



BSA: ASSOCIATIONS

BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

Welcome

Welcome to the BoardSource Board Self-Assessment for Associations (BSA) Report. The BSA was developed through a collaborative effort between BoardSource and ASAE and is designed to educate and provide insights on your board's governance performance, which will enable your board to operate at the highest and best use of its collective capacity. BoardSource recommends that organizations of all types engage in a self-assessment process every two to three years.

This report provides an overview of your board's performance based on recognized nonprofit governance roles and responsibilities, as outlined in *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards*. The report compiles data that reflect how well the board and the chief executive think they are meeting their responsibilities in four key areas identified by BoardSource as crucial for high-performing boards and organizational success: setting direction, ensuring resources, providing oversight, and board structure and operations.

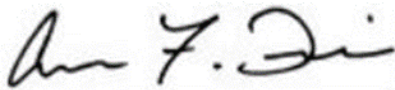
The report is intended to help your board determine its strengths and identify opportunities for board development. We encourage you to use the report

- as a starting point for discussions to identify gaps between expected and actual performance
- a basis for establishing a shared understanding of the board's roles and responsibilities
- provide context for creating a board development action plan
- enhance credibility for the organization among staff, membership, volunteers, donors, and other constituencies

Additionally, this report benchmarks your data against other nonprofit associations that have answered the same questions. By comparing your performance as a governing body against that of your peers, you will be able to clarify areas where your performance differs from that of your peers. Please use this data as one point of reference within the context and history of your association to help you focus on your strengths and identify those areas in need of improvement.

As the preeminent organization focused on nonprofit governance, BoardSource is here to help with all of your governance needs. Information about our resources and services can be found in this report, on our website, or you can e-mail us at members@boardsource.org. Congratulations on taking such an important step!

Sincerely,



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Results Overview At-A-Glance

The assessment is divided into four board roles; nine areas of responsibility are incorporated within those roles. The scores for individual questions are averaged within each area of responsibility, and the scores for each responsibility are then averaged within each role. These board roles and responsibilities are based on *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards*.

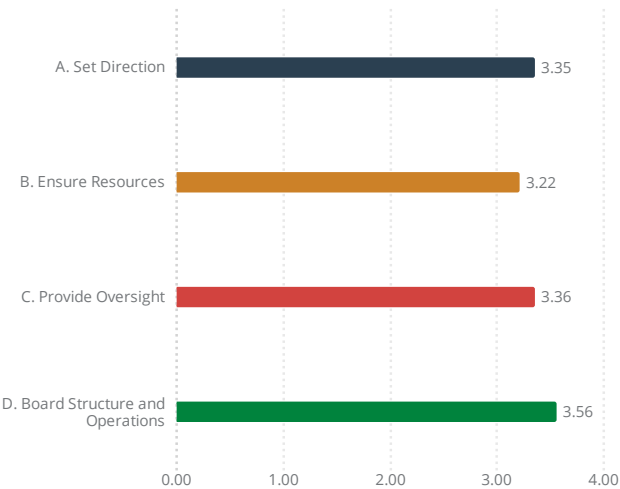
The scores below are based on a 5-point scale using the following definitions:
0 = Poor or needs improvement; 1 = Fair or marginal; 2 = OK or acceptable; 3 = Good or above average; 4 = Excellent or superior.

As an important note, respondents to the survey have the option to select NA/Don't Know to questions within the survey. Responses of NA/Don't Know are excluded from analysis within the final report and are not included in the averages provided. Responses of NA/Don't Know are also excluded from the total response count for that question.

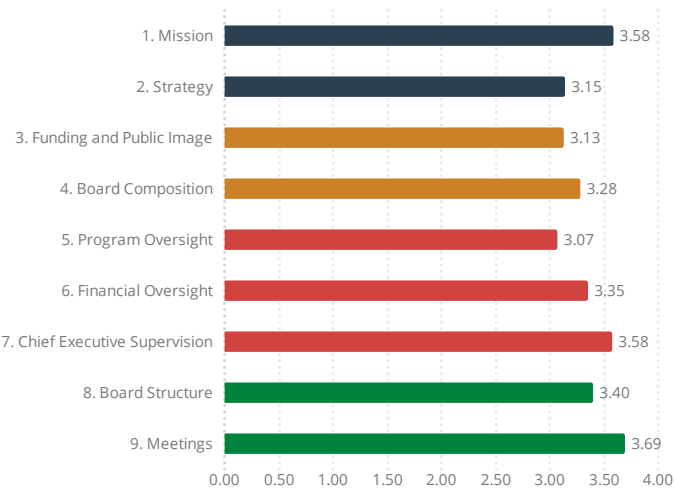
Roles and Responsibilities Overview

The graph below shows how your board has assessed its performance in the four roles (letter bars) and nine responsibilities (number bars) of nonprofit boards.

