



BSA:

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

Welcome

Dear Nonprofit Leader,

Congratulations on the completion of your BoardSource Board Self-Assessment for Community Foundations (BSA) Report. Enclosed you will find the results of your present and prior year board self-assessments. This report summarizes the responses to these surveys, and is a reflection of your board's core strengths, as well as areas that may need more attention.

This report provides an overview of your board's performance based on recognized nonprofit governance roles and responsibilities, as outlined in *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards*. The report compiles data that reflect how well the board and the chief executive think they are meeting their responsibilities in four key areas identified by BoardSource as crucial for high-performing boards and organizational success: setting direction, ensuring resources, providing oversight, and board structure and operations.

As you review the report, we encourage you to consider the following:

- What stands out? Is there anything in the report that is especially surprising, or that you'd like to understand better through conversations as a full board?
- Does your recent self-assessment indicate that the board has strengthened its performance in key areas since it last assessed its performance? Or have ongoing or new challenges surfaced that warrant your attention?
- Does the board seem to be well aligned in terms of its assessment of its performance, or are there indications that different board members are experiencing the board's leadership performance differently? If the latter, why might that be?
- To what extent is your board meeting its own expectations? In what ways is the board happy with its leadership performance, and where is it signaling a desire to improve? Do any natural priorities emerge from the ratings?
- Based on what you see in the self-assessment, what are the top one to three areas where you think the board should focus its future development efforts?

These questions may help your board unlock new insights about its leadership and help you determine what goals you want to set and prioritize for your own board development and growth. We encourage you to formalize those goals or priorities as an action plan to guide your board development efforts. BoardSource has a wide range of resources and tools that can support you in those efforts, some of which are highlighted throughout the report. We also encourage you to explore www.boardsource.org to learn more about other ways we can assist your board, whether through our consulting directory, educational programming, or research and leadership on issues of great importance to boards, the social sector, and our society as a whole.

Thank you for the important work that you do, and for trusting BoardSource to be your partner. We applaud you for making this investment in your board's leadership, and look forward to being a continued resource to you as you lead your organization's important mission and work.

Sincerely,



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Results Overview At-A-Glance

The assessment is divided into four board roles; nine areas of responsibility are incorporated within those roles. The scores for individual questions are averaged within each area of responsibility, and the scores for each responsibility are then averaged within each role. These board roles and responsibilities are based on *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards*.

The scores below are based on a 5-point scale using the following definitions:

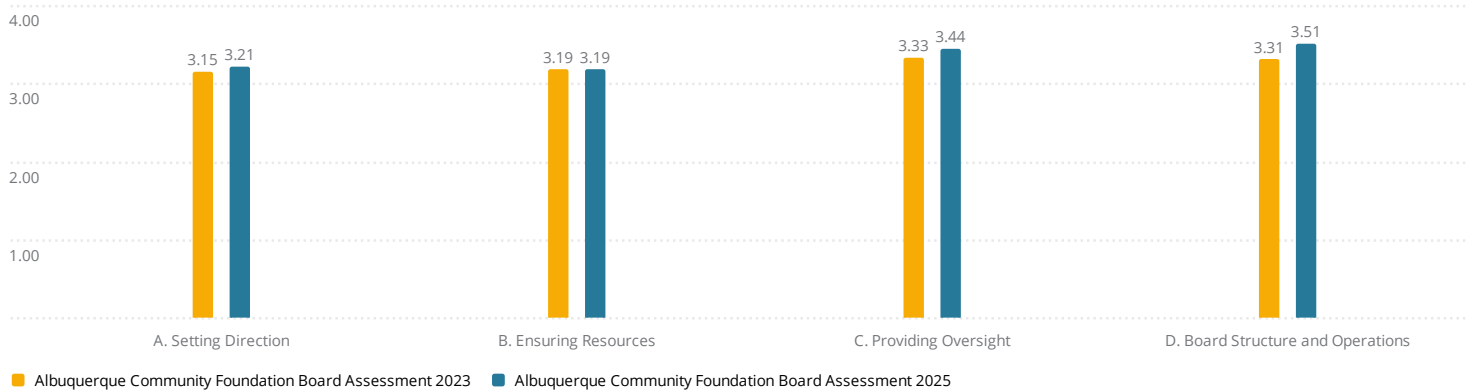
0 = Poor or needs improvement; 1 = Fair or marginal; 2 = OK or acceptable; 3 = Good or above average; 4 = Excellent or superior.

As an important note, respondents to the survey have the option to select NA/Don't Know to questions within the survey. Responses of NA/Don't Know are excluded from analysis within the final report and are not included in the averages provided. Responses of NA/Don't Know are also excluded from the total response count for that question.

