



The Board Member's Job Description

Prepared for Bemidji Community Food Shelf, Bemidji, MN

Mission: The Bemidji Community Food Shelf is a faith-based, caring place that listens to those who are experiencing food insecurity. We work with our partners to be inclusive and to provide fresh, nourishing foods for those living in Beltrami County and the Bemidji School District.

Vision: As a result of our actions, we want to see:

- Insightful, informed, courageous, diverse leadership
- Unwavering, responsive, respectful customer service
- Multifaceted, abundant, Connections to the Greater Community
- Sustainable, fertile, healthy farm
- Sustainability of fundraising
- Conscious, informed process & policies
- Rapidly, producing connections with media and technology

Time Commitment: 5-7 Hours/Month or 1-2 hours/week. Volunteers are welcome to give more time depending on their specific skills and how the time commitment fits in with their other life priorities.

General Values and Commitments We Seek:

- Commitment to the BCFS mission and vision
- Interest in working collaboratively with a diverse group of volunteers, staff, and other organizational stakeholders. Tolerance for the “productive discomfort” sometimes involved in collaboration (i.e. multiple decision-makers, accepting input from many, a slower timeline for accomplishing priorities)
- Making positive communication a priority, including constructive feedback and raising issues/problems/concerns in a proactive way so they can be addressed within BCFS
- Interest in and willingness to invest time in training and personal/professional development to continue to learn and grow as a BCFS Board Member
- Commitment to proactively disclosing any relationship(s) to prospective organizational employees and contractors

Agreements We Request of Board Members:

- To not agree to take on more than is reasonable for you at any point in time. To

acknowledge directly and kindly when BCFS asks you to take on more than you think you can handle given your other life priorities and commitments.

- To inform the board if you find that you can't do something you've committed to. We know that life comes with surprises and unexpected events may arise with your family, your paid work, or other areas of life.
- To protect the confidentiality of clients/families served, other volunteers, staff, and other organizational stakeholders.
- Ability to meet the minimum time commitment described above and a commitment to inform the board if things change and you need to take a break from your volunteer commitment to BCFS. We welcome you back when your schedule allows.

Board Duties Overview: The BCFS Board is a policy board and sets policy related to operating the organization, including food distribution, budgeting, personnel, and operating procedures.

Job Responsibilities & Opportunities (Annually)

1. Set strategic direction/review current strategic direction & thinking
2. Review organizational impact/performance/outcomes for the past year: Did we address community hunger? What differences did we make in the lives of our clients and community? Did we meet community needs?
3. Approve the organizational budget for the coming year
4. Evaluate the Executive Director's/CEO's Performance in the past year
5. Ensure that there is an executive succession plan/process in place for planned transitions and emergencies
6. Complete a board self-assessment of the board's work
7. Develop an individualized learning plan for yourself as a board member and learning/training/professional development goals for the board as a whole. Use the funds budgeted for board training – pick a training to attend (Propel Nonprofits, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, National Council of Nonprofits, BoardSource)
8. Convene and attend an annual meeting to elect new board members and officers, celebrate accomplishments and successes for the year, share stories about the year, and recognize board and staff members
9. Make sure BCFS bylaws are current, relevant, and remove barriers to conducting board business
10. Review and approve an Annual Report including programmatic accomplishments and a financial report
11. Approve submission of the organizational Form 990 to the IRS
12. Exercise oversight to ensure that state and federal reports were filed and taxes paid

Job Responsibilities & Opportunities Monthly

1. Analyze Strategic Priorities dashboard – Accomplishments, progress on track, course correction needed
2. Read the board packet carefully; schedule time prior to board meetings for this
3. Discuss major governance or oversight issues
4. Discuss Executive Director's Priorities & Major Concerns
5. Review financial statements (income/expenses for the month and year-to-date & balance sheet, oversight to ensure payroll taxes are paid to the IRS and state revenue dept.
6. Analyze program dashboard re: participation and outcomes
7. Check staff well-being turnover, grievances, etc.)
8. Assess resource development activities – grants, events, individual and major donors requests, and reporting)

Job Responsibilities & Opportunities (Daily)

1. Visit BCFS's social media pages to see what's up and gather brag bytes!
2. Share the BCFS story – share posts and tag friends and colleagues in posts. Don't forget to add "so inspired/excited/etc. to be a BCFS board member!"

