



Getting the Most Out of Your Council Leadership

# Council Executive Board Role

A Board's essential functions can be categorized in three areas: (1) setting direction and strategy; (2) providing oversight; and (3) ensuring resources

1. Determine mission and purpose
2. Select the Scout Executive
3. Support and evaluate the Scout Executive
4. Ensure effective planning
5. Monitor and strengthen programs and services
6. Ensure adequate financial resources
7. Protect assets and provide proper financial oversight
8. Build a competent board
9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity
10. Enhance the organization's public standing

# Common Board Issues

Boards and board members often don't have a strong understanding of their roles and responsibilities. *Common board problems causing boards to lose their way.*

- Veering off the mission
- Complacency
- Misguided motivations
- Multiple voices
- Micromanagement
- Limitless terms
- Lawless governance
- No board self-assessment
- Lack of self-improvement
- Knotted purse strings

# What Do Underperforming Council Boards Look Like

- Inwardly Focused vs. Externally Focused
- Challenged to Recruit “Right Board” Members
- Board Members Not Rowing in Same Direction
- Not Meeting Financial Goals
- Not Meeting Membership Goals
- Focused on Maintenance and Program Delivery
- Not the Right Mix of Tan Shirts vs. Suits
- Board Meetings Focused on Program
- Fail to Address Board Functions
- Become Self-Reinforcing and Resistant to Change
- More Often Lower Performing Against Minimum Standards
- Keep the Council from Growth

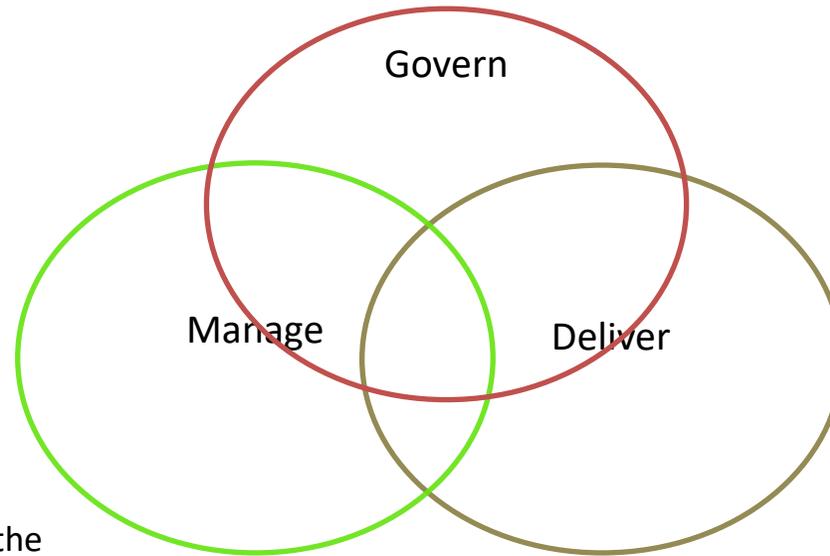
# What hats can volunteers wear?

## The Board Governs

- Setting Direction & Strategy
- Provide Oversight
- Ensure Resources

## Managing the Council

- The job of the Scout Executive
- Board delegates authority to SE
- Supported by staff under the direction of the SE



## Deliver the Scouting program

- Serving Units
- Staffing Programs

# Governance is the Job of the Board

- Governance is about establishing the rules, procedures, and processes by which an entity or group is governed, structured, sustained, regulated and held accountable.
- Good non-profit governance is all about focusing on the processes for making and implementing decisions that will continue to advance the organizations principles and mission and providing strategic leadership.
- Nonprofit governance has a dual focus: achieving the organizations social mission and then ensuring the organization is viable, (Nonprofit Quarterly, July 2017)
- Board members must adhere to well- established principles of nonprofit corporation law that define certain standards of conduct and attention in carrying out the various responsibilities to the organization.
- These standards can be described as the Three D's (
  - The Duty of Care
  - The Duty of Loyalty
  - The Duty of Obedience

## **Recommended Governance Practices – Board Source**

Boards can improve their effectiveness by the intentional adoption of good governance practices.

