

# Qualities of Good Board Members

The personal qualities of board members are critical to the board's successful operation. Integrity, competence, insight, dedication and effectiveness are vital.

*Key qualities of a good board member can be summarized as:*

- **Passion** – deep interest in the mission of the organization.
- **Vision and Leadership** — the ability to see the big picture and the courage to set direction to achieve the organization's mission.
- **Stewardship** — the integrity to serve the interests and pursue the goals of the organization, as well as the interests of the public and the organization's intended beneficiaries.
- **Knowledge** — knowledge of the constituents and operations and organizational and managerial acumen.
- **Diligence** — dedication and commitment to fulfilling the organization's goals.
- **Collegiality** — possessing a sincere and respectful attitude toward colleagues and their views.
- **Discretion** — Maintains confidentiality of board discussions and speaks with one voice when representing the organization to the community.

*To be an effective board member:*

- Bring your personal interests and expertise to the role, but bear in mind your primary obligation of stewardship is to the organization as a whole.
- Come to meetings on time, be attentive and well-prepared.
- Respect disagreement without personalizing the debate, and avoid paralysis in the face of dissent.
- Ask questions rather than accepting the status quo.
- Welcome information and advice, but reserve the right to make decisions based on your own best judgment.
- Support board decisions as well as professional staff that you have appointed to serve the organization.