

Divine Mercy Ministries

Board of Directors Manual

History

The ministry was formed in December 1996, when the then Director of the Pro Life Ministry of St Joseph's Catholic Church, Kathy Swygman, felt called to offer an option to teen girls faced with unexpected pregnancies.

Kathy worked with pregnant teens at the Beulah Beale School in Jacksonville and was distressed by the difficulties these girls faced by choosing life for their babies. Kathy felt that if these young women could find a safe place to prepare for and care for their babies in a Christ Centered home with a Resident Director to show them how a Christian woman raises her children in today's world, it could change the direction of their lives and the lives of their babies.

Unfortunately, Kathy had to relocate with her husband's job but the members of the ministry and our Spiritual Director, Fr Dan Cody, felt the ministry was too important to let it end. Fundraising was difficult and it wasn't until a benefactor temporarily donated a residence that The Divine Mercy House was opened in a ceremony presided over by Bishop John Snyder and Fr Cody on September 11, 1999.

Thanks to the support and generosity of Fr Cody and the parishioners of St Joseph's Catholic Church the permanent home was opened in June 2007 in a ceremony officiated by Bishop Victor Galeone and Fr Cody. The home has rooms to accommodate 5 residents with their children.

All residents are required to attend life skills training sessions, advance their education or career goals, provide full care for their babies, establish a transition to independent living plan with a budget, participate in the communal family style living of the home, and most importantly develop a relationship with God that can be the foundation for a better more fulfilling life for them and their babies.

Structure and Positions of The Board of Directors

The board typically consists of 5 to 12 members who each have equal say in administering the home. Permanently established positions are: Spiritual Director, President, Treasurer, Vice President and Secretary. Other positions available are Fundraising Director, Mental Health Counselor, Life Skills Director, Volunteer Coordinator, and other positions as from time to time are established by the Board.

Admission and Term for Board Members

Board Members are typically recruited by other board members or community members with a passion for the ministry and a willingness to serve. Board member nominees typically submit a resume with their interests and strengths they believe can serve the ministry and are then invited to attend one of the monthly board meetings as observers. After that meeting nominees will be voted on to admission for the board, which requires a simple majority of those present. A board member may be removed by a 2/3's majority of the full board.

Board members serve open terms with no prescribed term limit. It is hoped when a board member resigns they will attempt to solicit an appropriate replacement.

Board Member Roles and Responsibilities

Board members are the fiduciaries who steer the organization towards a sustainable future by adopting sound, ethical, and legal governance and financial management policies, as well as by making sure the nonprofit has adequate resources to advance its mission.

One of the most important responsibilities for the board is to hire and set the compensation of the Executive Director, who runs the day-to-day management activities of the organization and the hiring and identifying the need for auxiliary staff, and then to provide supervision and evaluation of the Executive Director.

For the paid staff in place, rather than steer the boat by managing day-to-day operations, board members provide foresight, oversight, and insight and support to staff.

Yes, board members - your role as stewards of the nonprofits DOES involve fundraising. And we are big promoters of the important role board members play as advocates for the nonprofit's mission.

- Our board members serve as volunteers without any compensation.
- Arguably the most important policy for a board to adopt is a policy addressing conflicts of interest.
- Board members are expected to participate in all functions and fundraising events of the ministry whenever possible.
- Board members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings as well as any additional required events called by a member of the permanently established board positions or by a board majority, whenever possible.

The Basics

What's the role of the board of directors of a nonprofit corporation?

Just as for any corporation, the board of directors of a nonprofit has three primary legal duties known as the "duty of care," "duty of loyalty," and "duty of obedience."

1. **Duty of Care:** Take care of the nonprofit by ensuring prudent use of all assets, including facility, people, and good will;
2. **Duty of Loyalty:** Ensure that the nonprofit's activities and transactions are, first and foremost, advancing its mission; Recognize and disclose conflicts of interest; Make decisions that are in the best interest of the nonprofit corporation; not in the best interest of the individual board member (or any other individual or for-profit entity).
3. **Duty of Obedience:** Ensure that the nonprofit obeys applicable laws and regulations; follows its own bylaws; and that the nonprofit adheres to its stated purposes/mission.

However, a board of directors does not exist solely to fulfill legal duties and serve as a fiduciary of the organization's assets. Board members also play

very significant roles providing guidance by contributing to the organization's culture, strategic focus, effectiveness, and financial sustainability, as well as serving as ambassadors and advocates. Our board members are important resources for the organization in multiple ways.