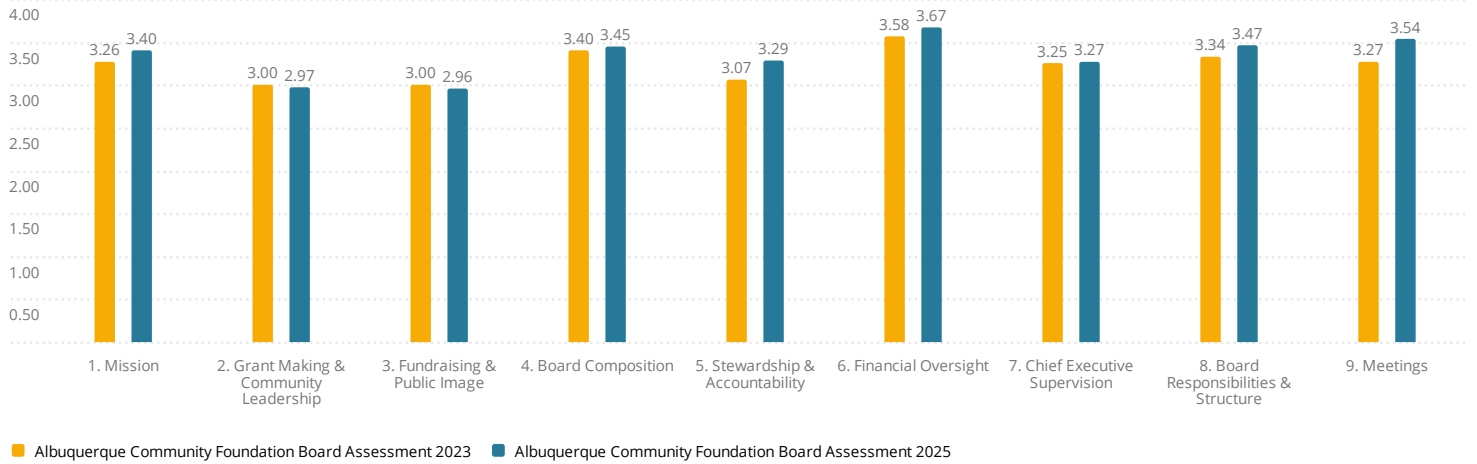
Roles and Responsibilities Overview

The graph below shows how your board has assessed its performance in the four roles (letter bars) and nine responsibilities (number bars) of nonprofit boards.

Your Board's Role Scores



Your Board's Responsibility Scores

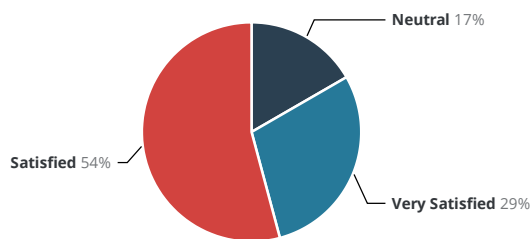


Board Service Experience

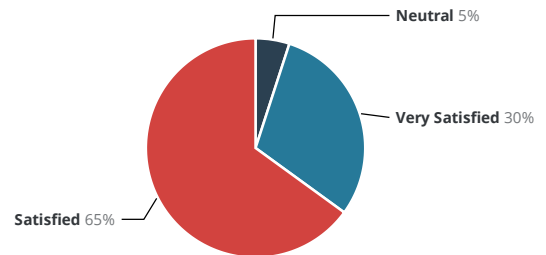
Overall Effectiveness

The following graphs reflect the board's thinking about its overall effectiveness. Because the percentages are based on the perceptions of your individual board members, this information can be used to spark a full board discussion on whether board members feel they are collectively meeting their responsibilities.

Previous Year ▾



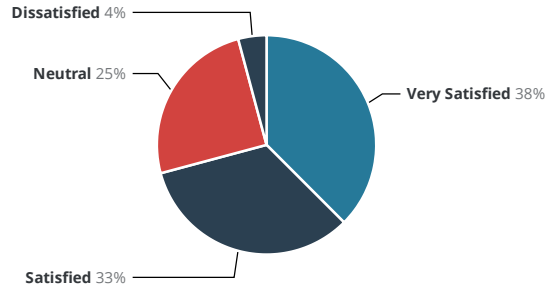
Current Year ▾



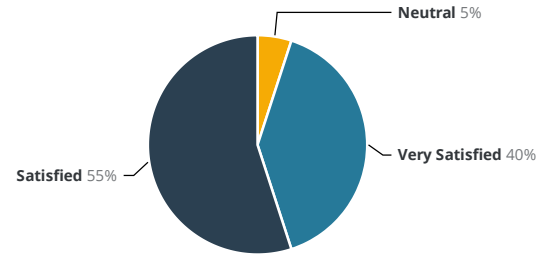
Level of Commitment and Involvement

The board self-assessment survey asks board members to identify their fellow board members' level of commitment and involvement, typically described as board engagement. Engaged board members make it a priority to attend and participate in all board meetings, take initiative, and jump into action when the chief executive needs expert guidance or opinion. Furthermore, engaged board members use their personal connections and affiliations to introduce the community foundation to suitable board member candidates, volunteer for leadership positions on the board, and, by example, encourage others to do the same. The graphs below show the board's level of satisfaction with its commitment and involvement.

Previous Year ▾



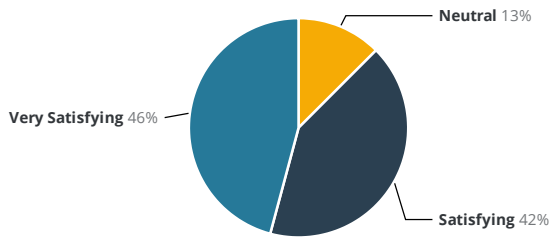
Current Year ▾



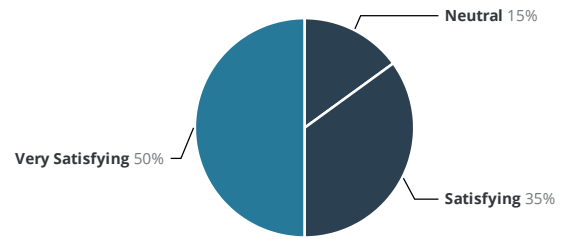
Individual Board Member Experience

Individuals serve on nonprofit boards for a variety of reasons. The percentages in this graph provide an overall sense of whether your individual board members feel that they have adequate opportunities to use their time, talent, and expertise to advance the mission of your foundation.

