Bring Out the Best in Your Board

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Our Mission

Fuel the effectiveness of nonprofits with guidance, expertise, and capital.
Session Overview

• Board Member Responsibilities Overview
• Board Type Continuum
• Tips for Engagement
Board Member Responsibilities

- Ensure Healthy Governance
- Lead Strategically
- Support & Supervise the Executive Director
- Be an Ambassador
- Ensure Financial Stability
Board Type Continuum

Hands-on /Start-up

Policy

Institutional
Start-up/Hands-On Board

- Board members support the founder and act as hands-on volunteers to help make the founders dream a reality
- Board size is often small
- Board members are often friends and colleagues from the founder’s circle

“Ten Dimensions that Shape Your Board”; Vanderwall & Benavides; 2008
Policy Board

• Board focuses on big picture policy, accountability and evaluating organizational effectiveness.

• Board members are recruited for a mix of skills and expertise with an emphasis on professionals

“Ten Dimensions that Shape Your Board”; Vanderwall & Benavides; 2008
In addition to focusing on governance, board members are actively involved in fundraising for the organization.

- Board size tends to be larger
- Board composition is relatively formal, includes access to major donors.

“Ten Dimensions that Shape Your Board”; Vanderwall & Benavides; 2008
Your Organization’s Stage

- Age of the organization
- Staffing levels
- Changes in funding
- Adversity
- Strategic direction
- Changes in programming
- Leadership transitions
Discussion Questions

• Where does your organization’s board fall on the continuum?

• In which of the 5 roles and responsibilities are board members most engaged?

• In which of the 5 roles and responsibilities are board members least engaged?
Key Engagement Questions

• Do we have the right people and are they really engaged?

• Do they know what their job is?

• Is the board organized in a way that helps us do our job well?

“Ten Dimensions that Shape Your Board”; Vanderwall & Benavides; 2008
Engagement Tips – Start-up Board

• Provide training for board members – requirements for 501(c)(3) organizations (i.e. fiduciary duties and compliance)

• Define roles and responsibilities among board members and volunteers

• Tap into passion and connection to the mission

• Provide access to infrastructure for the hands-on work of board members

Adapted from “Ten Dimensions that Shape Your Board”; Vanderwall & Benavides; 2008
Engagement Tips – Policy Board

- Provide training for board members – financial oversight, evaluating impact
- Define roles and responsibilities among board members and staff
- Help board members connect to the organization’s mission and impact
- Tap into specialized skills and expertise
- Dedicate board time for strategic discussions about topics including equity and inclusion

Adapted from “Ten Dimensions that Shape Your Board”; Vanderwall & Benavides; 2008
Engagement Tips – Institutional

• Provide training for board members – connections with resources & opportunities
• Define roles and responsibilities of board related to fundraising
• Help board members connect to the organization’s mission and impact
• Deepen discussion about what it means to be an inclusive board
• Provide opportunities to serve on committees or in ad hoc groups

Adapted from “Ten Dimensions that Shape Your Board”; Vanderwall & Benavides; 2008
Discussion Questions

- Which tips will benefit your board?

- What steps will you take to share these tips to bring out the best in your board?