

STRONG PARKS, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Tool 8: Board Leadership Function

The job of the board of directors is simple: it is responsible for everything. This includes both governance and management of the organization, and it's most obviously true in organizations without staff. Even if it delegates certain responsibilities to the staff or other professionals, the board is responsible for ensuring that resources are being effectively applied to meet its mission.

Some philanthropic partner organizations have the luxury to hire staff to help fulfill some of these responsibilities. Depending on the size of the staff, the board will delegate key functions that are best suited to the full-time attention provided by professionals. The board will retain the functions that are reserved for its fundamental fiduciary responsibility, and for which it is best suited. These functions can be divided between the **governing functions** reserved for the board, and the **management functions** often delegated to staff.

GOVERNING FUNCTIONS

The governing functions are those that provide the essential direction, resources, and structure needed to meet specific needs the organization is serving. These include:

- **Strategic Direction** – setting a direction for the organization that reflects its role in supporting the park's priorities
- **Financial Accountability** – managing financial resources that ensure honesty and cost-effectiveness
- **Leadership Development** – developing the human resources that lead the philanthropic partner organization at present and in the future
- **Resource Development** – developing financial resources that support the park's priorities and the organization's programs and operations

MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

The management functions are those that provide the program activities and support to accomplish the goals of the organization. These usually include:

- **Program Planning and Implementation** – taking the strategic direction to the next level of detail and putting it into action
- **Administration** – ensuring the effective management of the details behind programs

For smaller philanthropic partner organizations, the board usually delegates only some of the management functions to staff. For larger organizations (Executive Director plus additional staff), the board usually delegates nearly all the management functions. The board should never delegate the governing functions to staff: the governance functions represent the board's core responsibilities to its key constituencies – the park and philanthropic audiences – and to the general public.