

The Role of the Board Chair – Sample Job Description

This template is not intended as legal advice. Your organizational goals, purpose, values, and bylaws should drive the creation of this document.

- Keep the board focused on what matters most.
- Continue to define the board's boundaries to the board. What is the board expected/not expected to do?
- Monitor board discussion and ensure that board meeting time is used effectively.
- Create ad hoc committees to propose options to difficult issues.
- Ensure that no single board member is dominating board discussions. Work toward operating as a team.
- Contribute to the work of the board without dominating or over-influencing.
- Keep open channels of communication between the board and the organization.
- Make sure that board members are clear about their individual board commitments.
- Ensure that board efforts are documented and made available to the board and executive director (partner with staff as appropriate).
- Develop a positive working relationship with the CEO/ED.
- Assist the CEO/ED in preparing the agenda for board meetings.
- Act as official spokesperson for the board, when asked by the CEO and board.
- Coordinate and participate in the CEO/EDs annual performance evaluation.
- Establish and enforce guidelines for disciplining board members.
- Take the leadership role with executive director communication.
- Ensure board development and finance committees are active.
- Ensure board officer and executive director succession plans are in place and up to date.

Rationale:

The board chair's main responsibility is to keep the board focused on what matters the most for the organization and where the board can have the most positive impact.

To effectively run meetings, the board chair must partner with the CEO/ED to prepare an agenda, keep meeting discussion and debate focused on the issues, and move board members to a decision.

The board chair's authority is granted to him or her only by the full board. He or she may speak publicly on behalf of the board only when given permission and only in support of the decisions of the full board. The board chair should never give his or her personal opinion about a board decision to the news media.