Recommended Governance Practices reflect BoardSource's decades of experience working with thousands of board leaders and conducting extensive research on board practices.

The practices articulate a roadmap for boards toward becoming a strategic asset for their organization and are arranged in three categories:

- **Essential Practices:** BoardSource recommends that all boards adhere to these practices to function successfully.
- **Leading Practices:** BoardSource recommends that all boards adopt these practices to move toward board excellence.
- **Compliance Practices:** These practices address legal requirements and BoardSource's recommended process for compliance.

# Recommended Governance Practices – Board Source

**Essential Practices** – the Executive Board should **adhere** to these practices

- **Meeting Attendance** - board members must make it a priority to attend all board meetings and miss only under exceptional circumstances
- **Term Limits** - the board should adopt term limits
- **Strategic Board Recruitment** - be strategic about member recruitment and define an ideal composition based on the organization's priorities
- **Strategic Planning** - the board must play a substantive role with management in developing, approving, and supporting organizational strategy
- **Budget Approval** - the board must approve the annual budget
- **Chief Executive Job Description** - develop a written job description for the chief executive and define annual expectations
- **Chief Executive Evaluation**- the board must evaluate the chief executive's performance annually; the evaluation should be written and involve the full board
- **Audit** - every charitable organization (excluding those exempt from filing Form 990) with \$1 million or more in revenue should undertake an audit annually

## **Recommended Governance Practices – Board Source**

**Leading Practices** – the Executive Board should **adopt** to these practices

- **Consent Agendas** - include consent agendas in its board meeting agendas
- **Executive Sessions** - have regularly scheduled executive sessions
- **Board Diversity and Inclusion** - be intentional in its recruitment and engagement of diverse board members and foster a culture of inclusivity
- **Board Evaluation** - conduct a comprehensive self-assessment approximately every two years to evaluate its own performance
- **Board Orientation** - formalize its new member orientation process
- **Bylaws Review** - review the bylaws periodically and ensure timely amendments when necessary
- **Chief Executive Serving on the Board** - the chief executive should be an ex officio, non-voting member of the board
- **Board Job Description** - the board should have a written job description outlining the responsibilities of the full board and of individual board members

## Recommended Governance Practices – Board Source

Leading Practices (*Continued*) – Executive Board should **adopt** to these practices

- **Managing Conflicts of Interest** - adopt a conflict-of-interest policy defining what one is and how it is managed. Board and senior staff should disclose known potential conflicts and be recused from discussions or voting when conflicts do arise
- **Personal Giving** - every board member should make a meaningful personal contribution according to their means; board should attain 100-percent board giving
- **Board Retreat** - include an annual retreat in its meeting schedule
- **Board Size** - the board should determine its optimal size based on its needs
- **Committees** - the board's standing committee structure should be lean and strategic and complemented by the use of task forces
- **Executive Committee** - if the board has an executive committee, its purpose and authority level must be defined in the bylaws
- **Governance Committee** - The board should either form a governance committee or ensure that the function of that committee is carried out
- **Form 990 Posting** - The nonprofit should post its Form 990 on its own Web site

## **Recommended Governance Practices – Board Source**

**Compliance Practices** – Executive Board should **address** to these practices

- **Meeting Frequency** - The board should have more than the one annual meeting required by law
- **Executive Compensation** - The board must formalize a process for setting appropriate compensation for the chief executive and approve the compensation package
- **Review of IRS Form 990** - The full board should review the Form 990 before it is filed (Audit in lieu of Form 990)
- **Document Destruction and Retention** - The board must ensure no records are destroyed when the organization is under federal investigation.
- **Whistleblower Process** - The board must ensure that no employee is punished or discriminated against because he or she reported improper conduct.