Here are 5 Qualities That Make Someone a Successful Nonprofit Board Member

1. Commitment to the organization

Successful board members demonstrate a genuine commitment to the nonprofit's mission and the clients it serves. They prioritize attending meetings, actively participate in discussions, and take an active role in decision-making processes. By dedicating their time and expertise, they contribute to the organization's growth and development. Successful board members also make an effort to be well-informed about the organization's mission, services, policies, and programs. They continuously seek knowledge about the nonprofit's work and stay updated on developments in the relevant fields. This commitment to staying informed allows board members to make their own informed decisions and provide valuable insights.

2. Personal financial contribution

Successful nonprofit board members lead by example by making a personal financial contribution to the nonprofit. Before asking others to contribute, they confirm their dedication by pledging and paying an annual contribution. By making this financial commitment, they demonstrate their belief in the organization's mission and values. Additionally, they actively participate in fundraising and resource development efforts. They make thank you calls to donors, bring colleagues and friends to fundraising events. Successful board members actively engage in cultivating relationships with potential donors and help secure in-kind contributions. By actively participating in fundraising activities, they support the financial sustainability of the organization and inspire others to contribute.

3. Ethical Conduct and Confidentiality

Successful board members always have the organization's best interests in mind and avoid conflicts of interest. They adhere to the duty of loyalty, meaning they act in the best interests of the organization and do not use their position for personal gain. They maintain confidentiality of board deliberations and publicly support board decisions, even if they may have disagreed. Board members should follow conflict of interest and confidentiality policies, signing statements annually and excusing themselves from discussions and votes where they have a conflict of interest. By upholding these ethical standards, successful board members foster trust and ensure the organization's integrity.

4. Active Engagement and Leadership

Successful board members actively engage with the organization beyond board meetings. They serve on committees, offer to take on special assignments, and take leadership roles when necessary. They attend and actively participate in board member retreats and workshops. They actively participating in committee work and special assignments, they share the workload and contribute their expertise to the organization's initiatives. Additionally, successful board members inform others about the nonprofit, acting as goodwill ambassadors. They make presentations at community venues, personally contact friends and businesses to support the nonprofit, and share relevant information with their networks.

5. Fulfillment of Legal Responsibilities

Successful board members understand and fulfill their legal responsibilities. They meet the duty of care by making informed decisions and exercising reasonable care in their stewardship of the organization. They meet the duty of loyalty by acting in the best interests of the organization, avoiding personal gain, and being faithful to the mission. They meet the duty of obedience by ensuring their actions align with the organization's central goals, obeying the law, and adhering to the organization's internal rules and regulations. By

fulfilling these legal responsibilities, successful board members protect the organization's reputation and build public trust.

Summary

Being a successful nonprofit board member requires a combination of personal qualities, commitment, and fulfillment of legal responsibilities. By demonstrating a commitment to the organization, making personal financial contributions, actively participating in decision-making processes, and upholding ethical conduct, board members can make a lasting impact. Additionally, active engagement, leadership, and the fulfillment of legal responsibilities contribute to the organization's growth, sustainability, and positive change in the community. All board members and anyone considering joining our board, embodying these qualities will help them contribute effectively and become an integral part of the organization's success. Together, we can create a brighter future and make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Signs Of a Successful Nonprofit Board: Making A Difference With 120 Hours

Nonprofit organizations rely on the commitment and active engagement of their board members to make a significant impact in their communities. The allocation of time and effort by board members is crucial for the success of these organizations. In this blog, we will explore the signs of a successful nonprofit board by examining the specific areas where board members can contribute their time. By dedicating just 120 hours per year, board members can make a substantial difference in the organization's growth, advocacy, fundraising efforts, and overall success.

1. Meeting Attendance: Demonstrating Commitment

A successful nonprofit board starts with committed board members who prioritize attending meetings and events. Board members should allocate ten hours per year for regular board meetings, where they actively participate in discussions, provide input, and make informed decisions. Additionally, they should dedicate eight hours to special events and fundraisers, showing their support and engaging with donors and stakeholders. Committing 12 hours per year to committee work allows board members to contribute their expertise in specific areas of focus. Finally, attending the annual meeting for two hours is essential to staying updated on organizational achievements, challenges, and future plans.

2. Advocacy: Spreading the Message

Successful board members go beyond their boardroom roles by actively advocating for the nonprofit. Investing ten hours in talking about the organization with family, friends, associates, and various groups helps raise awareness and broaden the network of potential supporters. Engaging in conversations with prospective donors and sharing the impact of the nonprofit's work is a crucial step in building relationships and attracting vital resources. Board members can leverage their connections within business, religious, and civic communities to spread the organization's message and increase its visibility.

3. Influence: Building Relationships and Partnerships

A successful nonprofit board understands the power of influence. Board members should dedicate 18 hours to convince foundations, government officials, legislators, business leaders, and community influencers that their organization is a wise investment. By sharing success stories, presenting the nonprofit's impact and demonstrating its financial stability, board members can secure crucial support and partnerships. Building relationships with key stakeholders allows board members to advocate effectively and access resources that further the organization's mission.