Previous Year ▾



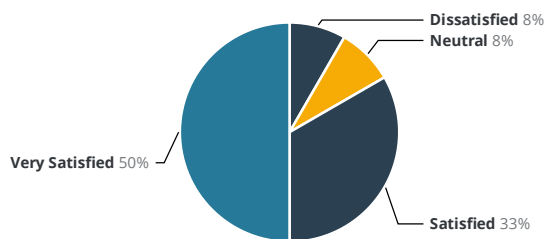
Current Year ▾



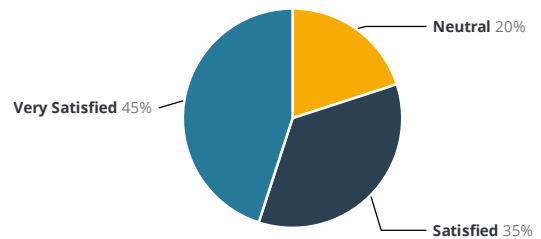
Size Matters

The primary guide for determining board size is the board's function, which may change over time depending on where the community foundation is in the organizational life cycle, ranging from start-up to adolescent to mature. Variables such as these make it impossible for BoardSource to recommend a standard size for all boards; however, it is difficult to imagine that a board with fewer than five members is able to incorporate all the desired qualities and capacity of an effective board, or that an exceptionally large board is able to engage every member in a constructive manner. Based on BoardSource's [Leading With Intent: 2017 National Index of Nonprofit Board Practices](#), we know that the average board has 15 members. Regardless of size, all board members must be engaged, as all are equally accountable for the foundation.

Previous Year ▾



Current Year ▾



A | Setting Direction

(includes Mission + Grantmaking & Community Leadership)

One of the board's primary roles is to set direction and outline strategies for achieving goals. Key elements to consider when setting direction are your community foundation's mission, vision, and values.

- A mission statement defines your community foundation's fundamental purpose. A clear mission statement is inspirational yet realistic, emotional as well as informative, concise and complete. It is positive and focuses on achievable accomplishments.
- The vision statement is about long-term goals and the direction in which the community foundation is heading. It defines the community foundation's dream. Because a vision statement is created through a group process in which all boards members share their ideals for the community foundation, it has a team-building effect.
- Values are the principles that guide individual and organizational behavior. By articulating these principles, the board establishes guideposts that help chart direction for years ahead.

Effective and strategic board members take responsibility for identifying the issues that must be addressed to serve the community foundation's mission, vision, and values in the years ahead. Board members should utilize their unique talents and experience to identify these issues and to inform the community foundation's understanding of them.

Strengthen Performance through Action

1. Refer to your mission, vision, and value statements when making decisions.
2. When necessary, refine your statements,
3. Share the statements with all board candidates and new board members.
4. Work together with the chief executive to provide guidance and input in developing the strategic planning process.
5. Incorporate strategic thinking into every board meeting rather than relegating it to the annual retreat agenda.

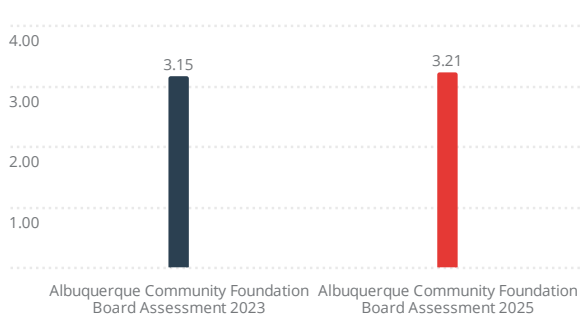
Recommended Resources - Mission and Vision

- Book: [The Nonprofit Board's Role in Mission, Planning, and Evaluation](#)
- Free Community Resource: [Tips for Developing a Mission Statement](#)
- Free Community Resource: [Mission Statement vs. Vision Statement](#)

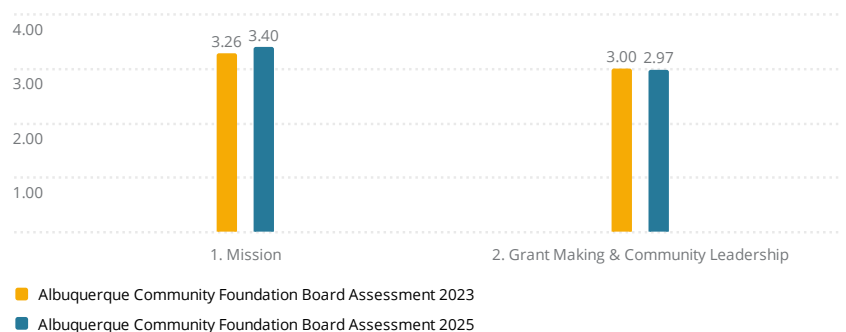
Recommended Resources - Strategy

- Guide: [Shaping the Future of Your Organization: A Strategic Planning Guide for Nonprofit Leaders](#)
- Free Community Resource: [Nonprofit Strategy By the Numbers: Evolution and Progress](#)
- Free Community Resource: [Charting a New Path Forward: Insights & Reflections from BoardSource's Strategic Planning Efforts](#)

Your Setting Direction Role Score



Your role score is based on the following responsibility scores:

