
Category 1: Our board prepares to do its job better

1a) We conduct a thorough orientation for all new board members.

Yes Needs Improvement No

Comments:

The standard: New board members share the same level of responsibility as every other member of the board and cannot afford to be unfamiliar with how the board operates or how the organization operates. Neither can the board afford to have new members unfamiliar with operations. Orientation is the responsibility of the full board and not the executive, although the executive should assist the board with the orientation. The orientation should take place as soon after election/appointment to the board as possible.

1b) All new board members are given copies of the mission statement, long-range plan, bylaws, board policies and other important documents of the organization.

Yes Needs Improvement No

Comments:

The standard: All of these materials should be in a board member notebook and every member of the board should have a copy of the notebook. The notebook should serve as a reference between meetings and it should be brought to each board meeting for reference. The board operates under clear standards and this paperwork spells out those operational standards.

1c) We provide regular board development activities for all board members.

Yes Needs Improvement No

Comments:

The standard: Board members must perform in a professional manner and professionals regularly spend time doing inservice education as long as they are in their professions. Board development should be frequent and can be as simple as evaluating meeting procedures or doing this self-evaluation.

1d) Our board members regularly attend state and national meetings for our type of organization.

Yes Needs Improvement No

Comments:

The standard: Many types of nonprofits are affiliated with state and national associations. If you are, at least part of your board should attend state and/or national meetings of the association every year. Your board should not operate in isolation, but rather learn from others who govern the same type of organization. You should budget funds for this type of board development.

1e) Our board budgets money for board development.

Yes Needs Improvement No

Comments:

The standard: Board development, like staff development, costs money for materials, travel and trainers. Board members are often reluctant to “spend money on themselves” because every dime that goes to board development will not go to programs and services. But the for-profit world has learned well that there is no better investment than that of assisting those who govern the organization do a better job. If you’re budgeting nothing now, make board development part of your long-range planning, fund it at whatever level you feel comfortable with this year and increase that line item over the next few years as you increase your board development activities.