Job Responsibilities & Opportunities (Ongoing)

1. Be a role model in the community (you're a BCFS representative 24/7/365)
2. Serve as an ambassador in the community - have your elevator pitch ready! Cultivate relationships that support the BCFS's mission and sustainability
3. Support your Executive Director – ask how she/he wants to be supported
4. Make a financial donation in any amount that is comfortable for you
5. Attend organizational events, fundraisers, and meetings
6. Participate in board/committee meetings
7. Invite individuals/businesses/institutions to support/attend events/serve on the board/learn about BCFS – share the BCFS annual report



BCFS Board Member Agreements

Bemidji Community Food Shelf

The Bemidji Community Food Shelf (BCFS) needs high quality governance volunteers and our volunteer leaders need opportunities to make meaningful, positive contributions to the community in ways that use their time well. The Board sets the tone for organizational, chapter, and digital culture and needs to model effective and respectful working relationships. Because nonprofits are a new concept for many governance volunteers and because BCFS is unique, basic agreements are important for effective work and to protect the valuable time of all governance volunteers. It is critically important that board members and the Executive Director are highly intentional about how they treat each other and work together.

BOARD & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PARTNERSHIP

1. I understand that the Board and Executive Director must work in partnership to accomplish the organization's mission and maintain sustainability. I commit to open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect in my working relationship with the Executive Director as a full and equal partner in the organization's work. I will actively use my positional authority as a board member to kindly intervene when I observe board behavior that is not consistent with this partnership commitment.
2. I realize that one of the key functions of board members is to support the Executive Director and provide guidance to help ensure that the organization's most important priorities are being advanced. At times this requires that board members be willing to raise tough issues, to ask questions so that issues and decisions are fully understood, and to kindly challenge the Executive Director. This is required for good governance and can be done in a respectful way. It helps ensure that there is full transparency, that decisions are not "rubber-stamped," and that the board receives sufficient information to exercise organizational oversight. These board practices are acts of "care, loyalty, and obedience" to the organization.

3. I understand that the board has only one employee, who is the Executive Director. I will treat the Executive Director, with respect by directing all communication to employees and volunteers through the Executive Director and by acknowledging the Executive Director authority to decide which employees to call on for information and to answer questions in board meetings.
4. The Board Chair and Executive Director partnership is essential. This is an active, working partnership that requires ongoing discussion and consultation. The Board Chair and ED will schedule a monthly discussion (Zoom or phone conversations are fine) to discuss the upcoming board meeting and develop the agenda. This is an important role for active board leadership. While the Executive Director may finalize the agenda, which gets sent with the board packet, it is essential that the board chair provide active leadership and direction.
5. Committees are part of the effective board- Executive Director partnership. Committee chairs must exercise initiative to get agenda items to the board chair and Executive Director when there are decisions that require board approval, discussion, or other action. Staff may support this work through information required for decision-making at board meetings. This information is ideally gets submitted via the board packet in advance of the meeting.
6. The Board needs to be well-informed and highly engaged. A monthly board packet sent a week before meetings is essential for the board to understand the context in which it is asked to make decisions for BCFS. This should include an agenda for the board meeting, an Executive Director's report, a financial report (income and expenses and balance sheet). These reports are time-consuming to produce, and it is essential that the time put into these is respected by the board. Each board member will "calendar" time prior to board meetings explicitly to review the board packet.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, INCLUSIVITY, & DIVERSITY

To maximize effectiveness, our board requires diversity in perspective, life experience, racial and ethnic background, social and economic status, gender, religion, disability, body size, sexual orientation, employment status, parenting status, marital status, national origin, and global location. I will actively use my positional authority as a board member and my "ordinary privilege" to kindly intervene when I observe board behavior that is not

consistent with maintaining active participation of a diverse group of board members, and when I see inappropriate behavior that is directed at a board member or group of board members based on any of these characteristics.