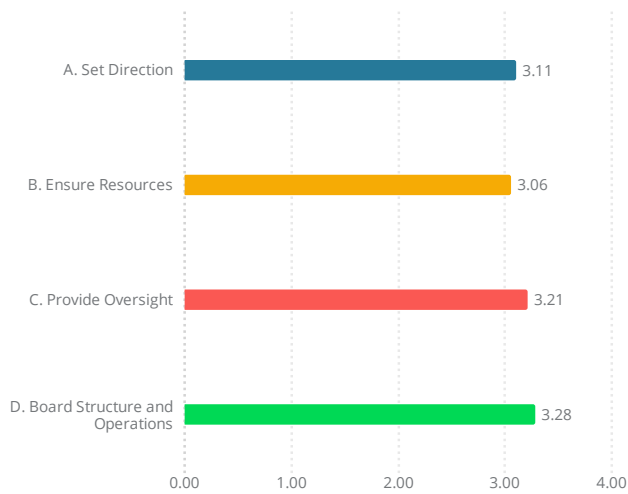
Your Board's Role Scores



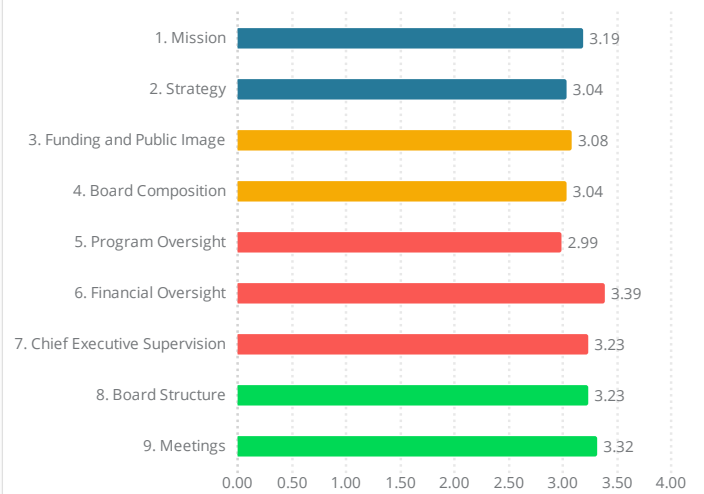
Your Board's Responsibility Scores



All Boards Average Role Scores 



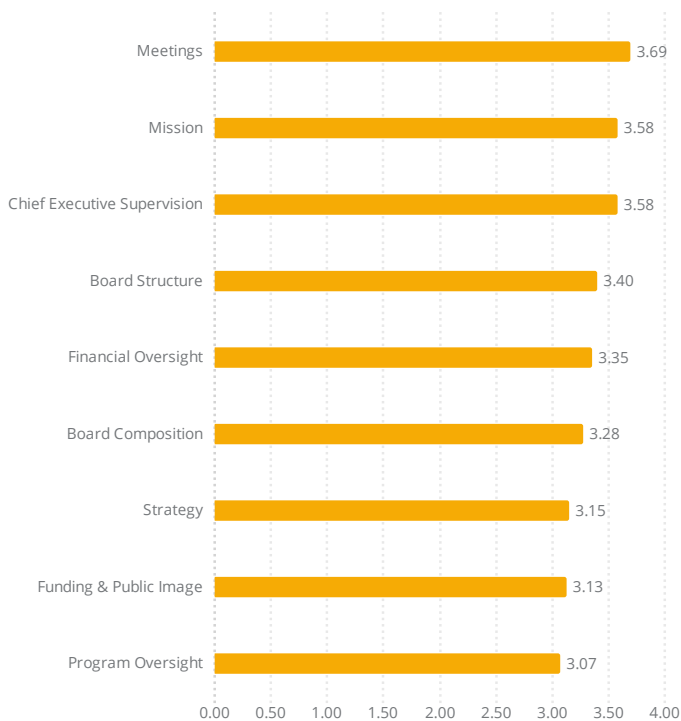
All Boards Average Responsibility Scores 



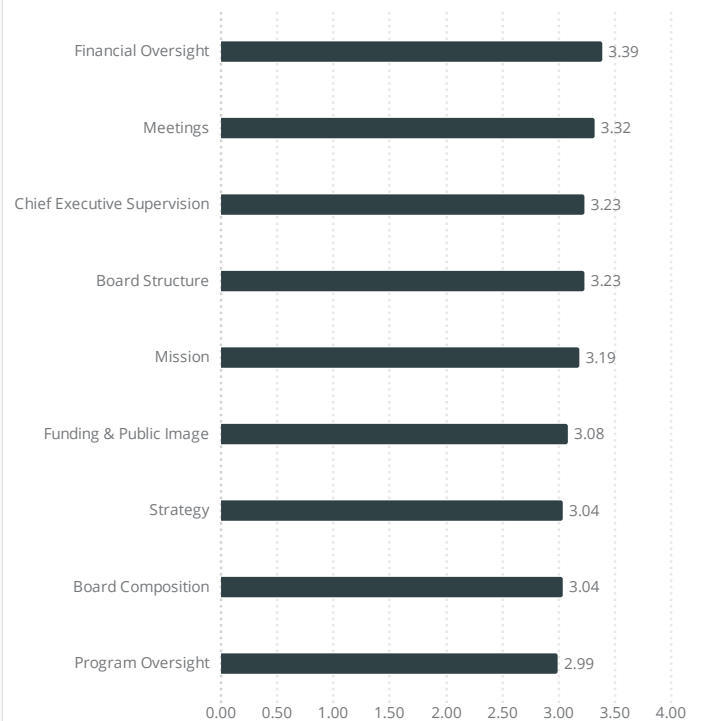
Highest to Lowest Ranked Responsibilities

The graph below shows how your board has assessed its performance — from highest to lowest — in the nine areas of responsibility. Bars at top indicate strong performance. Bars in middle highlight areas in which the board is performing at an acceptable level but may want to watch. Bars at bottom indicate responsibilities that need attention.

Your Board



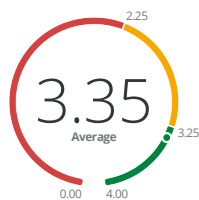
All Boards 



A | Set Direction

Setting direction requires the board to look beyond the immediate horizon by developing a shared vision, articulating guiding values for organizational action, establishing major goals, and outlining strategies for achieving those goals.

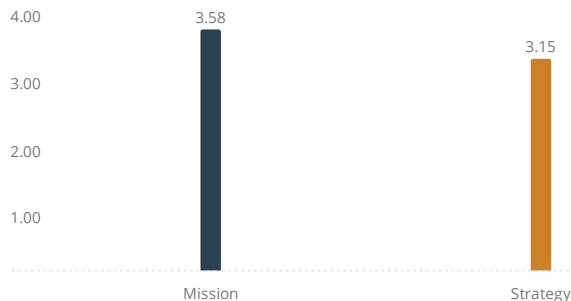
A | Set Direction Role Score - Your Board



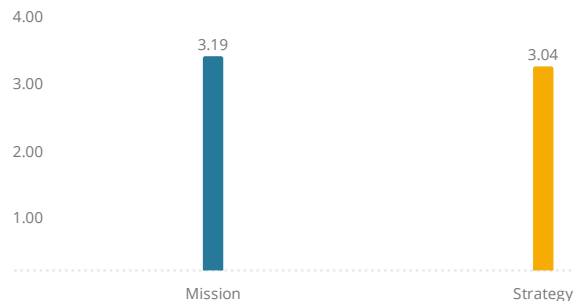
A | Set Direction Role Score - All Boards



A | Set Direction Responsibility Scores - Your Board



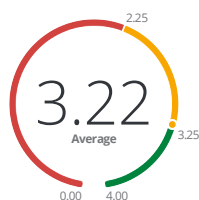
A | Set Direction Responsibility Scores - All Boards



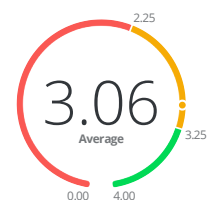
B | Ensure Resources

After establishing a strategic direction, the board is responsible for ensuring that the association has the resources needed to achieve its goals. An association needs three principal types of resources: people to do the work; money to pay salaries and expenses; and credibility with the public, on whose support it depends. While the board itself does not necessarily have to secure these resources, it makes sure that people and systems are in place to make them available.

