

BOARD CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

A strong partnership between the chief executive and board chair is essential to leading an effective organization. When the relationship goes awry, it's often due to confusion over individual responsibilities.

In general, the chief executive's role is focused on management and working with staff to implement programs and initiatives in support of the mission. The board chair is responsible for governance and oversight, leading the board in evaluating the organization's work from a macro-perspective and ensuring that the work advances the mission in an ethical and legal manner.

But how do these general roles manifest in key responsibilities, such as fundraising or board meetings? Read on to find out.

POLICY AND PLANNING

Board Chair/Governance	Shared	Chief Executive/Management
Develops and/or reviews guiding principles (mission, vision, values) and policies	Strategic planning and program evaluation	Commits to and carries out mission
Ensures effective planning, overseeing board involvement in development and approval of strategic plan	Mission impact	Provides administrative support for board policymaking
Monitors organization's programs and services in support of the mission and strategic plan	Organizational growth and sustainability	Engages the board in planning
		Implements strategic plan
		Monitors the quality and effectiveness of individual programs, providing board with data and information needed to evaluate program effectiveness, impact, and outcomes

BUDGET AND FINANCES

Board Chair/Governance	Shared	Chief Executive/Management
Ensures adequate financial resources; protects assets; provides financial oversight	Fiscal stewardship	Prepares and proposes budget to board
Reviews and approves annual budget		Manages programs according to board-adopted financial policies and budget guidelines
Oversees annual audit process		

FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT

Board Chair/Governance	Shared	Chief Executive/Management
Maximizes board member participation in resource development; oversees approval of fundraising plan Attends fundraising events, cultivates donors, and makes a personal contribution Solicits contributions from board members	Solicit contributions from outside donors Engage board members in fundraising activities Evaluate effectiveness of fundraising strategies	Develops fundraising plan and coordinates overall fundraising efforts Ensures staff support for board fundraising Updates board on development efforts

BOARD MEETINGS

Board Chair	Shared	Chief Executive
Leads and facilitates board meetings	Develop meeting agenda	Ensures that board members have necessary information and meeting materials Attends meetings, except specific executive sessions

COMMITTEE WORK

Board Chair	Shared	Chief Executive
Ensures that board has effective committee and task force structure Appoints board committee and task force chairs Serves as ex officio, non-voting member of all committees, except the governance committee when discussing elections Keep board informed of committee and task force work	Develop and review committee structure and individual committees to ensure alignment with mission and strategic goals Identify committee members	Sits in on appropriate committee meetings as non-voting member Ensures that committee members have staff support and needed materials/information

BOARD RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Board Chair	Shared	Chief Executive
Ensures strategic board building and recruitment Sets goals and expectations for the board Cultivates leadership among individual board members Prioritizes board development, including orientation and educational sessions	Identify skills, expertise, and attributes needed for the board Keep all board members engaged in the work of the organization	Develops and sustains strong working relationships with board members Shares appropriate information to keep board informed and educated about ongoing organizational activities and changes in the field in which the organization works Identifies potential new board members and participates in orientation

BOARD ASSESSMENT

Board Chair	Shared	Chief Executive
Ensures regular opportunities for assessment Oversees comprehensive board assessment every two years	Evaluate assessment results and identify board development opportunities in collaboration with governance committee	Assists board assessment process

STAFF OVERSIGHT, COMPENSATION, EVALUATION

Board Chair	Shared	Chief Executive
Oversees hiring, compensation, and evaluation of chief executive Ensures chief executive succession plan exists	Provide general oversight to ensure strong and effective staff resources	Oversees and evaluates all staff Sets staff salaries within budget constraints

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Board Chair	Shared	Chief Executive
Promotes the work of the organization and encourages board members to do so as well; advocates for the organization’s mission with public policy makers Speaks for the board when a controversy or crisis arises	With full board and staff, develop message that conveys the organization’s mission effectively and can be used consistently by everyone within the organization Public policy advocacy	Serves as public face and official spokesperson for the organization Coordinates public relations and communications and advocacy efforts

RESOURCES



Please note that this delineation of roles and responsibilities is recommended practice and may not apply to all organizations, including those small and new organizations without staff.