# Evaluate Your Current Executive Board

## Things to consider:

- Executive Board Member engagement
- Partnership between Board Chair and Scout Executive
- Is every seat filled
- Do board members possess a strong sphere of influence
- Are Board Members clear on their role & responsibilities
- Are board members implementers or overseers
- Does your board allow the Scout Exec to manage day-to-day activities
- Do all of your Board Members make a meaningful gift to the Council
- Does Your Board have the right composition of leaders

# Does Your Board Have the Right Composition of Leaders

So what does it take to build and maintain a strong and effective board?

- Get the right people on the bus in the right seats
- Leading with Intent - successful boards are thoughtfully composed as it relates to skill sets, leadership styles, and diversity of thought and background.
- Understand the leadership needs of your Council and seek out leaders who can bring the expertise, passion, and external leadership required
- Start with a board matrix — an inventory of the perspectives, skill sets, and leadership characteristics that are required
- Does the Board reflect the diversity of the community it serves

# Board Development - Strategic Recruiting

## Board Member Recruitment:

- Year-round Recruitment & Retention Committee (Nominating Committee)
- Succession plan in place for key leadership positions
- Systematic method to identify prospective board members
- Effectiveness of nominating committee recruiting process
- Quality of materials used to recruit candidate
- Personal visit (individual or team)
- Inventory of leadership needs
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current officers & members

# Council Nominating Committee Worksheet

Council nominating committee has the responsibility of selecting a slate of council leaders who will be responsible for achieving council objectives. Essential steps for the committee recommended by BSA include:

- Meet periodically throughout the year to maintain an active, written list of candidates
- Review local council bylaws and council election procedures to determine number of people to be elected
- Identify council priorities from current strategic plan to determine resources needed
- Review position descriptions
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current officers, executive board members, and members at large
- Consider potential leadership outside of Scouting
- Target recruiting new and ideally younger executive board members
- Make recommendations for each office, matching skills to needs, and aspire to reach unanimous agreement on each nominee
- Participate, as requested, in helping to secure nominee's agreement to serve
- Support the final actions of the committee and treat all information as confidential

# Board Member Orientation Checklist

This checklist is a general outline to guide the orientation of new board members.

- Program – Facility tour, Council’s web site address, Facebook page, annual calendar, meeting dates, publication material and program description
- Background – History on the Council; Newsletters; and Fact Sheet. Board members should understand the organizations mission, purpose, goals, policies, programs, services, strengths and needs.
- Strategic Direction – Review of Strategic Plan and recent updates
- Finances – Review recent financials and instruct board members on how to understand; review annual budget
- Organizational structure – Review bylaws and organizational chart; ensure new members understand how board interacts with staff; and roster of Board members
- Roles & Responsibilities – Overview of responsibilities of Board versus individual; provide position description; attendance expectations; conflict of interest policy; and Board Member Agreement (includes guidance around financial support)
- Board Operations - Review board manual; accept committee assignment (very critical step in assimilating new members); schedule of committee meetings; attend all board meetings and come prepared to participate

# Strategies for Change

- Self-Assess
- Get Alignment with Key 3 and Entire Executive Board
- Get the Right People in the Right Seats
- Develop Existing Board Members
- Insure Role Clarity
- Inventory Open Seats
- Year Round Nomintaing Committee with Strategic Focus
- Term Limits – Leverage Advisory Council
- Push Program Work to Board Committees
- Routinely assess Performance vs. Key Metrics & Strategic Plan
- Build a Plan and Stay the Course

# Bottom Line

“When a council succeeds, it is the result of great leadership and partnership of professionals and volunteers – starting with the Scout Executive and the Board.

“If a council fails, it is the fault of the Board.”