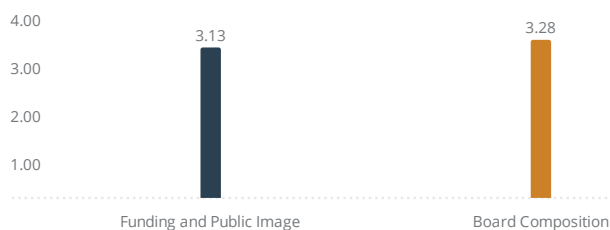
B | Ensure Resources Role Score - Your Board



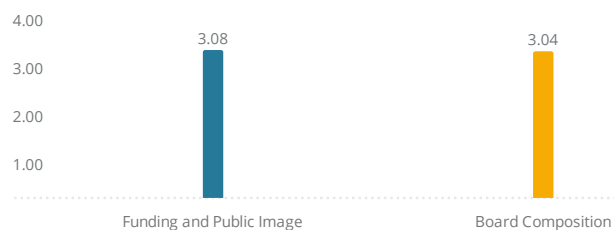
B | Ensure Resources Role Score - All Boards



B | Ensure Resources Responsibility Scores - Your Board



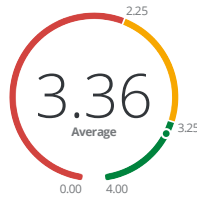
B | Ensure Resources Responsibility Scores - All Boards



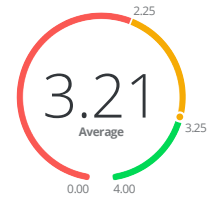
C | Provide Oversight

In the board's oversight role, the emphasis is on accountability. As a governing body, the board provides oversight not only of the finances and programs, but also of the association's legal and moral conduct. Furthermore, the board delegates authority to the chief executive, who is therefore accountable to the board. Thus, the board's oversight role also includes supervising, providing feedback to, and supporting its chief executive.

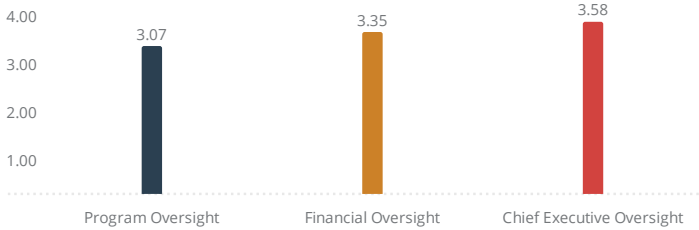
C | Provide Oversight Role Score - Your Board



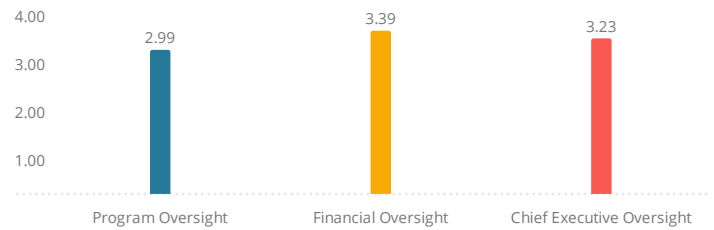
C | Provide Oversight Role Score - All Boards



C | Provide Oversight Responsibility Scores - Your Board



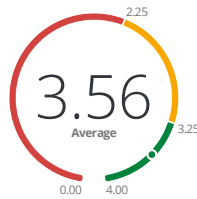
C | Provide Oversight Responsibility Scores - All Boards



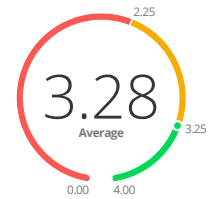
D | Board Structure and Operations

A well-functioning board is a strategic resource for the association. A board that attends to the quality of its performance will serve the association and its constituencies well. Among the factors that go into functioning effectively are board size and composition, clarity of roles and responsibilities, productive meetings, well-functioning committees, access to necessary information, and use of a team approach.

D | Board Structure and Operations Role Score - Your Board



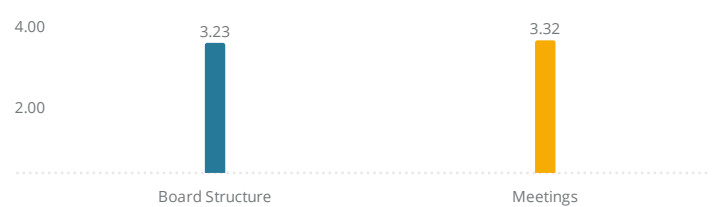
D | Board Structure and Operations Role Score - All Boards



D | Board Structure and Operations Responsibility Scores - Your Board



D | Board Structure and Operations Responsibility Scores - All Boards

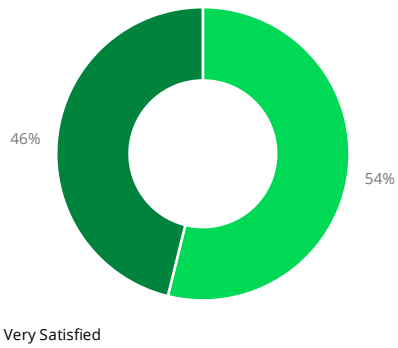


Board Service Experience

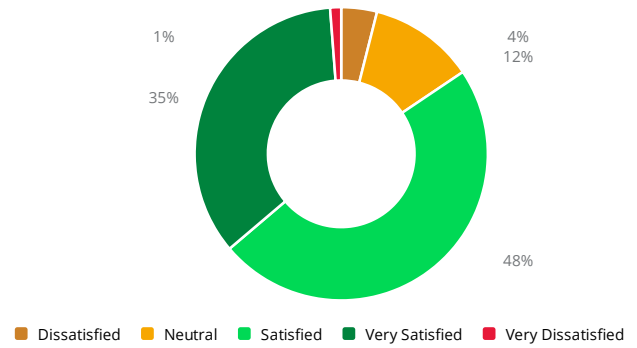
Overall Effectiveness

The following graphs reflect the board's thinking about its overall effectiveness. Because the percentages are based on the perceptions of your individual board members, this information can be used to spark a full board discussion on whether board members feel they are collectively meeting their responsibilities.

Your Board



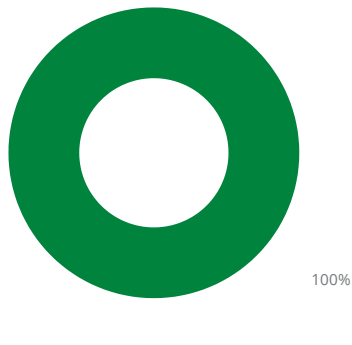
All Boards



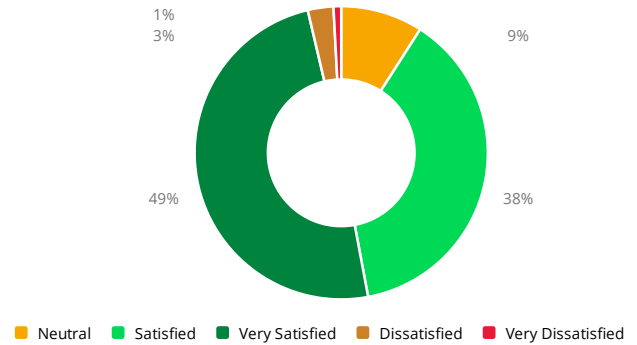
Level of Commitment and Involvement

The board self-assessment survey asks board members to identify their fellow board members' level of commitment and involvement, typically described as board engagement. Engaged board members make it a priority to attend and participate in all board meetings, take initiative, and jump into action when the chief executive needs expert guidance or opinion. Furthermore, engaged board members use their personal connections and affiliations to introduce the association to suitable board member candidates, volunteer for leadership positions on the board, and, by example, encourage others to do the same. The graphs below show the board's level of satisfaction with its commitment and involvement.

