

**Improving Outcomes for
your Board Members**

TEXAS **CASA**
October 2011
San Marcos, TX

**CASA Leadership
begins with the Board**

A CASA program has a governing body responsible for...

- overseeing the program's compliance with all applicable laws and regulations,
- adoption of policies,
- definition of services and
- guidance of program development assuring the program's accountability to the courts and community.

**Ten Responsibilities
of Nonprofit Boards**

1. Determine mission and purpose. Create and review a statement of mission and purpose that articulates the organization's goals, means and primary constituents served.
2. Select the chief executive. Reach consensus on the chief executive's responsibilities and undertake a careful search to find the most qualified individual for the position.

Board Responsibilities



- 3. Support and evaluate the chief executive. Ensure that the chief executive has the moral and professional support s/he needs to further the goals of the organization.
- 4. Ensure effective planning. Actively participate in an overall planning process and assist in implementing and monitoring the plan's goals.

Board Responsibilities



- 5. Monitor, and strengthen programs and services. Determine which programs are consistent with the organization's mission and monitor their effectiveness.
- 6. Ensure adequate financial resources. One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to secure adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission.

Board Responsibilities



- 7. Protect assets and provide proper financial oversight. Assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.
- 8. Build a competent board. Articulate prerequisites for candidates, orient new members and periodically and comprehensively evaluate their own performance.

Board Responsibilities

9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity. Ultimately responsible for adherence to legal standards and ethical norms.
10. Enhance the organization's public standing. Clearly articulate the organization's mission, accomplishments and goals to the public and garner support from the community.

CASA Board Orientation and Training



- Includes a formal orientation to the CASA program's goals, objectives, structure and methods of operation.
- Ensures that Board members are familiarized with CASA services and
- are provided with key documents related to governance and board responsibilities

Board Education and Communication



The board should establish an effective, systematic process for educating and communicating with board members to ensure that they are aware of their legal and ethical responsibilities, knowledgeable about the programs and activities of the organization, and can carry out their oversight functions effectively.

CASA Board Diversity



- A CASA program is an inclusive organization whose volunteers, staff and Board members reflect the diversity of the children and community it serves.
- CASA has individuals on the Board with various capabilities, including but not limited to...

CASA Board Diversity



- Skills and experience to serve at a policy-making level.
- Ability to advocate for sufficient financial resources to carryout the program's purpose.
- Knowledge of the court system and the community served.
- Ability to reflect community and client interests and to advocate for culturally responsive service delivery.

CASA Meetings



- Set the minimum number of formal meetings of the full Board at four times per calendar year.
- Set the quorum for these meetings so at least a simple majority of the current membership of the Board or advisory council is present.
- Maintain a written record of every meeting.

Review of CASA Governing Documents



- The articles of incorporation, bylaws and other governing instruments help boards ensure that the organization is abiding by the rules it has set for itself and determine whether changes need to be made to those instruments.

Responsibilities of Individual Board Members



- Attend all board and committee meetings and functions, and be prepared to participate.
- Stay informed about board and committee matters; review and comment on minutes and reports.
- Stay informed about the organization's mission, services, policies, and programs.

Responsibilities of Individual Board Members

- Keep up-to-date on developments in the organization's field.
- Follow developments in the community, economy, government, etc. that may affect the organization.
- Serve on committees and offer to take on special assignments.

Responsibilities of Individual Board Members



- Make a personal financial contribution to the organization.
- Participate in organizational fundraising.
- Inform others about the organization.
- Get to know other members; build working relationships that contribute to consensus.

Responsibilities of Individual Board Members



- Suggest nominees who can make significant contributions to the work of the board and the organization.
- Follow conflict of interest, ethics, confidentiality and whistleblower policies.
- Assist the board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities such as reviewing the organization's annual financial statements.
- Participate actively in the board's annual evaluation and planning efforts.

Evaluation of Board Performance



Board members should evaluate their performance as a group and as individuals no less frequently than every three years, and should have clear procedures for removing board members who are unable to fulfill their responsibilities.

20 Questions about Your Nonprofit Board




- 1. Could every member of the board provide a stranger with a succinct and accurate description of what the organization does?
 - Yes Most could I seriously doubt it
- 2. When was the last time the board discussed the future of a major program or service area?
 - Recently W/N the past year I can't recall

20 Questions

- 3. How many members of the board could accurately state the organization's operating budget for the current fiscal year?
 - Most Half A few The treasurer
- 4. Could a majority of board members draw a pie chart indicating how the organization spends its money?
 - Yes No

20 Questions

- 5. Did the organization operate at a deficit or a surplus last year?
 - Deficit Surplus Don't know
- 6. Was the meeting well organized, with materials sent out in advance?
 - Extremely well organized Sufficiently well organized Hopeless
 - Was this typical? Yes No


 **20 Questions**

7. Did the board spend the majority of its time on the most important items on the agenda?

- Yes No There were no important items on the agenda now

8. Was the meeting well attended?

- Yes We managed a quorum No


 **20 Questions**

9. Did you consider the meeting a good use of your time?

- Yes Marginally No

10. Did the meeting make a positive difference to the work of the organization?

- Yes Don't think so Don't know


 **20 Questions**

11. When board members volunteer to do something, do they follow through?

- Usually Sometimes Never Can't remember the last time someone volunteered

12. Do a handful of people dominate board discussions and decision making?

- Usually Sometimes Never




20 Questions

13. Do board members know and respect each other and enjoy working together?


- Yes No

14. Are all board decisions — other than those that have been delegated to the executive committee — made in the board room? Or do you consistently wonder if you were out of the room when a key decision was made?



20 Questions

- All decisions are made in the board room
- Most decisions are made in the board room
- I can't figure out how decisions are made



20 Questions

15. Consider the last person elected to the board: Was a clear recruitment strategy evident?

- Yes No Not sure Can't remember the last election

16. Does the board do as much as it could to assist the organization in fundraising?

- Yes No

20 Questions

17. Did you make a personal gift to the organization this year?

- Yes No Was I supposed to?
 No one asked.

18. Did the current chair need to be talked into taking the job?

- Yes No Elected in absentia
- Is there a clear successor? Yes No

20 Questions

19. Did you read the last communication from the executive director?

- Yes No Not sure


If it asked for a response, did you respond?

- Yes No Not sure

Do you think your behavior was unusual, or typical of the rest of the board?


- Unusual Typical

20 Questions



20. Overall, how do you rate the board?

- High functioning So-so
 Good but needs a tune-up
 Need to start over
- Suggest three things that could improve your board's performance:

 **Evaluation Handouts**

- Board of Directors' Evaluation
- Board of Directors' Self-Evaluation
- Dysfunctions of a Team

How can you improve the outcomes of your board members?

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