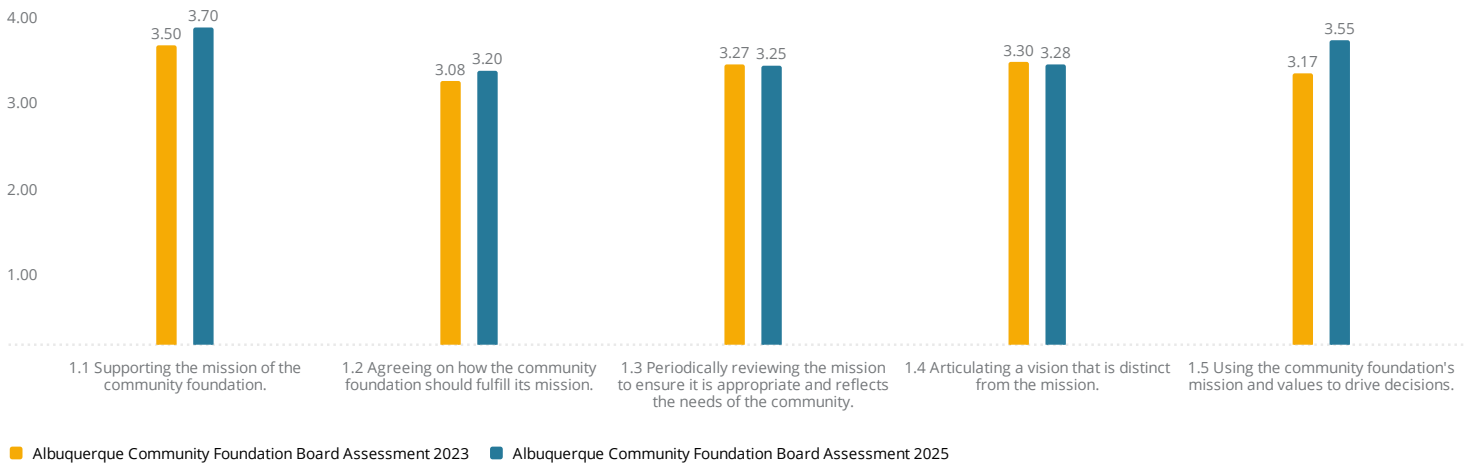


Mission | Section Detail

A community foundation is a public charity with a commitment to serve a specific geographic area. It is uniquely positioned to lead community-wide efforts in its role as grantmaker for local projects, but it goes beyond simply making grants that advance charitable activities. It also identifies current and emerging issues, channels resources to address its community's needs, and helps the community prepare for the future. Bringing together individuals and organizations that share a common interest, it may lead and operate its own programs and initiatives to serve the community. It encourages and promotes individual and corporate philanthropy by managing donor-advised funds. Dedicated to improving the quality of life in its area, a community foundation effectively invests in the future of its community by creating permanent charitable funds to help its region meet the challenges of changing times.

One of a community foundation board's fundamental responsibilities is to establish the mission and vision for the future of the community. A mission statement is a concise expression of what the organization is trying to achieve and for whose benefit. A vision statement creates an inspiring image of the community foundation's desired future. These statements serve as the primary guide for making decisions. The board, working closely with the chief executive, should review them periodically and revise them if necessary.

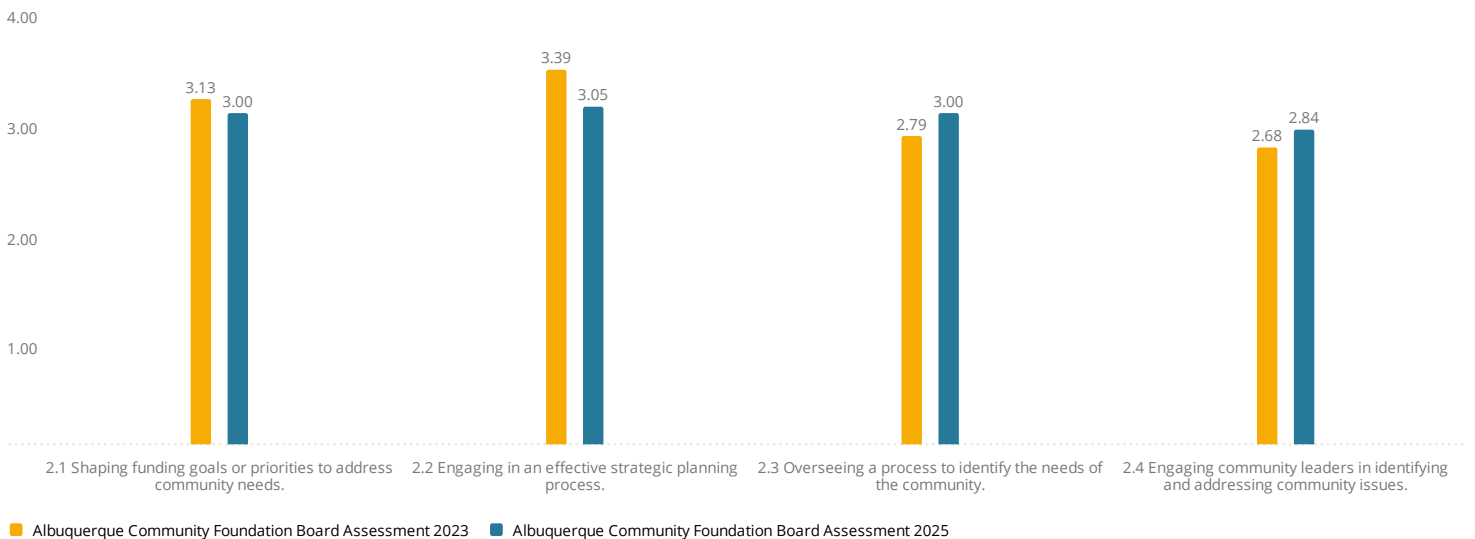
Average Score



Grant Making and Community Leadership | Section Detail

An important role for a nonprofit governing board is to ensure effective planning, and a community foundation board has a particular responsibility to identify emerging issues in the community, set funding goals or priorities accordingly, and determine when or if the foundation should act as a leader and convener. Throughout the grantmaking process, the board seeks to understand the community foundation's donors, as well as the needs of the community, so that it can respond appropriately as opportunities and challenges arise.

Average Score



B | Ensuring Resources

(includes Fundraising, Public Image and Board Composition)

Your organization, like all nonprofits, requires a competent board and a positive public image to accomplish its mission.

