

Board Roles and Responsibilities

Board Briefs are a series of "at-a-glance" resources to assist board volunteers in supporting their Clubs. They are designed for use at board meetings as subject matter for a five-minute educational opportunity. They can be discussed in their entirety or in sections. Different questions from the same brief can be posed at different meetings. The CVO can use them or ask an appropriate committee to lead the conversation (e.g., finance, governance, etc.).

Executive Summary

The boards of Boys & Girls Clubs serve three primary roles: establish identity and strategic direction; ensure resources; and provide oversight. In addition to these collective roles, individual members of boards, by agreeing to serve, take on responsibilities for actively participating in the work of the board, staying informed, promoting the Club, safeguarding ethics and values, and upholding their legal obligations, among other responsibilities.

Board Roles and Responsibilities

The *collective* duties of board members can be summarized under three roles:

1. Establish Identity and Strategic Direction

- Establish Identity
 - Determine and maintain focus on mission
 - Establish the values by which the Club will operate
- Establish strategic direction, including:
 - Vision for the future
 - Major goals and strategies
- Ensure that operational policies and plans support the goals and strategies in the strategic plan

2. Ensure Resources

- Identify resources needed, including:
 - Financial resources
 - Leadership: Chief Professional Officer (CPO) and board
 - Credibility/good reputation
 - Facilities and other physical resources needed for the Club's programs
- Establish policies for how these resources will be acquired and stewarded, including the roles to be played by board members (i.e., making a personal donation and active participation in resource development)

3. Provide Oversight

- Ensure financial health by
 - Establishing financial policies
 - Ensuring fiscal accountability
- Monitor progress toward strategic goals and evaluate program effectiveness
- Ensure compliance with laws and ethical standards
- Safeguard and model organizational values
- Provide annual CPO performance review

Individual Board Member Responsibilities

Board members also have responsibilities as individual members of the board. As individuals, each board member must actively participate, be informed, promote the Club, and safeguard ethics and values. Board members also have legal obligations.

It is recommended that each Boys & Girls Club board outline the responsibilities of *individual* board members in a well-written ***job description***. With such a description, individual board members ***know what is expected*** of them before they join the board, and they ***can be held accountable***. A job description should include the following important elements:

- Know and effectively articulate the mission, vision, core values, goals, policies, and program areas of the Club.
- Participate in the strategic planning process and in the development of a plan for the board's work to support the strategic plan.
- Identify connections to individuals, corporate leaders, foundations, etc. who might provide financial or other support for the Club.
- Identify friends and associates who might be prospective board members.
- Make a personally meaningful financial contribution annually to the Club.
- Participate in Club resource development activities in a variety of ways (e.g., identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and thanking donors).
- Serve as a Club ambassador in the community.
- Participate in hiring and conducting the annual evaluation of the Club's chief professional officer (CPO).
- Support and advise the CPO as appropriate.
- Participate actively in assessing Club performance.
- Accept responsibility for Club financial accountability.
- Participate in establishing and enforcing Club policies.
- Avoid conflicts of interest but disclose them when potential conflicts arise.
- Attend all board meetings and attend applicable committee meetings. Also, attend all Club events.
- Review materials in advance of meetings.
- Chair and/or participate in at least one board committee.
- Commit time, thought, and effort to the Club.
- Maintain confidentiality of all board meetings.

Questions for Discussion:

The following questions can be used for discussion at board meetings:

- Are we all aware of our collective and individual responsibilities? If not, how can we increase awareness of these responsibilities?
- How can we strengthen our board member job description? What changes are needed?
- What more — if anything — can we do to hold ourselves accountable for our responsibilities?

Additional Resources

- Boys & Girls Clubs of America, *Board Volunteer Training*.
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America, *Board Member's Handbook*.

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