Your Board



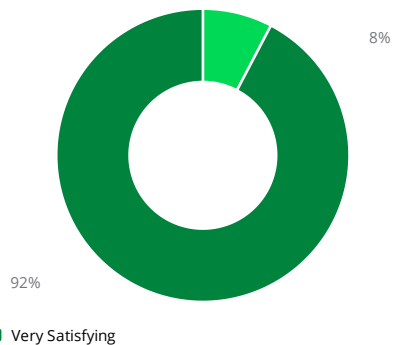
All Boards



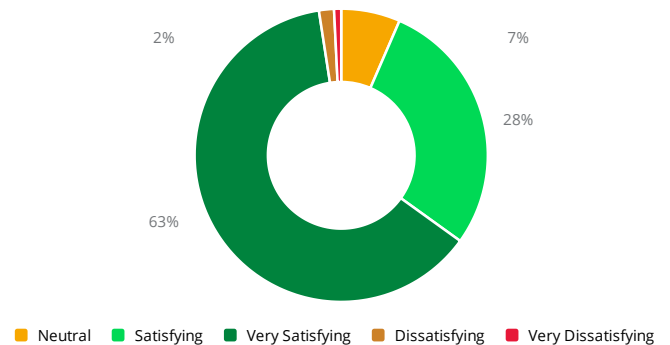
Individual Board Member Experience

Individuals serve on nonprofit boards for a variety of reasons. The percentages in this graph provide an overall sense of whether your individual board members feel that they have adequate opportunities to use their time, talent, and expertise to advance the mission of your organization.

Your Board



All Boards





B | Ensuring Resources

(includes Public Image and Board Composition)

Your organization, like all nonprofits, requires a competent board and a positive public image to accomplish its mission.

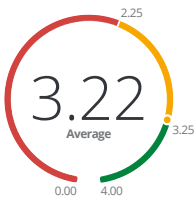
Strengthen Performance through Action

- 1. Spread the word about your association's accomplishments and share your pride in the organization. Be the association's advocate and representative 24/7.
- 2. Take on assignments such as joining a board team to meet with an elected official or a funder.
- 3. Transmit feedback from stakeholders to help shape board discussion.
- 4. Articulate the association's official positions; be clear about when you are presenting your personal opinions.
- 5. Approach recruitment and board building as an ongoing cycle.
- 6. Ensure your governance committee is fully engaged and involves every board member in the board-building process by recommending or cultivating potential new board members.
- 7. If necessary, enhance the profile of your associaion to make it attractive to strong board candidates.
- 8. Create a solid orientation program for new members no matter how extensive their previous board experience is.

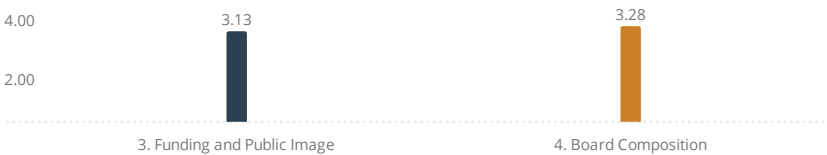
Recommended Resources - Public Image

- Free community resource: [Stand for Your Mission](#)
- Book: [The Board Building Cycle](#)
- Free Community Resource: [Taking Action on Board Diversity: Five Questions to Get You Started](#)
- Member Resource: [Recruiting the Right Board Members](#)

Your Ensuring Resources Role Score



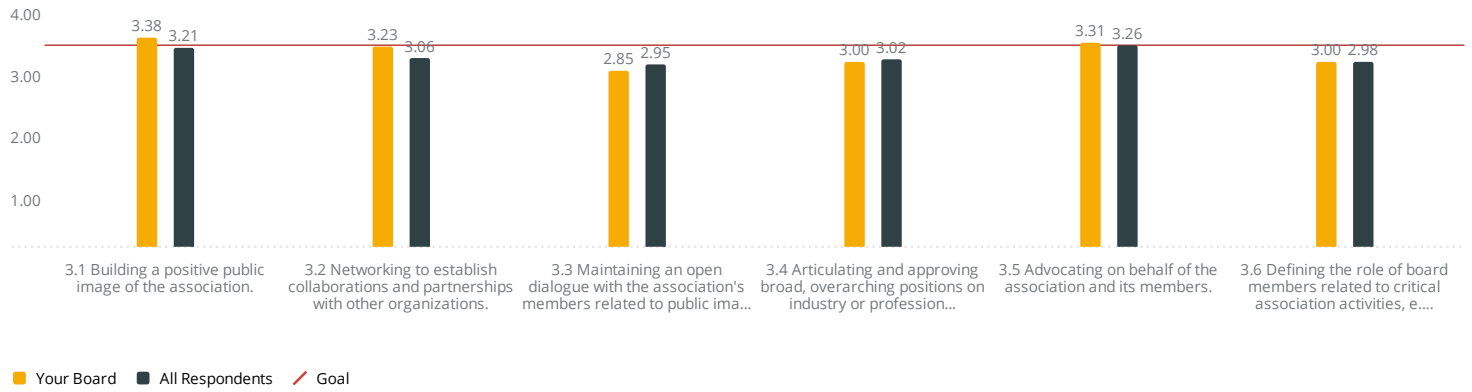
Your role score is based on the following responsibility scores:



Public Image | Section Detail

The board is responsible for developing public policy and advocating on behalf of the association and its members. To carry out its responsibilities, the board needs to stay in touch with the concerns and interests of various stakeholders, including its members. An association's activities may include monitoring regulatory, legal, legislative, and other activities that promote the good of the collective membership.

Average Score



Question Breakdowns

(Please rate the board's performance in...)

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ OK ■ Fair ■ Poor ■ NA / Don't Know

3.1 Building a positive public image of the association.



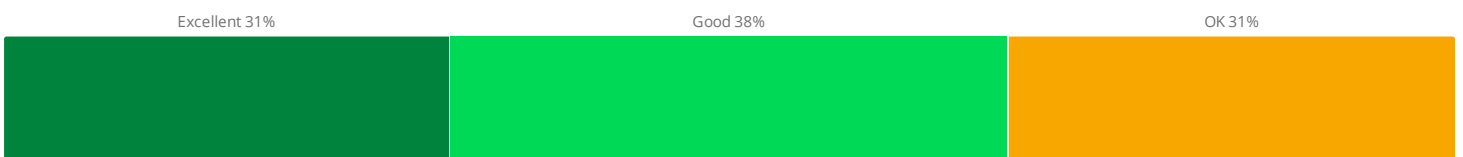
3.2 Networking to establish collaborations and partnerships with other organizations.