ORGANIZATIONAL AGREEMENTS: DECISIONS & HOW TO USE BOARD MEETING TIME

1. The Board of Directors sets direction for the organization, stewards assets, hires/ supports/evaluates/and provides oversight of the executive director, approves the annual budget, and ensures that BCFS fulfills its mission and financial reporting and tax obligations to the state and federal government.
2. If I serve as a volunteer for or client of the BCFS, I agree to separate out my volunteer and/or client role(s) from my board role and follow the processes in place to raise grievances and concerns rather than using board meetings for this purpose. I agree to put the organization's best interests at the forefront during board meetings.
3. The Board has collective power and everybody participates in decisions. No single board member has the authority to make requests of the Executive Director or obligate organizational resources without collective board approval. No single board member will get their way all the time and no single board member can have control over every decision.
4. I will come prepared to meetings by reading the agenda and meeting packet in advance of the meeting. I will RSVP my attendance (yea, nay, or maybe) promptly for meetings, events, and other volunteer commitments I make.
5. Board meetings need to run efficiently and enable the organization to make decisions and get work accomplished. If there are new issues that were not on the agenda or new ideas that get raised in meetings that are not critical *in the immediate future*, the Board Chair will ask to put those ideas on a "Parking Lot" List (for consideration at the next Board Meeting) rather than changing the current board meeting agenda.
6. When one volunteer asks another to accomplish a task, if something changes and the task is either no longer needed or new information is available (i.e. the task has already been accomplished), this will be communicated immediately to the board member or volunteer who was asked to take on the responsibility.

7. The Weekly Update. When there is important information that all board members need to know, it should be shared concisely in an email to the Board Secretary so that they can send out an update to the rest of the board. Information needs to be submitted promptly and board members must indicate if there are financial decisions or other commitments that will create short- or long-term organizational obligations.

PERSONAL AGREEMENTS ABOUT “HOW TO DISAGREE”

1. I agree to work to the best of my ability to advance BCFS’s mission and to make decisions in the best interests of the entire organization and not just the project or subject area to which I am most committed.
2. No single board member’s vote is more important than another’s. We strive for consensus, and operate under majority vote when a decision is required. I agree to uphold all the decisions made by the board, even if I personally disagree. Because silence is taken as consent during board meetings, I commit to voicing my opinions in Board Meetings prior to votes. I will not voice my dissent after the meeting ends with just a single individual or just a few individuals. Instead, I will share my dissent with the whole board during the meeting.
3. I will share my values about the issues we discuss even if I do not have a specific fact or rationale because it is important that other members understand my values and beliefs. If necessary, I will request to have a vote postponed when appropriate so that I can adequately express my opinions prior to the vote.
4. Board members have both common values as well as areas of difference. I agree that I will not take it personally when other board members disagree with my vision, ideas, or positions on issues. I will not skip board meetings because I am upset, nor will I start social media or email campaigns against other board members or employees. Instead, I will share my opinions in meetings.

5. When I strongly disagree, I will communicate that in a clear and respectful manner. I recognize that it is hard to do this when angry or upset, and I will wait until my emotions are under control to speak so that I do not damage relationships.
6. When I make an error, or when in the heat of the moment, I am harsh or rude to another board member, the group, or the executive director or other employees, I will publicly apologize.
7. I will maintain the appropriate confidentiality of Board Members, other volunteers, and employees. I will not share sensitive information outside of the organization, either verbally, in writing, or through social media or other digital/electronic platforms.
8. I recognize that all board members make many sacrifices to continue the organization's work. Boards need volunteer members and it is important not to alienate others when one member is angry or disagrees with a decision.
9. Each board member needs to feel valued and respected. I will support other board members, employees, and volunteers to the best of my ability by communicating directly to them during board or committee meetings and will not discuss their behavior with others outside of their presence. I will be caring, helpful, and supportive even when I disagree. I will not call individual board members or employees outside of board meetings to communicate my disagreement with their positions, behavior or decisions.
10. I agree to save my energy for the really big issues BCFS needs to work on and will not spend my valuable time, nor that of other board members, venting about "the small stuff" either in board meetings or outside of board meetings.