



Board Member Expectations¹ Sample Nonprofit, Inc.

This pledge is intended to acknowledge the shared responsibilities, commitment and conduct expected of all members of the Board of Directors of Sample Nonprofit, Inc. This document is not meant to be a formal contract but rather a set of expectations set forth for all existing and future board members.

As a member of the Board of Directors of Sample Nonprofit, I am fully committed and dedicated to the mission of Sample Nonprofit, [quote mission here]. I pledge to help Sample Nonprofit carry out this mission, consistent with the functions of the office of board member as stated in Sample Nonprofit's By-laws.

The role of the board

As a board member of Sample Nonprofit, I have both the opportunity and the obligation to appoint and evaluate the CEO, help establish strategic direction, set broad policy, and steward the assets, all in support of the organization's stated mission. I commit to fulfilling these obligations with my time, talent, treasure and relationships.

The role of management

I understand that the CEO/Executive Director is responsible, under the board's direction, for developing the long-range plan for board approval, devising acceptable short- and medium-term objectives in pursuit of that plan, and then managing the organization's resources to meet those objectives.

Preparation

I will work diligently to understand the mission, purpose, goals and programs of the organization, and I will prepare for all board and committee meetings by reviewing all related documents and materials in advance.

Fiscal and program oversight

Together with my fellow board members, I am responsible for the fiscal oversight of Sample Nonprofit. Whether I am a member of the organization's finance or audit committees, I will know what our budget is and take an active

¹ A draft document compiled by BoardWalk Consulting (www.BoardWalkConsulting.com) from actual commitment letters provided by various foundations and nonprofit organizations. Readers are encouraged to adjust this draft to meet the specific needs of their individual organizations.

part in reviewing and approving the budget and monitoring our performance against that budget. If I do not understand an element of Sample Nonprofit's fiscal health, I will reach out to the appropriate board members, committees, or staff for clarification.

Active participation in board meetings

I will attend regularly scheduled board meetings, be available for consultation by phone and e-mail, and serve on at least one committee of the board where I can apply my special skills, perspective and experience. I will come prepared to discuss the issues and business at hand, and I will help prepare for and participate in the annual board retreat, typically scheduled on or about [date].

If I miss three consecutive board or committee meetings without proper notice or am otherwise unable to fulfill my obligations as a board member, I will offer my resignation or request a leave of absence.

Active participation in major events

I will attend Sample Nonprofit's major public events and fundraisers and will actively encourage support and attendance by my friends and colleagues as well.

Positively represent the organization

As a board member, I know that I am a *de facto* ambassador for the organization, and I will strive to represent Sample Nonprofit in the best possible ways. I will never offer myself as an official spokesperson for the organization without proper authority from the board or CEO.

Financial support

I will work with relevant members of the board and staff to come up with a giving plan that is reasonable for my personal situation, and I will leverage Sample Nonprofit's development staff to help me secure sources for this level of funding.

Overall fundraising efforts. I expect to be actively involved throughout the year in some aspect of Sample Nonprofit's fundraising efforts. More particularly, I will help identify and cultivate potential supporters, and I agree to make a limited number of calls on potential supporters.

Annual campaigns. I will make what is for me a substantial financial donation to Sample Nonprofit each year to signify that the organization is a personal philanthropic priority.

- *[If the board has established a minimum:]* At a minimum, I will make an annual gift of at least _____.
- *[If the board has not established a minimum:]* I understand the board's collective commitment to the annual fund is _____, and I will endeavor to contribute my fair share of that goal.

Capital campaigns. I understand that board members are expected to participate actively in the organization's capital campaigns.

- *[If no campaign is underway:]* Although I am not making a specific capital pledge at this point, I understand 100% board participation is fundamental to the success of a capital campaign and that I will be asked to make what is for me a substantial financial donation whenever such a campaign is finalized.
- *[If the board has established a minimum:]* At a minimum, I will make an annual capital gift of at least _____.
- *[If the board has not established a minimum:]* I understand the board's collective commitment to the capital campaign is _____, and I will contribute my fair share of that goal.

Planned gifts. I understand that each trustee is encouraged to make provision for Sample Nonprofit in his or her estate plan, and I agree to do so for at least as long as I am a member of the organization's board.

Support the staff

I recognize the significant obligations of the staff in carrying out Sample Nonprofit's work, and I will do my best not to interfere with the staff's operating responsibilities. While I have the right to speak with staff members about matters of mutual interest, I understand that I do not have the right to direct the actions of staff members unless appropriately authorized to do so by the board or the CEO/Executive Director.

Uphold confidentiality and By-laws

I understand that the board must speak with one voice, and therefore I agree not to divulge board-level discussions to outsiders unless the board has adopted a different policy for a specific instance or issue. I have read and understand the organization's By-laws, and I agree to operate in conformity with them.

Sample Nonprofit's Commitment to its Board Members:

As part of the organization's execution of its mission, Sample Nonprofit makes the following commitment to its board members:

- We will provide you the opportunity for meaningful and rewarding service to our mission and our community.
- We will provide you in a timely way with the information you need to be an effective board member.
- We will be diligent in making the best possible use of the assets you make available to us, whether those be assets of time, wisdom, experience, relationships or money.
- We will schedule meetings in advance, and we will start and end meetings on time, unless a majority of those present at the time elect otherwise.
- We will make every effort to keep our meetings brief, relevant, interesting and impactful.
- We will respond to the best of our ability to your questions and concerns.
- We will encourage your feedback and criticism.
- We will do our utmost to be an organization of which all of us can be proud.

Commitment

By signing this document, I am acknowledging that board service implies a three-way commitment from board members individually, board members collectively and the organization as a whole. Even though this commitment letter is non-binding in a legal sense, I understand that the organization will rely on the collective commitments of its board members in formulating its plans and executing its strategy. Furthermore, I request that the commitments in this letter be made part of an annual evaluation of my service as a board member.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
[Board Member]

Signed: _____ Date: _____
[Board President]

Signed: _____ Date: _____
[CEO/Executive Director]