3.3 Maintaining an open dialogue with the association's members related to public image and advocacy issues.



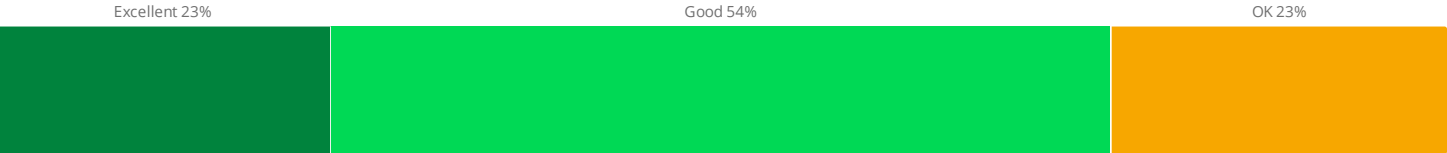
3.4 Articulating and approving broad, overarching positions on industry or professional issues.



3.5 Advocating on behalf of the association and its members.

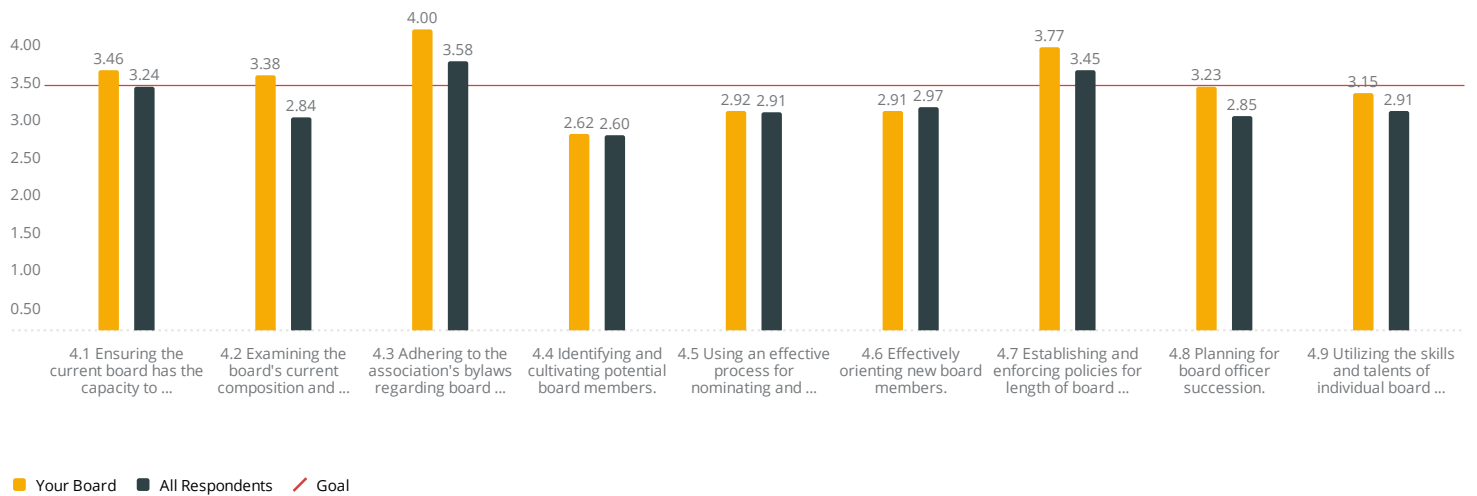


3.6 Defining the role of board members related to critical association activities, e.g., who serves as the official spokesperson, access to media.



An association's board is a critical resource, and the board is responsible for its own composition and leadership. A good board is composed of individuals who contribute critically needed skills, experience, perspective, wisdom, contacts, time, and other resources to the association. A well-conceived board-building plan helps the board to identify and recruit members and cultivate officers. New members are oriented to the board's responsibilities and the association's activities. Board member rotation ensures that the board is infused with new ideas yet remains a manageable size.

Average Score



Question Breakdowns

(Please rate the board's performance in...)

■ Excellent
 ■ Good
 ■ OK
 ■ Fair
 ■ Poor
 ■ NA / Don't Know

4.1 Ensuring the current board has the capacity to effectively govern and lead the association.



4.2 Examining the board's current composition and identifying gaps, e.g., in expertise, influence, ethnicity, age, gender.



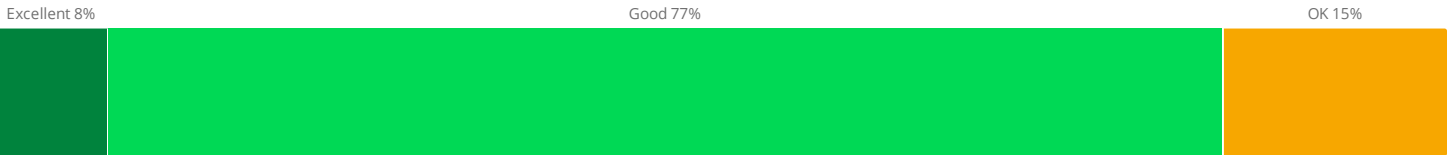
4.3 Adhering to the association's bylaws regarding board composition, duties, voting rights and qualifications.



4.4 Identifying and cultivating potential board members.



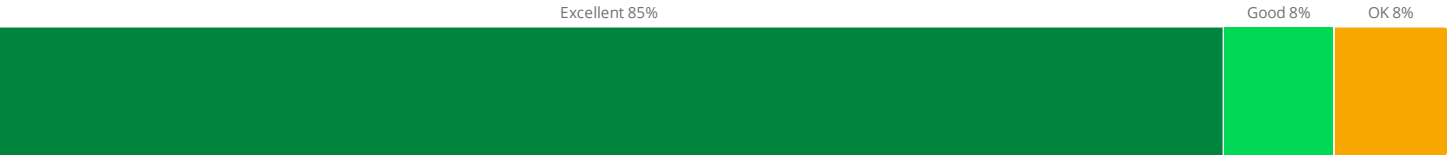
4.5 Using an effective process for nominating and electing board members.



