

# A Guide To The Nature of a Board of Director's Goal

The goals of an organizations policy board should communicate the current and future areas of emphasis from among the larger array of organizational services, activities and issues.

## **The purpose of goals are:**

1. To address a need and/or opportunity
2. To communicate the policy boards priorities and areas of emphasis
3. To provide meaningful direction to the organization
4. To inform an organizational work-plan and operational budget
5. To establish organizational performance expectations and a basis for organizational accountability

## **There are two types of board goals:**

1. Content Goals: these are goals that specify an intention to establish policy, complete a project, or an event, etc.

Example of a board content goal: Implement an Economic Development Program to provide improved employment opportunities in the community and enhance a diversified tax base for the city.

2. Process Goals: these are goals that specify an intention to engage in or establish a procedure, organizational practice, or process to reach a decision and/or desired outcome.

Example of a board process goal: To establish a structured procedure for community involvement during Council working committee meetings.

## **Characteristics of Effective Board of Director Goals:**

1. Level of detail: the most effective board goals are centered on the "abstract-specific detail spectrum". Effective goals are not so vague as to be useless and not so specific as to constitute "micro-management".

Example of an abstract board goal: To establish a warm and safe feeling in our community

Example of a “centered” board goal: Plan and build a Community Center to serve the needs of our youth, seniors, and general citizenry in partnership with other community organizations.

Example of a “micro-management” board goal: To place a 45,000 square foot fire station on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Vine that will house 3 truck companies in the next twelve months.

3. Attainability: effective board goals are given both adequate resources (funds etc.) and a realistic timeframe for accomplishment.
4. Organizational Compatibility: effective board goals are consistent with the mission of the organization, current policy and integrate into the existing organizational work-plan taking into account on-going activities and commitments.
5. Accountability Features: effective board goals provide the basis for monitoring progress and determining completion such as benchmarking and a clear definition of accomplishment.
6. Parsimonious: effective board goals reflect the view that fewer goals done well is preferred to many goals done poorly. Experienced boards of directors realize that goals should not and cannot reflect the full array of organizational activities and services. All members of the organization realize and accept that important organizational activities and services may not be reflected in goals selected by the board of directors but will continue to accomplish the organizational mission.