsible for establishing policies that will govern the Club's daily operations and ongoing activities, from programs to human resources.
- Resource Development and Oversight: The board must not only exercise fiduciary oversight to protect the Club's resources, it must also assist in raising money for the Club.

Board Competencies – Specific Functions Of The Board

While working in these four primary roles, a successful board develops a number of key competencies. The real value of the board is delivered through these competencies. By participating in, actively supporting and collectively overseeing the Club in all of the following areas, a board fulfills its role.

I. Trusteeship

- Ensuring the organization's mission and purpose: The board is responsible for creating the mission statement and reviewing it periodically for accuracy and validity.
- Ensuring legal and ethical integrity and maintaining accountability: The board is ultimately responsible for ensuring adherence to legal standards and ethical norms, as well as for adherence to the provisions of the Club's constitution and bylaws.
- Enhancing the organization's public standing: The board should interpret the Club's mission, accomplishments and goals to the public, as well as garner support from important members of the community.

- Board composition and development: Board excellence has everything to do with the composition of the board — members understanding their role, their inspiration to action, and self-inspection against standards of excellence.
- Ensuring that high quality professional leadership is employed: The board must reach consensus on the CPO's job description and undertake a careful search to find the most qualified individual for the position. The board ensures the moral and professional support the CPO needs to further the goals of the Club.

II. Planning – A Strategic Perspective

- Ensuring effective organizational planning: The board is responsible for insuring a process by which an organization thinks through and determines what it is going to do in the future and when and how it is going to do it.

Strategic planning is a systematic, organized, dynamic process used by an organization to:

- involve board and community leadership in the Boys & Girls Club mission;
- determine what the Club wants to be like at a given point (e.g., three, five, eight years) in the future;
- establish specific goals, objectives and measures for the plan;
- implement management techniques and controls to assure the organization that its plan is being followed and achieved;
- evaluate and guide the impact of the organization on community needs.

III. Policy and Evaluation

Boards have many jobs to do, but fundamental to them all is the role of quality assurance. To ensure that the Club has the infrastructure in place to deliver on its mission, the board establishes policies and procedures for the following:

- Compensation and performance management: Boards must undertake a clear plan to attract and retain the most qualified individuals for employment in their organization. Ensuring high performance and professional leadership is one, if not the most, important responsibility of a board of directors. This includes policies that provide competitive, market-driven salaries and benefits as well as periodic performance reviews based upon accountability standards.
- Monitoring and strengthening the Club's programs and services strategy: Boys & Girls Clubs of America has developed four tools for guiding organizational assessments: *Commitment to Quality* for annual, programmatic reviews; *Stages of Organizational Effectiveness* for annual evaluation of the seven areas of a Club's operations; *Outcome Measurements Tool Kit*, a tool that provides resources to measure the impact of Club programs on youth; and *Standards for Self-Evaluation of Member Boys & Girls Clubs* for a periodic analysis of a Club's programs, internal capacity and overall effectiveness.
- Evaluation of the board and board members. On a regular basis, board members need to take time out for introspection about their individual contribution to the Club and the board's collective performance. Annually, each individual should consider how well he or she has fulfilled his or her commitment to the Club. Every three to five years, the board should reflect on how well it is meeting its corporate responsibilities.

IV. Resource Development and Oversight

- Ensuring adequate resources: One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to assure that the Club has adequate resources to fulfill its mission. The board should work in partnership with the CPO and development staff, if any, to raise funds from the community.

Board members have two general areas of responsibility in terms of resource development: understanding and overseeing the fundraising process, and giving and asking for support for the Club.

- Managing resources effectively: In order for the Club to remain accountable to its donors, the public, and to safeguard its tax-exempt status, the board must develop the annual budget and ensure that proper financial controls are in place. Board members act as trustees of the Club's assets and must exercise due diligence to see that the Club is well-managed and that its financial situation remains sound.

Not every board member can be a financial wizard. However, every board member needs to be a financial inquisitor. It is essential to understand basic terminology, be able to read financial statements, judge the Club's stability, and have the capacity to recognize warning signs that might indicate a change in the overall health of the Club. If board members do not understand something, they must be willing to find out the answer.

Effect on End Results

- A well-respected community image.
- A well-managed and highly effective organization providing programs to meet the needs of boys and girls.
- Demonstrated achievement of the organization's goals and objectives.
- An organization that has 100% of its financial needs met through board giving and influence.
- A diverse, competent staff and a quality program based on the principles of youth development.