

Boards in Gear

Board Operations

Speakers: Lianna Olds, Deputy Director of Partnerships at Nonprofit Association of Washington, & Johanna Martinez, Board Member of Mujer Al Volante

00:00:00 Video description: *In the center of the screen is a grey circle with the Nonprofit Association of Washington logo mark. One by one, five sections appear to form a ring around the logo mark. Each section represents a chapter and is a different color: purple, orange, green, red, and teal. Text that reads "1 Board Operations" appears on the red section. The sectioned ring begins to spin around the center and the video zooms in on the Board Operations section and then fades to white.*

00:00:08 Video description: *A video fades in of an African-American female with dark skin and dark hair. She is wearing blue top. In the background is a yellow wall with a few pictures hanging on it, and in the corner are a few tea cups on a table. In the bottom left corner of the video a white banner with the sectioned ring spinning on it appears with the speaker's name and organization, "Lianna Olds, Nonprofit Association of Washington." At the bottom of the screen is a red banner.*

00:00:08 Lianna: Welcome to the Boards in Gear video series. In this video, we're going to talk about Board Operations. Efficient and effective board operations that include regular board meetings are a key part of advancing an organization's work. Boards should have operational practices in place that align with their stage of development, board culture, and organizational values. The board needs to hold spaces and set up structures that provide oversight for the intentional growth and protection of the nonprofit's assets. Strong board operations support board members' abilities to make strategic decisions in response to new opportunities and challenges.

00:00:49 Video description: *The video fades to black and returns side by side with a second video frame. Lianna is on the left. On the right is a video of an Asian female with dark hair and glasses, wearing a gray top. She is outside and in the background are*

some trees and clouds. Under the video a white banner with the sectioned ring spinning on it appears with the speakers name and organization, "Johanna Martinez, Mujer Al Volante."

00:00:49 Lianna: I'm joined now by Johanna Martinez, who is a board member at Mujer Al Volante. So how would you define the role of the board?

00:00:58 Johanna: Thank you. When I think of the board, I think its role is primarily to direct, promote, and support the nonprofit in its mission and to be able to provide support to achieve its objectives, and that can be seen in a number of different ways. It can include being present, being able to share your voice, and being able to communicate with the other board members on how do we achieve the nonprofit's mission in the short term and long term.

00:01:33 Lianna: Absolutely. But when you have so many people and they can have so many different thoughts about how that looks, how do you go about getting really everybody on the same page about the expectations of the board and kind of where that conversation is supposed to stop and supposed to end?

1:55 Johanna: Yeah, I think the conversation about expectations is really important to happen in the beginning when the Executive Director or other board members are doing board recruitment. It's really important to lay down what the expectations are because every board, board's requirement is a little bit different. So some boards might require more, a more hands on approach, and some might require you to be there, to be present during meetings to understand where the board is, the direction of the board right now, and to kind of help shape that direction in the future. But it's really important to communicate in the beginning how many hours are required of my time, how many meetings are required for the future? And what personal responsibilities there are.

00:02:48 Lianna: And I'm wondering about creating a common expectation and kind of working all across different, different individuals, different experiences and how, is there a process you've ever experienced with creating that common expectation?

00:03:05 Johanna: Yeah, I think, you know, with Mujer Al Volante, it was really great. We partner with an organization Rainier Valley Corps RVC, and they brought in a perspective when we were all on boarded to come and discuss what the expectations are in general kind of commonly in a group meeting to be able to talk about the different roles, if any, and what the expectations are moving forward. And so I think that that is a really important part for any board to begin, make sure that everybody is at least starting from the same framework.

00:03:46 Video description: *The side by side videos fade to black and the screen returns to the video of Lianna.*

00:03:46 Lianna: When it comes to operations, there are few things to mention around board meetings, board committees, and board and staff relationships. Each board's meeting space is going to look and feel different based on the board's culture and organizational values. So to get the most of the board's valuable meeting time, there are actions you can take before, during, and after board meetings. An important action in preparing for your meetings is discussing the agenda, structure, and support materials all as tools for the board's work. The board should identify a meeting format and content that facilitates decision making, learning, and meaningful board experiences for all of your members.

Consider if your meeting agenda has a mix of oversight items, strategic work, and bigger picture connection to cause conversations. Also, agendas should balance discussion around your nonprofit's past, present, and future. Often, more work emerges from meetings and setting an approach for tracking progress between your meetings will support the board's overall efforts. In Washington, Nonprofits must keep a copy of the following records permanently: minutes of all board meetings, all actions taken by the board by unanimous written consent, and all actions taken on behalf of the nonprofit by a board committee. Speaking of board committees, your board can organize committees as needed to increase capacity, provide more informed decision making, and better engage individual board members in the work aligned with their interests and skills.

Lastly, for nonprofits with staff setting clear rules and responsibilities between the board and the staff strengthens the relationships, reduces interpersonal conflict, and focuses people on the organization's mission. A particularly crucial partnership

to understand and nurture is the relationship between the board and the executive director. Through efficient and effective operations, the board can better steward the organization on behalf of the community who entrusted the nonprofit with resources to make a difference. I hope you join us for our final video in the series that focuses on Fundraising.

00:06:04 Video description: *The video fades to white. In the center of the screen is a grey circle with the Nonprofit Association of Washington logo mark. One by one, five sections appear to form a ring around the logo mark. Each section is a different color and has text with the name of a chapter of Boards in Gear: "1 Connection to Cause" on the purple section; "2 Responsibilities" on the orange section; "3 Composition & Development" on the green section; "4 Board Operation" on the red section; "5 Fundraising" on the teal section. In the center, the text "Boards in Gear" appears. The sectioned ring begins to spin around the center and fades out. The screen changes to the Nonprofit Association of Washington logo, the shape of the state of Washington made of colorful shapes with the words "Nonprofit Association of Washington" underneath. Below, text reads "In partnership with" and under this text is the Washington Secretary of State, Corporations and Charities Division logo, a circular image of George Washington with the words "Secretary of State, State of Washington" around the circle next to text that reads "Washington Secretary of State", two lines, and text that reads "Corporations and Charities Division." At the bottom is a purple banner that reads "nonprofitwa.org/learn."*

00:06:13 Video description: *The logos disappear, and text appears that reads "We greatly appreciate the contributions of the speakers in this video series. Lianna Olds, Njuguna Gishuru, Kimberly Hollins, Allison Mountjoy, Johanna Martinez, Regina Elmi."*

00:06:19 Video description: *The screen fades to black. Text that reads "3 Choices Creative Communications" appears on the screen above a logo of an eye. Under the eye, text reads "3greatchoices.com."*