

Board Members and Personal Contributions

Many nonprofit boards spend considerable time defining the board's role in securing adequate resources for the organization. Personal contribution is an essential part of that discussion. Each board should determine its own personal giving policy. For boards that raise funds, the target should be to reach 100 percent board member participation.

Why Should Board Members Give?

Board member giving is natural and necessary. Here are some reasons why:

- Board members of most charitable organizations are expected to participate in fundraising, including giving a personally significant financial gift.
- By personally contributing, a board member recognizes their responsibility and demonstrates a commitment.
- A board member who is also a donor will be more successful when asking others to give.
- Many foundations only contribute to organizations where every board member is a contributor.

Creating a Nonprofit Board Giving Policy

A fundraising and personal giving policy will be very helpful in determining how and at what level board members should give. A strong leader during the decision-making process — a sensitive peer who is in a good position to make the case for a policy — can help find a consensus among board members. As the decision affects each board member individually, it is necessary to create a policy that will be honored by all. To avoid any misunderstandings and false expectations, every board candidate should be familiar with these policies.

How Much Should Board Members Contribute?

Often it is not appropriate to ask each board member to contribute equally. Some board candidates might find the amount too high; therefore, the policy would eliminate valuable prospects from joining the board. Others may have considered contributing more but a lower suggested amount could reduce their gift. .

Policies can set a range, suggest a minimum amount, and/or encourage each member to give generously according to their means. One set of guidelines may not be appropriate for every board. BoardSource recommends board members give at a level significant to them, individually.

Additional Options of Giving

Some boards closely tie fundraising and personal giving. For instance, each board member may be asked to raise a set amount. This is called a Give or Get policy. It is up to the individual board member to raise the funds or make a personal contribution. Besides setting a base contribution level, many performing arts boards want board members to purchase season tickets and bring guests to performances. In other types of organizations, board members are asked to buy memberships for others, subscribe to the organization's journals, purchase the organization's products as gifts, or support special events financially by purchasing auction tickets or donating items to an auction or a sale.

A challenge of getting rather than giving is that the board misses the opportunity to meet the 100% giving expectation and to steward board members as donors.

BoardSource recommends each board member give at a level significant to them and help raise other funds, as appropriate to their experience.

The Role Nonprofit Boards Play in Fundraising

One of the roles and responsibilities of a nonprofit board is securing resources. If the organization relies on contributed income, board members are expected to participate in fundraising. That may include soliciting and making individual gifts, introducing their network to the organization, attending agency events, and bringing guests to events.

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Resource: [Fearless Fundraising for Nonprofit Boards](#)