4.6 Effectively orienting new board members.



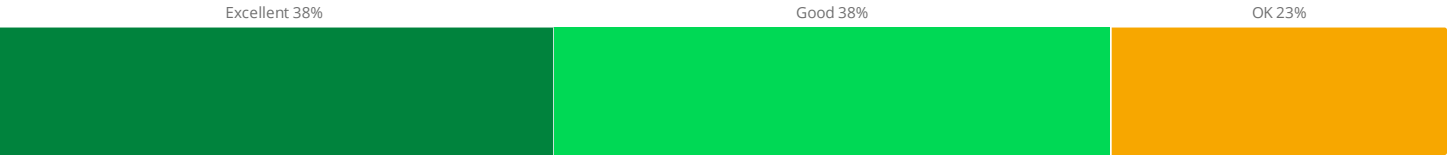
4.7 Establishing and enforcing policies for length of board service, e.g., length of terms and number of terms.



4.8 Planning for board officer succession.



4.9 Utilizing the skills and talents of individual board members.



How can the board improve its performance in this area?

Checklist of Practices

Certain policies and practices characterize an effective nonprofit board. Some of these practices are required by law; many others have become widely accepted as good practice. The board self-assessment survey asked yes/no questions about these practices, which were answered only by the chief executive.

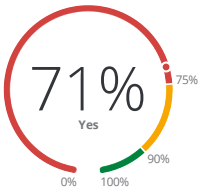
The gauges below show the percent of practices your board currently has in place.

- These practices are divided into four areas:
- 1. **Organizational Practices** relate to strategic planning documents and procedures.
 - 2. **Oversight Practices** include financial and legal policies and procedures.
 - 3. **Board Practices** address issues related to orientation, terms, retreats, and committees.
 - 4. **CEO Supervision Practices** cover the support and supervision of the highest paid staff person.

Organizational Practices

Does your board have the following practices in place?

% of organizational practices your board has in place:



1. Does the association have a written mission statement?
Yes

2. Does the association have a written vision statement?
Yes

3. Does the association have a written code of ethics?
No

4. Does the association have a written strategic plan?
Yes

5. Did the full board formally approve the association's strategic plan?
Yes

6. Does the association have a diversity and inclusion statement?
Yes

7. Has the association reviewed its policies and processes to incorporate diversity and inclusion?
No

Benchmark: % of boards that have each policy in place: 7

Organizational Practices

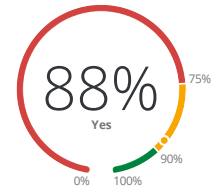
Yes

01. Does the association have a written mission statement?	99%
02. Does the association have a written vision statement?	85%
03. Does the association have a written code of ethics?	78%
04. Does the association have a written strategic plan?	93%
05. Did the full board formally approve the association's strategic plan?	90%
06. Does the association have a diversity and inclusion statement?	53%
07. Has the association reviewed its policies and processes to incorporate diversity and i...	50%

Board Practices

Does your board have the following practices in place?

% of board practices your board has in place:



1. Are board member responsibilities and expectations provided in writing to candidates during the recruitment and nominating process?

Yes

2. Is a structured, formal orientation held for new board members?

Yes

3. Is the length of board member terms defined?

Yes

4. Is there a maximum number of consecutive years a board member can serve?

Yes

5. Does the board have an annual retreat?

No

6. Do board committees have written charters or job descriptions?

Yes

7. Is there a written policy specifying the executive committee's roles and powers?

Yes

8. As the chief executive, are you excluded from voting on board issues?

Yes

Benchmark: % of boards that have each policy in place: 7

Board Practices	Yes
01.Are board member responsibilities and expectations (e.g., time, attendance, fundraising)...	67%
02. Is a structured, formal orientation held for new board members?	88%
03. Is the length of board member terms defined?	95%
04. Is there a maximum number of consecutive years a board member can serve?	81%
05. Does the board have an annual retreat?	47%
06. Do board committees have written charters or job descriptions?	86%
07. Is there a written policy specifying the executive committee's roles and powers? (Selec...	76%
08. As the chief executive, are you excluded from voting on board issues?	89%

Oversight Practices

Does your board have the following practices in place?

% of oversight practices your board has in place:



1. Did the full board formally approve the association's annual budget?

Yes

2. Does the full board receive financial reports at least quarterly?

Yes

3. Within the past year, has the association obtained a formal independent audit?

Yes

4. Did the board, or a committee of the board, meet with the auditors without staff present?

Yes

5. Did all board members receive a copy of the association's IRS Form 990?

Yes

6. Has the association posted appropriate information to the association's or another's website, e.g., governing documents, conflict-of-interest policy, financial statements, Form 990?

Yes

7. Does the association have a whistleblower policy that provides protection for employees who report suspected illegal activities?

Yes

8. Does the association have a document retention and destruction policy?

Yes

9. Does the association carry directors' and officers' liability insurance?

Yes

10. Does the association have a written conflict-of-interest policy that requires recusal and annual written disclosure?

Yes

11. Have all current board members and senior staff signed a conflict-of-interest and annual disclosure statement?

Yes

Benchmark: % of boards that have each policy in place: 7

Oversight Practices ▼

Yes

01. Did the full board formally approve the association's annual budget?

98%

02. Does the full board receive financial reports at least quarterly?

89%

03. Within the past year, has the association obtained a formal independent audit?

91%

04. Did the board, or a committee of the board, meet with the auditors without staff prese...

67%

05. Did all board members receive a copy of the association's IRS Form 990?

74%

06. Has the association posted appropriate information to the association's or another's w...

71%

07. Does the association have a whistleblower policy that provides protection for employee...

82%

08. Does the association have a document retention and destruction policy?

79%

09. Does the association carry directors' and officers' liability insurance?

97%

10. Does the association have a written conflict-of-interest policy that requires recusal...

91%

11. Have all current board members and senior staff signed a conflict-of-interest and ann...

77%

CEO Supervision Practices

Does your board have the following practices in place?

% of CEO supervision practices your board has in place:



1. Does the chief executive have a written job description?

Yes

2. Is the chief executive evaluated annually by the board?

Yes

3. Does the evaluation of the chief executive include a formal, written performance review?

Yes

4. Does the board periodically review executive compensation at comparable organizations?

Yes

Benchmark: % of boards that have each policy in place: ∇

CEO Supervision Practices ▼

Yes

01. Does the chief executive have a written job description?

95%

02. Is the chief executive evaluated annually by the board?

91%

03. Does the evaluation of the chief executive include a formal, written performance review?

83%

04. Does the board periodically review executive compensation at comparable organizations?

69%

Board Information

How many times did your full board meet during the past 12 months?

How many hours does a typical board meeting last?

Your Board

Average ∇

6

Your Board

Average ∇

8.4

How many voting members currently serve on the board?

How many committees does your board have?

