

Meeting the Moment:
Business Development: Best Practices for Nonprofits
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COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER

*Empowering nonprofits across Colorado to identify and address
community needs through connections, convenings, and capacity building.*

In partnership with:
Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado



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Welcome to *Meeting the Moment: Business Development Best Practices for Nonprofits*. This resource packet was created to accompany CRC's interview with Briggen Wrinkle, Executive Director of the Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado.

Insights into Nonprofit Capacity and Need Across Colorado Study by University of Denver - School of Public Affairs found *"Respondents reported difficulties in identifying, attracting, and retaining qualified and committed individuals to serve on their boards. Key concerns included enhancing board effectiveness and accountability, fostering active participation in strategic planning and especially fundraising, and clarifying the roles and responsibilities between the board and staff."*

Community Foundation serving Southwest Colorado provides funding opportunities, professional development, local research and support for nonprofits in Archuleta, La Plata, Montezuma, Dolores, and San Juan counties in Southwest Colorado.

The Community Foundation focuses on:

- Strengthening nonprofits through organizational and board development.
- Connecting funders with effective nonprofits.
- Engaging communities across five counties, ten towns, and two sovereign nations.

Characteristics of Effective Boards

- Strong attendance and timely responses to communications.
- Members genuinely enjoy working together.
- Meetings stay focused on the agenda.
- Limited conflict or unexpected disruptions.
- Board members value in-person interaction and connection.

Three Key Practices for Building Strong Boards

1. Recruit Continuously

- Board recruitment should happen year-round, not only when vacancies arise.
- Maintain a running list of potential candidates.
- Evaluate candidates based on organizational needs and board composition.
- Bring new members on in cohorts when possible so they can learn together.



- Recruitment is a shared responsibility between the executive director and board members.
- Boards should actively seek candidates with the needed expertise, geographic representation, and community connections.
- Community involvement creates opportunities to identify future board leaders.
- Avoid recruiting solely from existing social circles.

2. Develop Strong Board Orientation Process

- Develop a structured onboarding process for new members.
- Board recruitment binder should include:
 - Bylaws
 - Board contact information
 - Financial information
 - Program descriptions
 - Board expectations and responsibilities
- Create opportunities for new and existing board members to connect socially before formal retreats or meetings.

3. Use Committees Strategically

- Keep committee structures manageable.
- Committees can:
 - Increase engagement.
 - Match volunteers with their skills and interests.
 - Serve as a pipeline for future board members.
- Examples discussed:
 - Internal Affairs
 - External Affairs
 - Finance Committee

Board Roles and Accountability

- Clear orientation helps define board and staff responsibilities.
- Executive directors and board leadership should address role confusion early.



- Highly engaged board members should be given productive channels for contributions while maintaining appropriate governance boundaries.

Common Challenges and Red Flags

- Reactive rather than proactive board recruitment.
- Internal conflict that goes unresolved.
- Lack of clarity around governance roles.
- Newly promoted executive directors receiving insufficient support from boards.
- Board members become disengaged or disconnected from the organization's direction.

Emerging Concern: Supporting New Executive Directors

- Many nonprofits are promoting internal staff into executive director roles.
- New EDs often face responsibilities they have never handled before, including HR, audits, taxes, insurance, and organizational leadership.
- Boards should provide coaching, mentoring, and professional development support to help these leaders succeed and avoid burnout.

Key Takeaway

- High-performing boards are intentional, proactive, and relationship-focused. Continuous recruitment, strong onboarding, clear roles, active committees, and ongoing support for leadership are essential for building resilient nonprofit organizations, especially in rural communities.

Helpful Resources for Board Development:

Board Source inspires and supports excellence in nonprofit governance, as well as board and staff leadership.

Blue Avocado is the bimonthly newsletter of American Nonprofits, a membership organization that provides practical financial information and support to U.S. 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, staff, stakeholders, and volunteers.

The **Colorado Nonprofit Association: Principles & Practices**.

Community Resource Center also has a **Board Development Skill Track – Bring Your Board to Life**, which combines personalized coaching with key training and



targeted resources. CRC also offers separate [on demand board trainings](#) with an option to add on personalized coaching. These trainings can be watched individually by staff/board members, in a group setting, or utilized as part of a board retreat with the CRC coach working as a facilitator to help organizations make the most of the training for their nonprofit.