Development Committee Job Description

Overview
The development committee leads the board’s fundraising efforts. It works with staff to craft the board’s fundraising role, including plans, procedures and schedules for board involvement. The committee also sets minimum guidelines for contributions by board members and solicits those contributions, and plays a strong role in identifying, cultivating and approaching major donors.

While this committee sets the fundraising agenda and ensures accountability, the full board must take responsibility for delivering the results. Development should be a standing topic at board meetings. Each board member needs clear responsibility.

The committee should consist of the board chair, perhaps a vice chairman, and two or more other board members.

Sample responsibilities include:

- Provide input for the annual fundraising plan.
  - Review historical financial and development goals-to-actuals
  - Understand staff’s budget assumptions
  - Detail projections of revenue sources, with likelihood of attainment by quarter

- Set goals and structure.
  - Set fundraising goals and determine major activities
  - Define and assign overall board and individual board member responsibilities
  - Establish reporting processes for communicating: 1) funding needs to board; and, 2) progress towards goal
  - Identify shortfalls and develop contingency plans as needed

- Define and implement strategies.
  - Major solicitations -- foundations, corporations and individuals
  - Annual campaign -- direct mail, smaller individual contributions
  - Events -- gala and supporting events such as house parties
  - Junior board -- activities and events

Questions for the Development Committee to Consider

- What are the current and future needs of the organization? How will we monitor and incorporate these needs into short and long-term development plans?
- How will we assess and communicate the organization’s results?
- What is the right balance of public vs. private funding, of restricted vs. unrestricted funding?
- What is the impact of large one-time or restricted gifts on the organization’s long-term financial health?
- What is the board’s personal giving policy? How will we ensure all members are aware of and abide by this policy?
- What is our process for having board members routinely provide prospect information and participate in cultivating new donors? How will board members participate in the stewardship of the organization’s existing donors?
- What reports should board members be provided (e.g., individual or group achievement)?
- How do we evaluate a new candidate’s fundraising ability during the nomination process? Should new member orientation include an introduction to fundraising concepts and the organization’s specific fundraising activities?
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- Do board members know how to tell the organization's story in a compelling fashion? Do they know how to ask for money? Where is training required?
- Do we need opportunities for board members to check in with and/or ask for help from the committee and/or development staff?

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