
CHECKLIST FOR

ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Develop a Culture of Accountability and Transparency

Rules, standards, and practices are more effective when the people they affect understand them, know why they are important, and embrace them.

2. Adopt a Statement of Values and Code of Ethics

A document describing the ethical principles that an organization's staff and board agree to follow, including a statement of values articulating the principles it is committed to uphold should be approved by the board.

3. Adopt a Conflict of Interest Policy

Few actions will undermine the credibility of a philanthropic organization faster than having its tax-exempt funds not used exclusively for charitable purposes. A well-defined conflict of interest policy will help preempt even the perception that funds are being misused.

4. ENSURE THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS UNDERSTANDS AND CAN FULFILL ITS FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The board has legal AND ethical obligations to ensure exclusive and effective use of resources only for charitable purposes.

4. CONDUCT INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL REVIEWS, PARTICULARLY AUDITS.

Financial procedures, controls, and policies must ensure strong financial safeguards.

6. ENSURE THE ACCURACY OF AND MAKE PUBLIC YOUR ORGANIZATIONS REQUIRED DOCUMENTS.

Information must be complete, accurate, timely, and publicly available. Required reporting forms must be reviewed by the board and signed by the CEO or CFO.

7. BE TRANSPARENT

The public will have more confidence in your organization if they know what you're doing and how you're doing it.

8. ESTABLISH AND SUPPORT A POLICY ON REPORTING SUSPECTED MISCONDUCT OR MALFEASANCE.

“Whistle-blower protection” should encourage individuals to come forth with suspected illegal practices.

9. REMAIN CURRENT WITH THE LAW

Board members and staff must understand and fully comply with all existing laws.

Suggestions for How To...

- Hold staff and board training on ethics or take other measures to foster a culture of accountability and transparency.
 - Have a code of ethics and statement of values and post it on your website.
 - Follow a conflict of interest policy and post it on your website.
 - Have board members with financial expertise.
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Suggestions for How To....(con't.)

- Have financial statements independently audited.
 - Have board members review all required financial documents.
 - Have your CEO/CFO sign off on all such documents.
 - File required legal/financial forms electronically.
 - Post required legal/financial forms on the website.
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Suggestions for How To...(con't.)

- Post policies and information on programs and results on your website.
 - Remain current with the law.
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