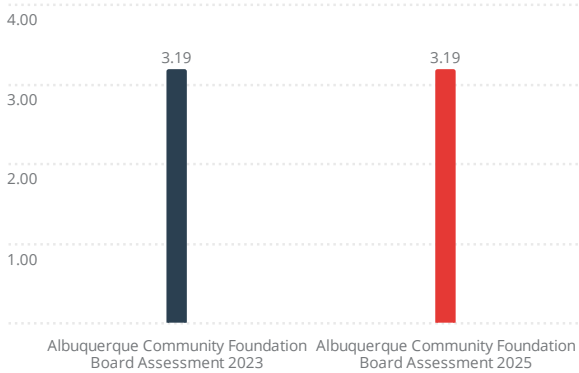
Strengthen Performance through Action

1. Spread the word about your community foundation's accomplishments and share your pride in the foundation. Be the community foundation's advocate and representative 24/7.
2. Take on assignments such as joining a board team to meet with an elected official or a funder.
3. Transmit feedback from stakeholders to help shape board discussion.
4. Articulate the community foundation's official positions; be clear about when you are presenting your personal opinions.
5. Approach recruitment and board building as an ongoing cycle.
6. Ensure your governance committee is fully engaged and involves every board member in the board-building process by recommending or cultivating potential new board members.
7. If necessary, enhance the profile of your community foundation to make it attractive to strong board candidates.
8. Create a solid orientation program for new members no matter how extensive their previous board experience is.

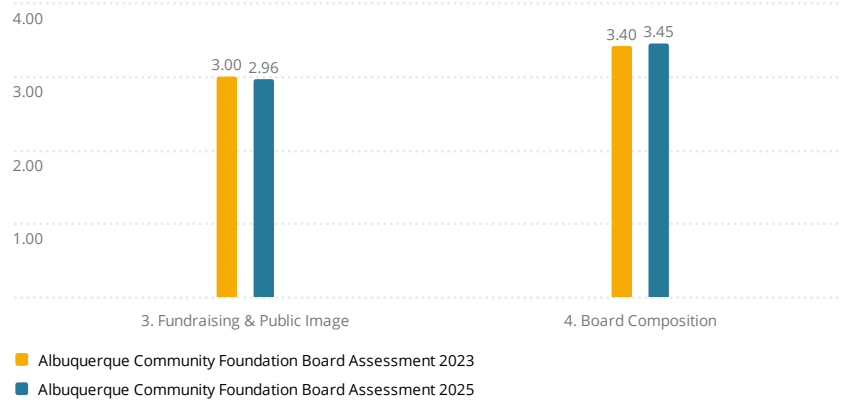
Recommended Resources - Public Image

- Free community resource: [Stand for Your Mission](#)
- Book: [The Board Building Cycle](#)
- Free Community Resource: [Taking Action on Board Diversity: Five Questions to Get You Started](#)
- Member Resource: [Recruiting the Right Board Members](#)

Your Ensuring Resources Role Score



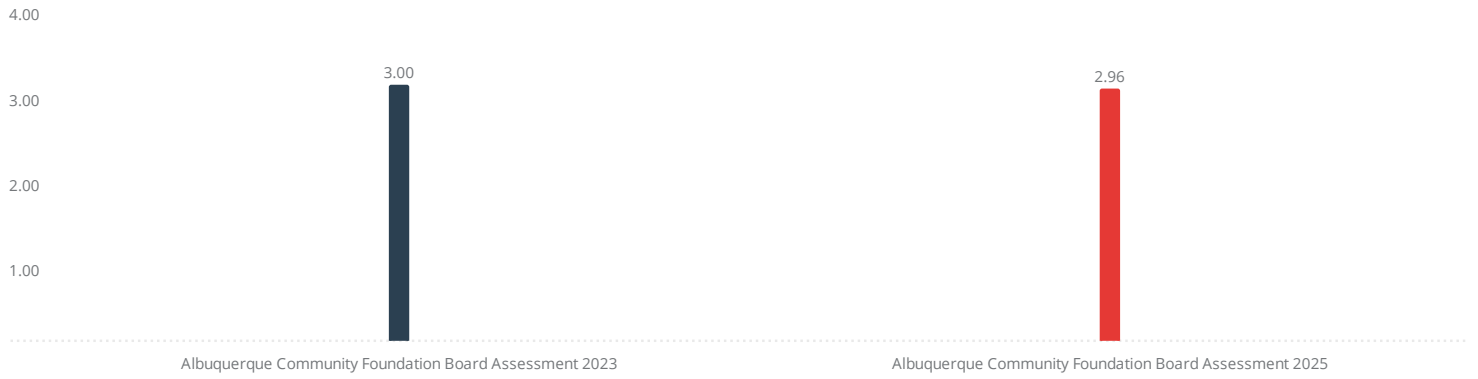
Your role score is based on the following responsibility scores:



Fundraising & Public Image | Section Detail

To succeed in its mission of developing the community and cultivating supporters, a community foundation needs to have a strong reputation and an adequate financial base. The foundation needs a clear-cut fundraising strategy to cultivate donors and carry out its grantmaking process. It can serve as a convener within the community as it works to develop broad support in the form of contributions from donors with diverse charitable interests. To accomplish these objectives, the board should be active in making personal contributions, connecting staff to potential donors (individuals, foundations, and corporations), soliciting friends and colleagues, and serving as an ambassador for the foundation in the community.

Average Score



Board Composition | Section Detail

A community foundation's board is responsible for its own composition and leadership. A good board is made up of individuals who contribute critically needed skills, experience, perspective, wisdom, contacts, time, and other resources to the foundation. In addition, the board should reflect the diversity of the community it serves. A well-conceived board-building plan helps the board to identify and recruit members and cultivate officers. New members are oriented to the board's responsibilities and the community foundation's activities. Board member rotation ensures that the board is infused with new ideas yet remains a manageable size.