*Al Kent, former Managing Partner  
PriceWaterhouse LLP*

*BSA Central Region President 2018-2021*



# Executive Board Development - Resources

## Council Executive Board Orientation

- *National website of Lesson Plans & Videos*  
<https://www.scouting.org/council-support/cebo/>

### THE COUNCIL

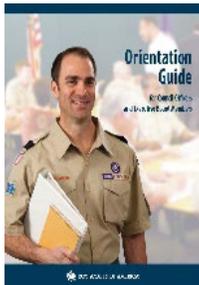
How the Council Functions  
Carry Out the Purpose of the BSA



ADULTS & YOUTH

## Executive Board

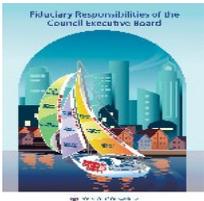
- *The Council: How the Council Functions to Carry Out the Purpose of the BSA*  
[www.scouting.org/filestore/mission/pdf/33071.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/mission/pdf/33071.pdf)
- *Orientation Guide for Council Officers and Executive Board Members*  
[www.scouting.org/filestore/commissioner/pdf/33161.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/commissioner/pdf/33161.pdf)



## Executive Board Development – Recommended Resources



- *The Fiduciary Responsibility of a Council Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America*  
[https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/financeimpact/pdf/Fiduciary Responsibility of a Boy Scout Council.pdf](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/financeimpact/pdf/Fiduciary%20Responsibility%20of%20a%20Boy%20Scout%20Council.pdf)



- *Fiduciary Responsibilities of the Council Executive Board (Sailboat)*  
[www.scouting.org/filestore/financeimpact/pdf/35-308.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/financeimpact/pdf/35-308.pdf)
- *Building an Effective Board of Directors*  
<http://afpbookstore.org/> (priced publication)
- *Council Nominating Committee Worksheet*  
<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/commissioner/pdf/513-331.pdf>

# Executive Board Development - Resources

- *The Intentional Board: Why Your Board Doesn't Work...and How to Fix It* by M. Kent Stroman  
Available on Amazon
- *Leading with Intent 2021*, Board Source  
<https://boardsource.org/research-critical-issues/nonprofit-sector-research/>
- For additional resources see the L&G OneDrive folder  
[our 04-L&G Resources folder in OneDrive](#)
- BSA Council Strategic Planning and Management  
[www.scouting.org/strategy.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/strategy.aspx)
- OnStrategy *Essentials Guide to Strategic Planning*  
<https://onstrategyhq.com>



**Getting the Most Out of Your Council Leadership  
(The Scout Executive/CEO)**

# Evaluations Reflect Council Goals

All professional and support staff should have goals each year. 2026 goals should be completed no later than January 20. Staff advisors should work with employees to develop goals. Council Presidents should work with Scout Executives to develop goals.

- Goals should be fair and achievable for the specific role of the employee.
- Scout Executive should be evaluated a minimum of twice a year.
  - Mid-Year reviews are conducted with President and SE and results sent to Territory Director.
  - Year-End reviews are conducted with President/SE/ and Territory Director
- All other employees including support staff and rangers should be evaluated quarterly

# Scout Executive Goals Samples

## Goal #1 Membership Growth

*Increase overall Membership by December 31, 2026.*

Exceeds – 3 %  
Consistently Meets – 2% growth  
Meets Most – +1  
Does Not Meets – Membership loss

## Factors that play into setting New member goals and retention goals:

Natural disasters/School Access

Last years retention rate: If previous rate was high between 62-70% Increments would be smaller than those who had 55% or lower

## Goal #1 Membership Growth

*2025 Base: 2,105 total Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturers and Explorers. 200 Scoutreach Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, And Venturing. Total Traditional and Scoutreach 2,305. 50.08% Cub Scout retention, 74.33% Scouts BSA retention, and 58.20% Venturing retention. Overall retention rate 60.90%)*

Key tactics: (Meet membership plan objectives, Increase overall retention rates, Conduct council recruiting training, etc...)

Achieve membership goal by December 31, 2026.

