

WORKSHEET: ESSENTIAL GUIDING DOCUMENTS

MISSION STATEMENT

Three reasons the mission statement is important:

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

The best mission statements tell *what* the organization does and *why* it does it. In the examples below, indicate the “what” and “why.”

National Parks Conservation Association: To protect and enhance America’s National Park System for present and future generations.

Teach for America: Growing the movement of leaders who work to ensure that kids growing up in poverty get an excellent education.

Your responsibility as a board member: *The Board of Directors are the champions of the mission!*
All board decisions should support the mission.

List three examples of board decisions that should support the mission.

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

Additionally, all governance decisions should be influenced by the mission statement.

The Vision Statement is a higher-level overview of the organization’s purpose. Typically, the Vision Statement expresses the organization’s:

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____



BYLAWS

Complete the essential elements of Bylaws:

Essential Bylaws Information	Other Important Bylaws Content
1: Organization mission / purpose	1: _____
2: _____	2: Number of board members
3: Number of meetings annually	3: _____
4: _____	4: Rules for removing an officer or member
5: Required number of board members to make up a quorum	5: _____
	6: Board member indemnification
	7: _____

Bylaws are the most important board governance document and serve as the ultimate authority for decision making and problem solving. **Who can change the Bylaws?**

Your responsibility as a board member: Know your organization's Bylaws! Read them carefully. Make sure you can find them easily.

To help you understand essential key Bylaws terms, label the term below that identifies the definition.

Term	Definition
	The number of members required to be present at a board meeting when voting takes place
	The legal document that establishes a corporation
	The organization's responsibility for covering board member expenses incurred during lawsuits related to their service on the board
	The length of time an individual agrees to serve as a board member



POLICIES

Three reasons why policies are important:

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

Policies are used by both the board (governance matters) and staff (day-to-day operations).

List a Don't associated with each of the following policies:

Board Member Compensation: _____

Confidentiality: _____

Conflict of Interest: _____

Financial Controls: _____

Lobbying: _____

Whistleblower: _____

Your responsibility as a board member: *The Board of Directors is responsible for reviewing and approving all new and revised policies.* When you serve on a committee, know the key policies related to your work.



STRATEGIC PLAN

A strategic plan defines a nonprofit organization's:

- Long term goals and objectives
- The actions needed to achieve those goals
- An overarching timeline

Three reasons why a strategic plan is important:

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

List the components of a strategic plan:

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

4: _____

Essential factors for strategic plan success:

- Involvement from both board and staff in the document's development
- The mission as the key driver of the document
- Ambitious but achievable strategies

Your responsibility as a board member: *Participate in plan development and review.* Offer your expertise. Keep a copy of the plan close at hand for easy reference during board and committee meetings.