Average Score



C | Providing Oversight

(includes Program Oversight, Financial Oversight, and Chief Executive Supervision)

Oversight involves both authority and accountability. However, in the board's oversight role, the emphasis is on accountability — on making sure the community foundation's assets are safeguarded and used responsibly and effectively to implement the mission. The board provides oversight not only of the finances and programs, but also of the foundation's legal and moral conduct. Furthermore, the board delegates authority to the chief executive, who is therefore accountable to the board. Thus, the board's oversight role also includes supervising, providing feedback to, and supporting its chief executive. As fiduciaries and stewards of public trust, board members must always act for the good of the foundation, rather than for the benefit of themselves.

Strengthen Performance through Action

1. All board members must fulfill their fiduciary responsibility to oversee the financial health of the community foundation. Financial oversight cannot be delegated to a committee but can be supported by the work of a committee.
2. Board development should include resources to assist board members in understanding nonprofit financial basics. Monitoring financial sustainability goes beyond reviewing financial reports; it requires reviewing short- and long-term trends in revenue streams, expenses, and programs.
3. Ensure that all necessary financial policies and controls are in place and being followed.
4. Work with the chief executive to understand and oversee the community foundation's legal obligations.
5. Monitor the quality of programs: "Are we doing what we said we would do?" "Are we doing the right thing?" "Is this program or service making enough of a difference for the people served?" "Is it worth the expenditure of funds and efforts?"
6. Incorporate mission moments during board meetings or create opportunities to see your mission in action.
7. Provide a clear job description and mutually agreed-upon annual expectations for the chief executive by clarifying what needs to be achieved; when appropriate, provide guidelines.
8. Properly administer annual performance assessment. Look at qualitative and quantitative factors, link goals to measurable indicators, understand that the chief executive's intangible qualities may have a valuable impact on the success of the association. Remember that evaluation provides your board the opportunity to strengthen the foundation by improving its management.
1. Offer opportunities for professional development and speak candidly when troubling issues arise.

Recommended Resources - Program Oversight

- Book: [The Nonprofit Dashboard: Using Metrics to Drive Mission Success](#)
- Free Community Resource: [Strengthen Your Board's Leadership by Increasing Its Understanding of Programs](#)
- Member Resource: [Identifying and Managing Risk](#)

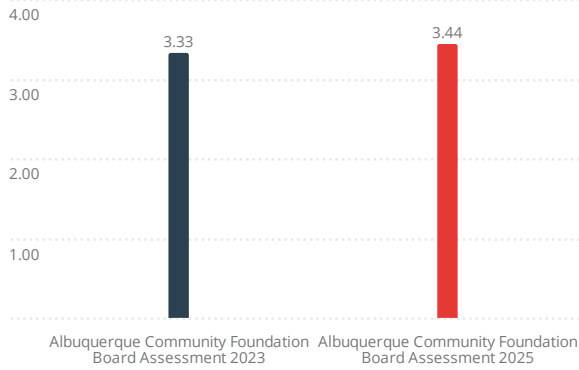
Recommended Resources - Financial Oversight

- Free Community Resource: [Red Flags, Yellow Flags: Are Your Financial Statements Trying to Tell You Something?](#)
- Book: [Financial Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards](#)
- Guide: [Welcome to Your Financial Statements: A Primer for Nonprofit Board Members](#)
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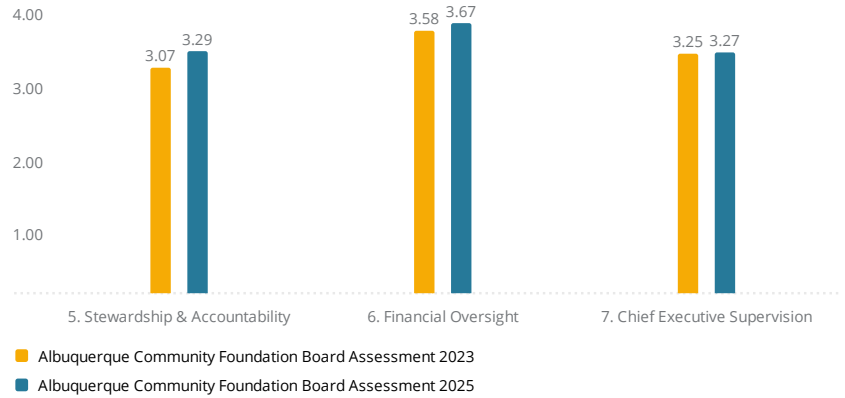
Recommended Resources - Chief Executive Oversight

- Member Resource: [Setting Goals for Your CEO](#)
- Book: [Govern More, Manage Less](#)
- Free Community Resource: [Board Chair and Chief Executive Partnership](#)

Your Providing Oversight Role Score



Your role score is based on the following responsibility scores:



Stewardship & Accountability | Section Detail

Each foundation should have a grantmaking strategy describing the foundation's areas of giving and overall involvement, the types of grants the foundation makes, oversight of donor-advised funds, and the foundation's approach to grantmaking and program participation. The foundation's grantmaking strategy provides a long-term, collective framework for giving, which separates "organized philanthropy" from an individual's donations to various worthy causes. Proper care in monitoring all activity helps the foundation to focus on the results it hopes to achieve with all grants, programs, and services, and to determine how to measure the impact of the grants.