Your Board

Average ∇

16



Your Board

Average ∇

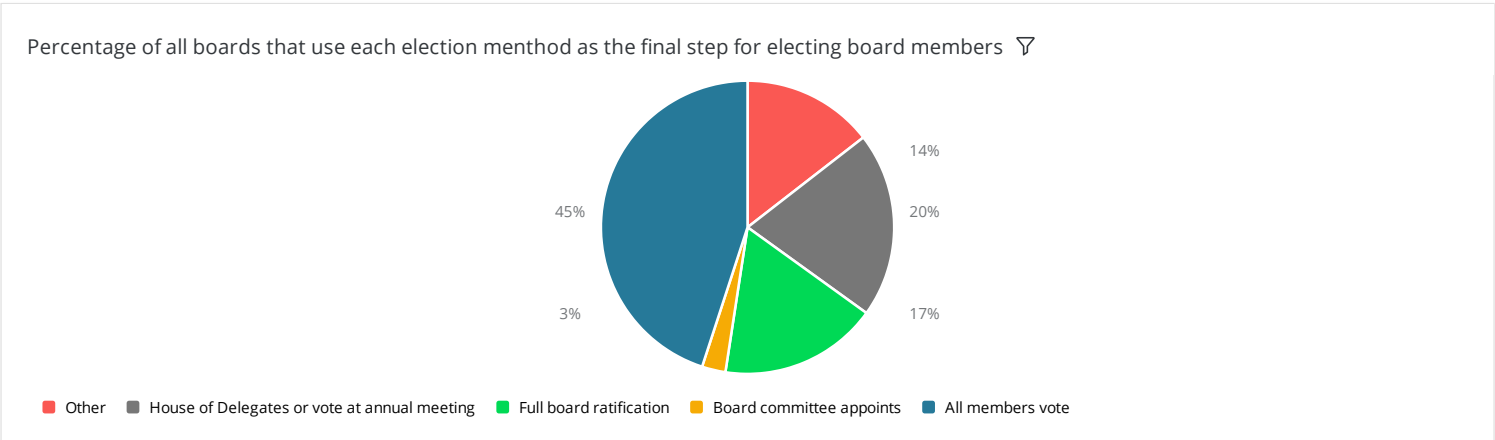
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Board Composition and Elections

From what overarching categories, if any, does your board require inclusion of individuals?

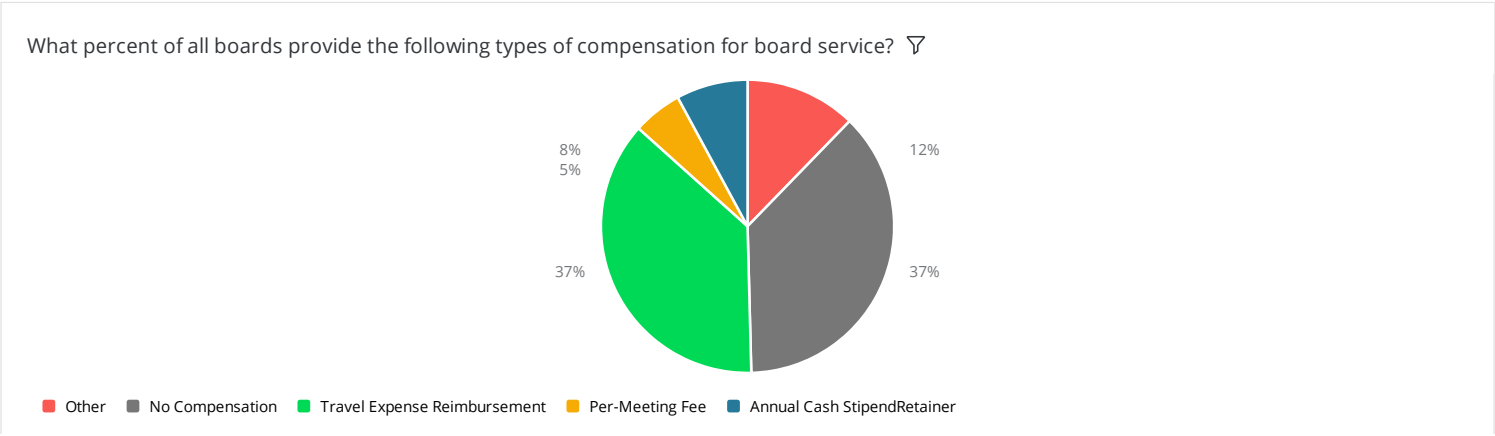
What percent of all boards are required to include individuals from these categories on their board? 	
All Boards 	%
Other	55%
Length of membership	8%
Geographic location	39%
Gender	12%
Ethnic or minority group	10%

What is the final step for electing board members to your board?



Board Member Compensation

How does your board compensate your board service?



Does compensation for board service vary by the individual's role on the board (e.g., officer, committee member, etc.) on your board?

Yes

Percent of all boards where compensation for board service varies by the individual's role on their board ∇