Exceeds 5% growth - 2025 retention rate + 3%  
Consistently Meets 3.5% growth 2025 retention rate +2%  
Meets Most 1.5% growth / 2025 retention rate +1.5%  
Does Not Meets – Membership loss/decrease in retention

## Achieve New member/retention goal by December 31

Exceeds:10% New members/ 4% retention growth  
Consistently Meets:5% New emmbers/2% retention growth  
Meets Most: 5% new members/ Increase in growth  
Does not Meets- new member loss/ Loss in retention rate

# Scout Executive Goals Samples

## Goal #1 Unit Growth

*Increase overall Units by December 31, 2026.*

Exceeds – 4 units  
Consistently Meets – 2 units  
Meets Most – 1 unit  
Does Not Meets – Loss of Units

## Goal #1 Unit Growth

*2025 Base: 95 total Packs, 40 Troops, 9 Crews/Ships and Posts. 6 Scoutreach Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, And Venturing units. Total units 144.*

Key tactics: (examples - New unit blitz, Bishop's dinner, etc...)

Achieve unit goals by December 31, 2026

Exceeds – 12 units  
Consistently Meets – 8 units  
Meets Most – 4 units  
Does Not Meets – Loss of units

# Scout Executive Goals Samples

## Goal #1 Financial Growth

Balance operating budget by December 31, 2026.

Exceeds: \$2,000 surplus

Consistently Meets: \$1,000 surplus

Meets Most: \$1 surplus

Does Not Meet: No surplus

## Goal #1 Financial Growth

*Raise the necessary operating funds to fund and grow the Scouting program without reducing staff positions.*

*2025 Base: \$2,220,000 Operating Revenue.*

*\$2,189,000 Operating Expenses. \$31,000 surplus.*

*\$105,000 New Gifts to Endowment.*

Key tactics: (Popcorn training, 2 new events, etc....)

Achieve membership goal by December 31, 2026.

Exceeds: \$50,000 surplus/\$75,000 New EG

Consistently Meets: \$30,000/\$50,000 New EG

Meets Most : \$15,000 Surplus/ \$25,000 NEW EG

Does Not Meets – No surplus/\$10,000 New EG

# Scout Executive Goals Samples

## Goal #1 Safeguarding Youth

## Goal #1 Safeguarding Youth

Prevent fatalities and Serious accidents. Increase reporting and decrease Lag time to 3 days.

2025 Deaths 0 /Serious Accidents: 2

2025 Reporting #: 37

2025 Average Lag Time: 6 Days

Key tactics: Staff and volunteer training, Safety communications presented at roundtables and through council communications.

Achieve results by December 31, 2026.

Exceeds: No fatalities/Serious accidents, Increase reporting and decrease lag time to 3 days.

Consistently Meets: No deaths/ series accidents and Increase reporting and decrease lag time to 5 Days

Meets Most : Same as 2025

Does Not Meets: Below 2025

# The Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) “360 Assessment”

- The LPI® measures the frequency of specific leadership behaviors and serves as a guide to leaders as they strive to develop and enhance their leadership capability. The online 360-assessments are both fully secure, intuitive, and interactive.
- The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) is done through iLead. Scouting America buys the assessment and then have someone on our Scouting U team who is certified to debrief the results.
- One time assessment costs \$227  
Two time assessment (Initial and Nine Month) costs \$272.50

Prepare a list of names, email addresses, and associated roles (manager, co-worker, direct report or other) of the employees/volunteers who are participating in the assessment and send to iLead representative to include:

- **Person being assessed:** i.e. Scout Executive
- **Managers:** i.e. Current President and Incoming President
- **Direct Reports:** Employees that report directly to Scout Executive
- **Co-Workers:** Employees in-directly reporting to Scout Executive
- **Other:** i.e. Executive Committee, Selected Board Members, and local NST Lead
- **Participants feedback is protected**
- **Timeframe for participants participation is determined**
- **While staff will review summary with person being assigned.**
- **Council President and Commissioner should review w/ Scout Executive and explore improvement opportunities if needed.**