Average Score



Financial Oversight | Section Detail

As a tax-exempt nonprofit entity, a community foundation operates in the public trust. To preserve that trust, it is critical that a community foundation be a prudent steward of charitable funds, carefully managing and investing funds, overseeing donor-advised funds, and maintaining accurate financial records. The board is responsible for preserving the community foundation's resources, protecting its assets, and maintaining its legal and ethical integrity. The board approves the annual budget and then monitors performance against the budget throughout the year. The board also oversees the annual audit to verify for itself and the public that the community foundation is accurately reporting the sources and uses of its funds. To safeguard the community foundation's future, the board establishes and adheres to appropriate investment and risk-management policies.

Average Score



Chief Executive Supervision | Section Detail

The primary board-staff relationship is between the board and the chief executive, and the quality of this relationship is of the utmost importance. To be effective, the board and chief executive need a close working relationship based on mutual trust and an appreciation of their respective roles in leading the community foundation. As part of its responsibility for supervising the chief executive, the board ensures that a job description outlines his or her duties, then evaluates the chief executive annually and determines appropriate executive compensation.

Average Score



D | Board Structure & Operations

Every board needs structure — rules, guidelines, and boundaries. A meeting is where the board makes and reviews policy, sets direction for the community foundation, defines and follows its own ethical guidelines, oversees the operations, and addresses its own well-being.

Strengthen Performance through Action

1. Periodically assess your board's workload, committee structure, life cycle requirements, need for diversity, and legal mandates to ensure that your board is managed well.
2. View your bylaws and policies as evolving documents needing regular review.
3. Consider relying on task forces in lieu of multiple standing committees to help the board manage its workload.
4. Cultivate positive board culture and dynamics.

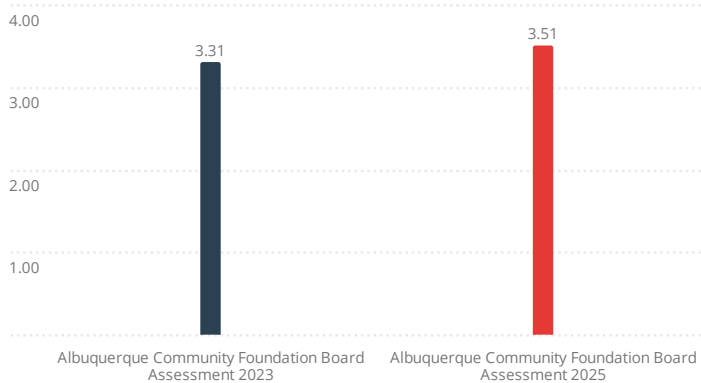
Recommended Resources - Board Structure

- Free Community Resource: [Board Committee Membership: Who Should Serve on Which Committee?](#)
- Member Resource: [Board Development Plan](#)
- Free Community Resource: [Bylaws Dos and Don'ts](#)

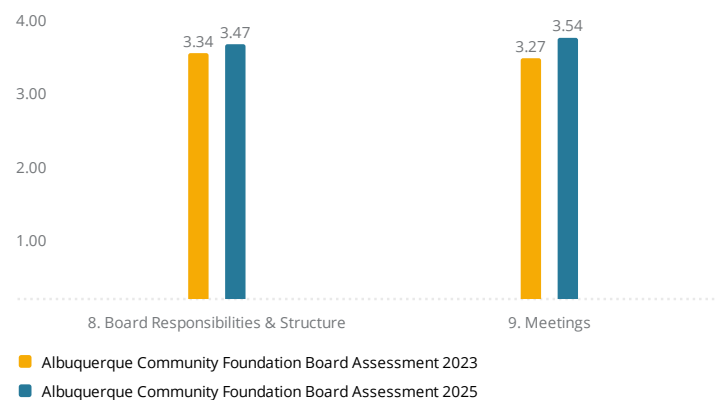
Recommended Resources - Meetings

- Book: [Meeting, and Exceeding Expectations: A Guide to Successful Board Meetings](#)
- Free Community Resource: [Using Generative Governance Principles for Better Boardroom Conversations](#)
- Free Community Resource: [Preparing for More Effective, Focused, and Strategic Board Meetings](#)

Your Board Structure and Operations Role Score



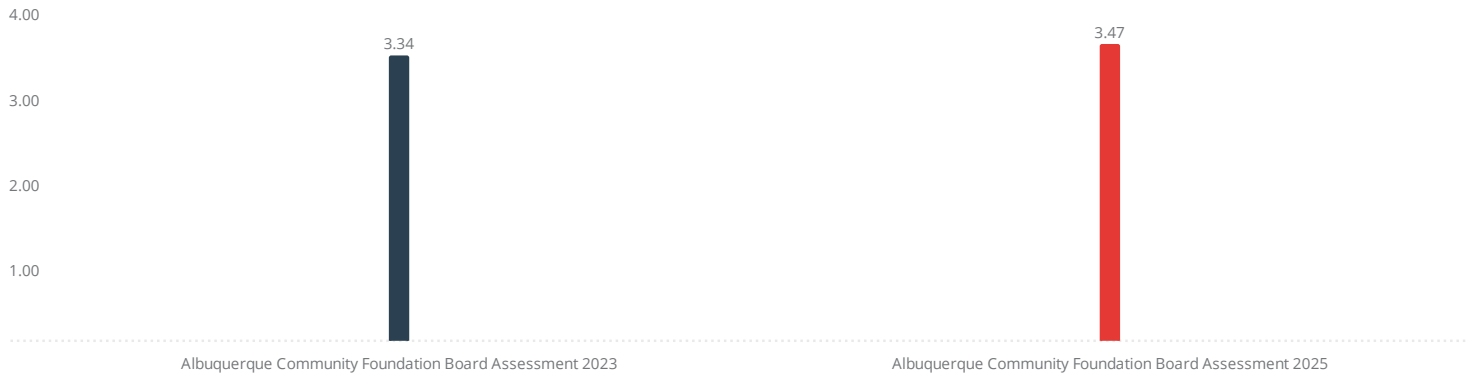
Your role score is based on the following responsibility scores:



Board Responsibilities & Structure | Section Detail

The board is responsible for making sure its own practices are appropriate and up-to-date. This requires that the board have a clear understanding of its roles with staff and an awareness of how these respective responsibilities may change as the community foundation evolves. The board also ensures that it is operating in accordance with the bylaws and other major organizational policies, which are reviewed periodically and revised as necessary. Finally, the board structures itself efficiently using committees and taskforces that have written charters and capable leadership.

