

Good Governance
Notes:

Decision Ownership Guide with Conversation Starters

Who Owns the Decision and How to Start the Conversation

Decision Type	Primary Owner	Conversation Starters
Mission, vision, or strategic direction	Board	"How does this align with our mission and long-term priorities?"
Bylaw changes	Board/Membership	"Does this require formal board or member approval?"
Policies and governance standards	Board	"What policy guidance do we need to establish?"
Day-to-day operations	Staff/Operational Leaders	"What is the most effective operational approach?"
Procedures and workflows	Staff/Committees	"What steps and responsibilities are needed to implement this?"
Budget approval and financial oversight	Board	"Do we have the resources and oversight needed?"
Program implementation	Staff/Committees	"How will we measure whether this supports the mission?"
Strategic planning	Board with Staff Input	"What priorities should guide us over the next 1–3 years?"
Volunteer or committee work assignments	Committees/Leaders	"Who is best positioned to lead this effort?"
Legal, ethical, or compliance concerns	Board	"Are we meeting our fiduciary and legal responsibilities?"
Public messaging and reputation issues	Board + Staff	"How does this reflect on the organization and its values?"
Succession planning and leadership development	Board	"How are we preparing future leaders?"

Governance Health Check

Use this checklist annually to assess the health of your chapters governance practices. Check each statement that is “true” and use the scoring guide to determine next steps.

Foundation & Governance Documents

- ☐ Mission statement is current and guides decisions
- ☐ Bylaws have been reviewed within the last 2–3 years
- ☐ Key policies are documented (conflict of interest, financial, membership, confidentiality, etc.)
- ☐ Procedures align with policies and bylaws

Board Engagement & Oversight

- ☐ Board members regularly attend and prepare for meetings
- ☐ Financial reports are reviewed consistently
- ☐ Board members disclose conflicts of interest
- ☐ Board decisions reflect the organization’s mission and best interests

Compliance & Accountability

- ☐ Required IRS/state filings are current
- ☐ Meeting minutes and governance records are maintained
- ☐ The organization complies with applicable laws and regulations
- ☐ Confidential information is protected appropriately

Strategy & Planning

- ☐ The organization has a current strategic plan
- ☐ Goals and priorities are reviewed regularly
- ☐ Programs are evaluated for mission alignment and effectiveness
- ☐ Resources are aligned with strategic priorities

Board Development & Leadership

- ☐ The board recruits and develops future leaders
- ☐ The chief executive/president is supported and evaluated
- ☐ Board roles and responsibilities are clearly understood
- ☐ Succession planning is part of board discussions

Reputation & Public Trust

- ☐ Board members actively advocate for the organization
- ☐ The organization demonstrates ethical and transparent practices
- ☐ Stakeholders and members are kept informed appropriately

Quick Scoring Guide

18–21 checks: Strong governance practices

14–17 checks: Healthy foundation with improvement opportunities

Below 14 checks: Governance review and board development recommended

GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITY MAP

Clarifying Who Does What to Strengthen Accountability and Advance Our Mission



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES	PRESIDENT	BOARD OF DIRECTORS	STAFF	COMMITTEES (Examples)	MEMBERS / VOLUNTEERS
 1. Mission & Strategic Oversight Set mission, vision, values, and long-term strategic direction.	L	S	I	R	I
 2. Financial Oversight Approve budget, review financials, oversight audits, manage risk.	L	S	E	L	I
 3. Executive Leadership Hire, evaluate, support, and ensure succession of the CEO.	S	I	-	R	-
 4. Operations & Program Management Manage staff, implement programs, ensure quality and compliance.	O	L	L	I	E
 5. Governance & Compliance Ensure legal compliance, ethical standards, bylaws, policies, and board effectiveness.	L	S	E	L	I
 6. Fundraising & Community Relations Cultivate resources, partners, donors, and advocate for the mission.	S	L	E	L	E
 7. Public Image & Advocacy Promote the organization, build public trust, and communicate our impact.	S	L	E	I	S

L = Lead (Primary Responsibility) S = Support (Shared Responsibility) E = Execute (Day-to-Day Responsibility) R = Review (Provide Input/Recommendations) I = Input (Provide Information/Feedback) O = Oversight - = Not Typically Involved



KEY PRINCIPLE: The Board governs. The President leads. Staff manage. Together we advance the mission. | Oversight, not micromanagement. Strategy, not day-to-day.