

Board Governance



power your mission

OUR APPROACH

In order to lead your nonprofit strategically and effectively, your board needs to have a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities. More than that, though, your board needs to agree on how it wants to operate together, members need to feel engaged in the work, and when conflict arises, there need to be group norms for productively addressing it.

This is all easier said than done. If your board or nonprofit has new faces, is developing a strategic plan, needs help navigating through challenges, or is feeling caught in the weeds instead of on setting strategy, it's probably a good time for board development.

At Propel Nonprofits, we engage with nonprofits as a mutual and trusted partner using a three-step approach: assessing where your board is currently at, coming to agreement on where you need to be (and how you want to be together), and then establishing an action plan to move forward toward your mission, together.

BENEFITS & OUTCOMES OF BOARD DEVELOPMENT

- New skills and perspectives identified to inform your recruitment and carry out your strategic goals
- Better board engagement by clarifying board roles and responsibilities
- More generative (and even fun!) board meetings
- Stronger interpersonal relationships
- Governance structures, practices, and agreements that fit your values and vision
- A healthier board/executive director partnership
- Smoother leadership transitions
- Establish group norms and tools for moving past conflict

FROM OUR CLIENTS



“We knew [working with Propel Nonprofits] would get us further faster toward our mission. It’s an investment that’s going to pay off, honestly, in the near-term, not even the long-term.”

-LYNN FARMER, Board Chair
Northside Economic Opportunity Network

Propel Nonprofits’ mission is to fuel the impact and effectiveness of nonprofits with guidance, expertise, and capital.

1. Where are you now?

Board Self-Assessment

A key responsibility of each governing board is to honestly assess its own performance to ensure that it is carrying out its responsibilities within a healthy climate that fosters open discussion, sound decision making, and respect for all members. Propel Nonprofits' anonymous self-assessment allows all members to offer feedback, and in turn, helps start a conversation between your board and our consultants as we work together to create a board development plan. Propel will collect responses from your board assessment and present your board with a report of areas that stood out as places for improvement, strengths to build on, and priority areas.

2. Where do you need to be?

Board Roles & Responsibilities

The clarity of roles and purpose can lead to better engagement. Our board development curriculum helps board members better understand their five key roles and responsibilities: 1) leading strategically; 2) ensuring financial stability; 3) serving as an ambassador; 4) supporting and supervising the executive director; and 5) ensuring healthy governance. The emphasis here will be on the roles of board members given the organization's current life stage.

3. How do you get there?

Board Development Action Plan

Once you know where you are and what your board needs to be doing, how do you move past conflict, disengagement, or other barriers to get there? In this phase, we'll work with you to develop both technical and adaptive tools to strengthen interpersonal dynamics, coach you for on-boarding or off-boarding, engage all the different skills and perspectives on your board, and work together better to lead your nonprofit.

MARIO HERNANDEZ

Strategic Services Director

mhernandez@propelnonprofits.org | 612-249-6688

Mario's experience includes improving the operations of organizations and increasing board effectiveness. He has led organizations through growth periods and periods of change. Mario has managed the for-profit business ventures of a local nonprofit and used his creative, entrepreneurial, analytical, and strategic skills to lead those ventures to profitability and impact.

KABO YANG

Strategic Services Consultant

kyang@propelnonprofits.org | 612-249-6698

Kabo has spent her career working and consulting in the nonprofit sector in the Twin Cities. Her consulting practice focused on identity-driven leadership, culturally-affirming nonprofit management and inclusion initiatives, and prioritized people of color-led organizations. She has served on nonprofit boards and is also an adjunct instructor in the Organizational Leadership graduate program at St. Catherine University.

AMANDA ZIEBELL MAWANDA

Strategic Services Consultant

aziebell@propelnonprofits.org | 612-249-6693

Amanda has a background in organizational leadership and development, including change management, strategic planning, and board development. She has over a decade of experience working in the nonprofit sector as a consultant and is focused on building a common vision, igniting creativity, and unleashing energy for positive change.

MARY ANN EHLISHLAGER

Senior Finance Consultant

mehlishlager@propelnonprofits.org | 612-249-6774

Mary Ann has decades of experience at the intersection of mission and finance, having served in executive roles in nonprofit theaters across the country. At Propel, Mary Ann works with nonprofit leaders to boost organizations' mission impact through excellence in financial leadership. Mary Ann holds an MFA from the California Institute of Arts and a BA from the University of Virginia.