Average Score



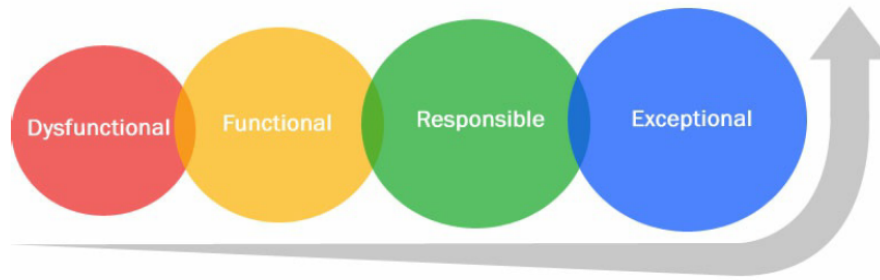
Meetings | Section Detail

Boards carry out much of their work in meetings. Meetings that are carefully structured and efficiently conducted will help board members feel that their time is well spent and that the board adds value to the organization. Effective boards have meeting agendas that focus on important issues, allow for discussion, and lead to action. To ensure efficiency, board members receive and review agendas and background materials prior to the meetings. To tap into the collective wisdom of the board, boards pay careful attention to boardroom culture, group dynamics, and decision-making processes.

Average Score



Board Performance Continuum



Taking Actions

Exceptional boards are a strategic asset to be leveraged by the organization. They add significant value and make a discernible difference in the organization's advance on mission. Use this report as a tool to guide your board on the path to exceptional performance.

Take action. The board self-assessment establishes a platform for setting and attaining important board priorities. The final step is identifying areas for improvement. To help your board do this, consider the following questions:

1. What steps can we take to ensure that information from the evaluation is used to improve the performance of the board?
2. Who or what committee is responsible for initiating and leading board development and assessment? Does it have the necessary resources and authority to fulfill its responsibilities?
3. Every board should have clearly established guidelines that outline the duties and responsibilities of individual board members. Are our board members held accountable to these standards? Do we have a process for removing nonperforming board members?

Develop a board action plan. Once the board has agreed on its priorities, use a board action plan to help the board stay on track in addressing the issues that surfaced.

Check your progress. Only the board can hold itself accountable for its own performance. In one year, revisit the results from the self-assessment and action plan, celebrate the successes, and recommit to those areas that need further attention.

Repeat. BoardSource recommends conducting a thorough board self-assessment every two to three years and using the intervening time to work on the action plan you develop.

Additional Services

With the completion of your board self-assessment (BSA), you have joined the ranks of approximately 500 nonprofit boards that used the BoardSource BSA in the past year. Governance does not come naturally to all these leaders. BoardSource offers the following resources for those who seek additional guidance. For more information visit our website: www.boardsource.org.

The Certificate of Nonprofit Board Education

This certificate is for new and potential board members as well as staff and consultants who are new to working with a board. This program is offered through a series of webinars, an on-demand learning platform, or through a live training.

About the Board Self-Assessment and BoardSource

About BoardSource

BoardSource is focused on its core mission of building exceptional nonprofit boards. As a nonprofit organization itself, we are acutely aware of the importance of strong board leadership and the impact of exceptional governance. Our goal is to help other nonprofit organizations fulfill their missions and to support the critical work they do in their communities by helping them increase the effectiveness of their boards. With more than 25 years of hands-on experience working with nonprofit boards, BoardSource has become the go-to resource for funders, partners, and nonprofit leaders who want to magnify their impact within their community through exceptional governance practices. BoardSource is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Our History

In the early 1980s, two organizations — Independent Sector and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges — conducted a survey of nonprofit organizations and found that although 30 percent of respondents believed they were doing a good job of training and educating their boards, the majority of the respondents reported little, if any, activity in strengthening their board's governance practices. As a result, the two organizations proposed the creation of a new organization to meet the unique and critical needs of nonprofit boards, and in 1988, established the National Center for Nonprofit Boards, now known as BoardSource.

BoardSource Today

BoardSource has an annual budget of approximately \$6 million and maintains a professional staff of more than 25 employees. In addition, the organization has an affiliated pool of consultants and trainers who conduct consulting and training engagements around the world.

BoardSource is the world's foremost publisher of comprehensive materials on nonprofit governance, having sold more than a million copies of more than 100 publications and tools developed over the past 25 years. BoardSource supports a community of more than 80,000 individuals with customized diagnostics, live and virtual trainings, and a comprehensive library of governance resources that includes original publications.

BoardSource began offering the board self-assessment tool shortly after the organization's founding in 1988. The product has evolved from a manually tabulated print survey to a user-friendly online assessment that is widely respected and utilized across the nonprofit sector. The current BSA, which was revised in 2009, is based on the BoardSource publication, *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards*, an all-time bestseller with more than 175,000 copies sold. Together, the book and the BSA explore the board's core responsibilities within the context of the governance challenges facing nonprofits today. The BSA for nonprofit boards of public and private charities has been customized specifically for associations, community foundations, private foundations, credit unions, independent schools, and a variety of other subjects of nonprofits within the sector.

Annually, BoardSource hosts the BoardSource Leadership Forum, which convenes hundreds of governance experts, board members, and chief executives of nonprofit organizations from around the world.