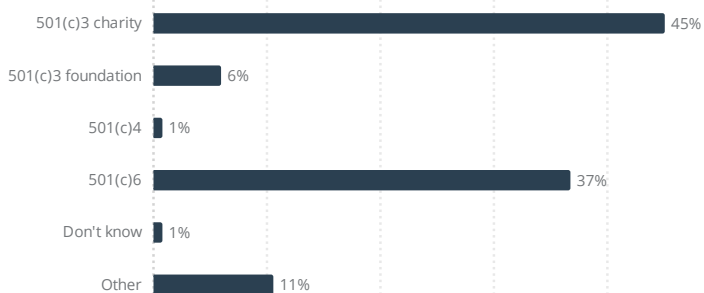
28%

Benchmarking

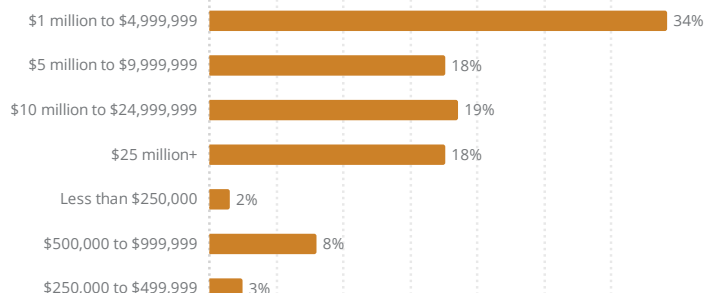
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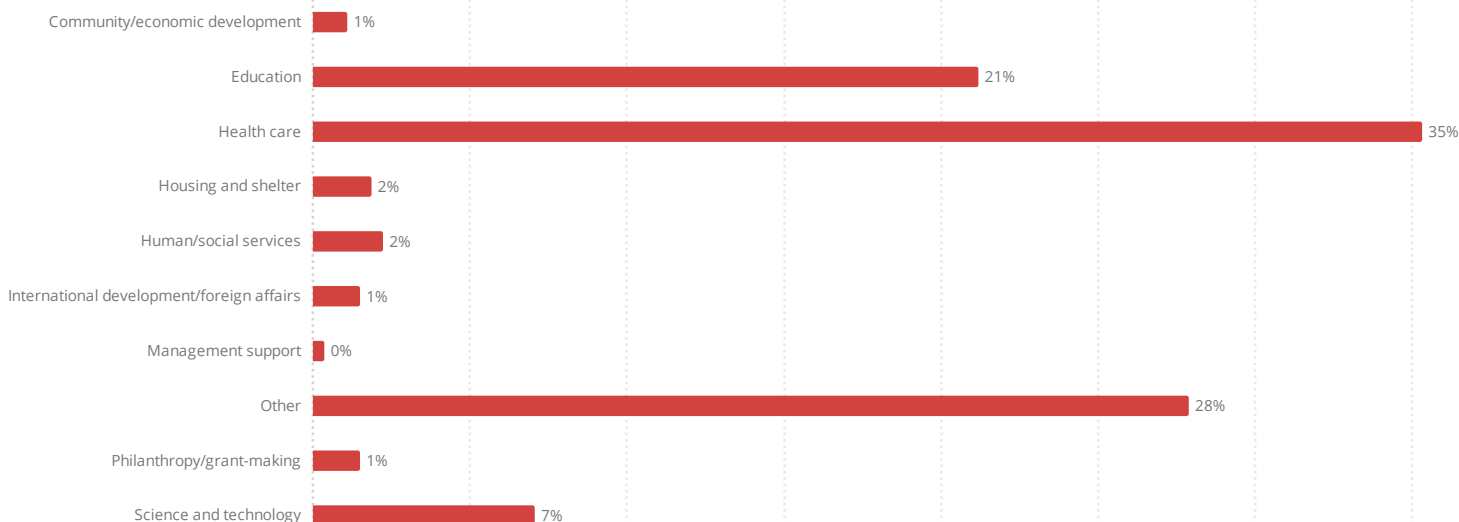
IRS Classification 266 ⓘ ∇



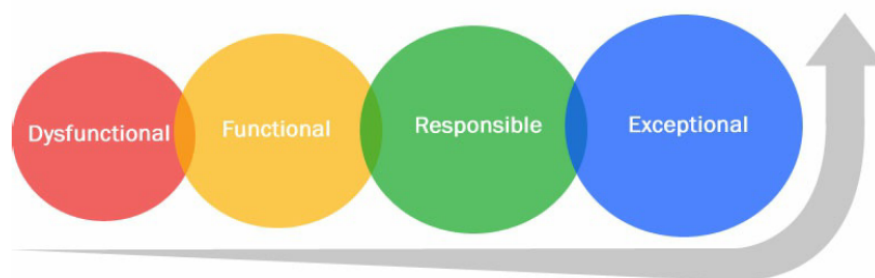
Budget 199 ⓘ ∇



Mission Area 269 ⓘ ∇



Board Performance Continuum



Taking Actions

Exceptional boards are a strategic asset to be leveraged by the organization. They add significant value and make a discernible difference in the organization's advancement of mission. Use this report as a tool to guide your board on the path to exceptional performance.

Take action. The board self-assessment establishes a platform for setting board priorities. The final step is identifying areas for growth. To help your board do this, consider the following questions:

1. What stands out? Is there anything in the report that is especially surprising, or that you'd like to understand better through conversations as a full board?
2. Does the board seem to be well aligned in terms of its assessment of its performance, or are there indications that different board members are experiencing the board's leadership performance differently? If the latter, why might that be?
3. To what extent is your board meeting its own expectations? In what ways is the board happy with its leadership performance, and where is it signaling a desire to improve? Do any natural priorities emerge from the ratings?
4. Based on what you see in the self-assessment, what are the top one to three areas where you think the board should focus its board development efforts?

Develop a board action plan. Once the board has agreed on its priorities, use a board action plan to help the board develop a clear approach to achieving its goals and staying accountable.

1. What steps can we take to ensure that information from the evaluation is used to improve the performance of the board?
2. Who or what committee is responsible for initiating and leading board development and assessment? Does it have the necessary resources and authority to fulfill its responsibilities?
3. Every board should have clearly established guidelines that outline the duties and responsibilities of individual board members. Are our board members held accountable to these standards? Do we have a process for removing nonperforming board members?

Check your progress. Only the board can hold itself accountable for its own performance. Periodically revisit the results from the self-assessment and action plan, celebrate the successes, and recommit to those areas that need further attention.

Repeat. BoardSource recommends conducting a thorough board self-assessment every two to three years and using the intervening time to work on the action plan you develop.

Deeper Support

Looking to go deeper? Consider investing in the Board Support Program, or reaching out to a consultant from our network.

Board Support Program

BoardSource's [Board Support Program](#) provides year-round governance guidance, resources, and leadership development to you, your board, and your organization.

Key benefits include:

- Complimentary Assessment Product
- Access to the [BoardSource Exchange](#)
- On-demand [Certificate of Nonprofit Board Education](#)
- Ask-an-Expert Email Service
- Members-Only Downloadable & Written Resources

Consultant Directory

BoardSource knows that – many times – there is no replacement for direct support and guidance from a [knowledgeable board consultant](#). That's why BoardSource has built relationships with a broad network of consultants from across the country who bring a wide range of strengths and experiences working with nonprofit boards.

New to selecting a consultant, or need a little help getting started? Check out this resource page:

[Choosing a Consultant FAQ](#)

Contact Us

Assessments Questions: assessments@boardsource.org
Membership or General Inquiries: members@boardsource.org

About BoardSource

About Us

BoardSource envisions a world where every social sector organization has the leadership it needs to fulfill its mission and advance the public good. Our mission is to inspire and support excellence in nonprofit governance and board and staff leadership.

Established in 1988, BoardSource's work is grounded in the fundamental belief that boards are critical to organizational success. With decades of hands-on experience working with and supporting nonprofit boards, BoardSource is the recognized leader in nonprofit governance and leadership, and a go-to resource for nonprofit board and executive leaders. BoardSource supports a broad and diverse cross-section of social sector organizations with

- leadership initiatives addressing key opportunities and issues within the nonprofit sector
- research and benchmarking of board composition, practices, and performance
- membership and board support programs
- customized diagnostics and performance assessment tools
- a comprehensive library of topic papers, publications, and downloadable infographics, tools, templates and more
- live and virtual education and training
- a biennial conference that brings together approximately 800 board leaders for two days of learning and sharing

A note to our global readers

The need for effective board leadership and governance knows no geographic boundaries, and BoardSource is committed to strong social sector board leadership and governance around the globe. While BoardSource uses United States laws and policies as the legal framework for our resources and recommendations, most of our resources do not focus on legal matters but rather on good governance practices, making them relevant to organizations working outside of the United States. We do suggest, however, that you refer to applicable laws in your country regarding financial reporting and other legal and transparency issues.

BoardSource is a 501(c)(3) organization.

For more information, please visit our website at www.boardsource.org, e-mail us at mail@boardsource.org, or call us at 800-883-6262.