



## Governance Learning Series: An Introduction to Governing Body Roles

*Here are the ten vital roles of the not-for-profit Governing Body:*

**1. KNOW WHY YOU ARE HERE.** What is our mission? Who created us, when? What is the history of leadership?

**2. LEADING IS A PARTNERSHIP.** Board members are strategic policy advisors. The Executive and Staff are operational experts.

**3. SERVING PEOPLE IS OUR GOAL.** Spend some time to understand our program of service and get to know the people being served by volunteering, or participating in an event.

**4. SERVE OUR CUSTOMERS BY SERVING OUR STAFF.** What is the organizational structure and how does our staff get the job done? It is often said, “If you serve the needs of staff, you will be serving the needs of your customers”.

**5. MANAGE EFFECTIVELY.** Set up a performance review system for the Executive. Establish goals and a process to review your Governing Body’s performance. Hold your management staff and yourselves accountable.

**6. YOU ARE AN AMBASSADOR.** Make it a point to represent your organization well in the community. Every board member should make an annual gift and help raise money.

**7. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY.** If you or a family member were receiving services from your organization, wouldn’t you want someone to exercise good fiscal responsibility? That requires scrutiny of expenses, but also proper pricing so that you can plan for a “rainy day” financial reserve.

**8. PLANNING FOR TOMORROW IS A DUTY.** Planning should be done at every meeting of your Governing Body. Plus set aside time each year for “long term planning.”

**9. USE THE TALENTS IN THE ROOM.** Meetings should be fully utilized and engaging. Read material ahead of time. Board members lead discussion. Make sure every voice is heard.

**10. LEAVE THE ORGANIZATION BETTER OFF THAN WHEN YOU STARTED.** Asking questions is your job, but supporting the staff in their hard work is critical for creating a good team approach.