

What does nonprofit governance look like?

The nonprofit ecosystem is one filled with so many players. From activists to community organizers, nonprofit staff, nonprofit boards, and yes, even corporations, so many actors play an important role in advancing social impact.

Here's an infographic to give you an overview of how players across the nonprofit ecosystem work together to create a more coordinated space in the nonprofit sector.



Board Members



Board Members are represented by the traffic lights. They are important in guiding the Executive Director and supporting the overall organization. They help to ensure that there is structure and that there are guardrails in place to help the organization navigate the nonprofit ecosystem in order to fulfill its mission.

Executive Directors



Executive Directors are the drivers. They are steering the organization and working closely with staff, board members, and other stakeholders to help raise awareness about the mission and help secure resources for the organization. Executive Directors play an important role in leading nonprofit organizations to ensure that all the members of the nonprofit ecosystem are constantly communicating and working towards fulfilling the mission of the organization.



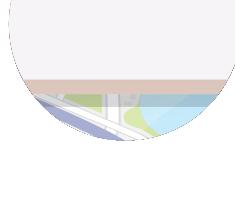
Staff Members

Staff members provide support to the Executive Director to help the organization successfully navigate the nonprofit ecosystem. Sometimes staff members (versus executive directors) are a bit closer to community members. Because of this, staff members may have a bit more fluency in understanding a community (or in this case, reading a GPS). Staff members are instrumental in working alongside the Executive Director to steer the organization towards its mission.



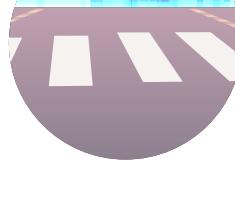
Community Members

Community Members have a unique and very important perspective being that they have the lived experience to help nonprofit leaders understand some of the challenges they face. Community members represent the GPS and their perspective helps guide organizations and helps the people running the organizations understand the best way to get to their destination.



Programs

Programs represent the vehicle or body of the car and in this case, a nonprofit organization is successful in part, because of its programs. Programs are how nonprofits get from point A to point B as they serve their communities. Programs are guided by nonprofit staff and they are often the pillars of nonprofit organizations.



Governance

Nonprofit governance or procedures is represented by the road. Nonprofit governance relates to policies and procedures that dictate how a nonprofit will be held accountable to the community they are serving. Nonprofit governance establishes the parameters for how the organization will accomplish its mission and how the organization will remain and continue to grow viable.

Governance is complex and nonprofit governance requires a range of individuals who understand the interdependent nature of work in the social sector. All parts are interconnected and communication is key to creating nonprofit ecosystems that thrive. Without one part of the system, the entire ecosystem will become weak and less efficient.