4. Reading and Responding: Staying Informed and Engaged

Successful board members prioritize staying informed of the organization's activities, challenges, and opportunities. Allocating 18 hours per year to read and respond to information provided by the nonprofit ensures that board members are up to date. By actively engaging with the materials and offering feedback or suggestions, they contribute to the organization's growth and improvement. Regular communication channels should be established to facilitate the flow of information between board members and staff.

5. Planning: Strategic Vision and Direction

A successful nonprofit board actively participates in the organization's planning processes. By collectively defining the nonprofit's strategic goals, objectives, and action plans, board members provide guidance and ensure alignment with the organization's mission. The planning process strengthens the board's connection to the organization and fosters a sense of ownership and accountability.

6. Fundraising: Leading by Example

Successful board members understand the importance of fundraising and take an active role in supporting the nonprofit's financial sustainability. Allocating 18 hours per year to fundraising activities, such as making calls, writing letters, and participating in major fundraising events, demonstrates commitment and leads by example. Board members should be willing to ask for donations themselves, as it reinforces their belief in the organization's mission. By dedicating time and effort to fundraising, board members show their commitment and inspire others to contribute to the nonprofit's success.

7. Becoming Educated: Lifelong Learning and Growth

Successful board members invest in their personal and professional development to better serve the organization. Dedicate 16 hours per year to attend local boardroom training, conferences, and webinars to gain knowledge about effective board governance. By staying informed about best practices, emerging trends, and challenges in the nonprofit sector, board members can make more informed decisions and contribute to the organization's success. Lifelong learning is essential for board members to stay relevant, provide valuable insights, and continuously improve their effectiveness in their roles.

The commitment of just 120 hours per year can make a significant difference in the success of a nonprofit organization. By attending meetings, advocating, influencing, staying informed, planning strategically, fundraising actively, and investing in education, board members play a crucial role in the organization's growth and impact. Their dedication and active engagement contribute to building strong relationships, securing resources, and ensuring the organization's long-term sustainability. If you are passionate about making a difference in your community, consider joining a nonprofit board and investing your time to create positive change. Together, we can achieve remarkable outcomes and transform lives.

Board Member Performance Expectations

Performance expectations of you, the individual as a board member

Each Board member of our organization affirms the expectations outlined here and strives to perform accordingly. We treat all Board members the same when it comes to these expectations. These expectations are clearly articulated during the recruitment process. We accept the candidate as a nominee or appointee only after she/he has agreed to fulfill these expectations. And, by accepting nomination or appointment, the individual confirms that this board service is one of his / her top volunteers and giving commitments.

Specific performance expectations are:

1. Believe in and be an active advocate and ambassador for the values, mission and vision of the organization.
 - Participation in group processes, e.g., meeting preparation and performance
 - Act in a way that contributes to the effective operation of the Board – and work with fellow Board members and staff to assure that the Board and its committees function well.
 - Focus on the good of the organization, independent of personal agenda, self-interest, or influence of others.
 - Support the organization's policies and procedures for conducting business.

- Maintain confidentiality of all work unless authorized otherwise.
- Support Board decisions once these are made.
- Help build a good corporate culture.
- Regularly attend Board and committee meetings. Prepare for these meetings by reviewing materials and bringing materials to meetings.
- Use conversation as a core business practice, asking strategic questions and participating in dialogue.
- Be available to serve as a committee/task force chair or member. Be a prepared and active participant.
- Inform the Board of Directors of any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, and abide by the decision of the Board related to the situation.
- Respect the authority of the Executive Director and staff; and, adhere to the limitations of the Board, its committees and individual Board members.

2. Personal Development

- Keep informed about the organization, its issues, and its connection to the community through active participation within the organization and outreach outside the organization. (Another way of saying this might be: Participate in opportunities to engage in/understand the organization's mission.)
- Participate in professional development opportunities to strengthen corporate governance and advance the organization's effectiveness through learning. Participate in appraisal of own performance and others, as called upon.

3. Individual leadership acts outside board and committee meetings

- Promote a culture of philanthropy.
- Help support the charitable contributions operation of the organization. Specifically:
 - Reach into diverse communities and help identify and cultivate relationships to support the organization as donors, volunteers, and advocates.
 - Give an annual financial contribution to the best of personal ability. If the organization launches a special campaign, give to that, too.
 - Participate in fund development by taking on various tasks tailored to your comfort and skills.
- As appropriate, use personal and professional contacts and expertise to benefit the organization, without compromising ethics or trespassing on relationships.

4. Agree to step down from Board position if unable to fulfill these expectations.