

Sample Best Practices for Boards of Directors

There are many resources that list best practices for volunteer board members of nonprofit organizations. This list is based on Imagine Canada's Level 1 standards for organizations of up to ten employees. <https://www.imaginecanada.ca/en/standards-program>

- Ensuring the board has a mission statement and that it is reviewed regularly (e.g. every 5 years)
- Approving the organization's strategic plan and evaluating progress in achieving the goals
- Recruiting, orienting and overseeing the most senior staff person (e.g. ensuring the most senior staff person has a job description, approving total compensation package annually)
- Approving risk management plan once a year
- Reviewing insurance coverage once a year
- Overseeing the organization's compliance with its own governing documents and all applicable laws and regulations (e.g. ONCA, payroll remittances)
- Reviewing and approving a code of ethics and key policies (conflict of interest, privacy, complaints, whistleblower, anti-harassment, equity and inclusion)
- Holding a sufficient number of meetings each year
- Approving terms of reference for the board and board committees
- Meeting minimum requirements for board composition (no fewer than three; a majority at arm's length to each other, the most senior staff and/or to management staff; no employees)
- Ensuring formal minutes of board meetings are recorded and retained
- Recruiting and orienting new board members
- Ensuring there are succession plans for the senior staff person and key board positions
- Setting term limits for directors on the board