

## Before Saying “Yes” to Serving on a Board

My friend was asked to join a board of directors. I could see that he was flattered and considering the invite. I don't think he knew what questions to ask about serving on a board. Here's a checklist *prospective board members* may want to consider.

### Area of Consideration

### Reason for Asking the Question

#### Organizational Purpose

- May I have a copy of the mission statement?
- Can you provide me with the strategic plan?

*Do I agree with the mission, vision, values and work of the organization?  
Is there a roadmap for board and staff or will we wander from issue to issue?*

#### Finances

- What is the annual budget and what is set aside in savings?
- What are the major sources of revenue?
- Is there an audit of the funds?
- Does the board have access to a CPA?
- May I have a copy of the Information Return, IRS Form 990?
- If exempt from federal tax, what is the IRS designation?

*Does the organization have sufficient resources?  
Are they dependent on grants or have diverse revenue sources?  
Are funds accounted for and audited to protect against diversions?  
If I have questions, can I rely on a financial professional?  
The 990 provides details about the organization, all public record.  
There are distinctions in foundations, trade associations, etc.*

#### Expectations

- How frequent, and long, are the meetings?
- How long is the term of office?
- Will there be an orientation of the board and access to information?
- Are there added expectations, such as serving on committees, raising funds or political activities?
- Is the board reimbursed for meeting attendance?

*How much time is expected from board volunteers?  
Is this a 1, 2 or 3 year term? How many years do I want to contribute?  
Will I have the information needed to be a good board member? How much will I have to read?  
How much extra time will be required?  
Will expenses come out of my pocket; can I afford this?*

