CHARACTERISTICS AND PRACTICES OF NON-PROFITS

MISSION, VISION, PROGRAM

More effective		*Less effective*
Prompted by thoughtful, collective decisions	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Prompted by individual charitable impulses
Mission and positions are clear, work is strategic	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Work is diffuse, mission is vague
Clarity of mission reflected in strategic goals, clear priorities and focused programs	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Programs aren't strategic, don't reflect the mission or organization priorities
Clearly focused on serving public need	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Some tendency to serve private interest

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

More effective		*Less effective*
Board, committees and staff roles and authority are clear, defined and separate	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Board, committees and staff roles and authority unclear, melded, inconsistent
Board members working to advance programmatic, organizational and fundraising goals; members hold each other accountable to meet commitments	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Board discusses what should happen but members seldom engaged in making things happen; little accountability within and to the board; board micro-manages all functions or isn't engaged
Develops & regularly consults strategic plan; uses planning as a tool for prioritizing	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Progresses by fits and starts, project to project
Regularly evaluates its performance and progress; learns and adapts nimbly	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Seldom evaluates progress, assesses efficacy or changes tactics to fit changing situations
Board meetings have clear purpose, held regularly, agenda & materials distributed in advance, chair keeps meeting focused & effective, members arrive prepared for discussion & decisions, discussion results in which results in action	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	Board meets irregularly (too often or too seldom) with little advance notice or preparation, meetings ramble off agenda, decisions unclear or postponed, members unprepared, more talk than action
Board makes policies and positions "explicit" in writing	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	Board believes policies and positions are "implicit" in work
Decision-making by board as a whole, following established channels and protocols; members support board decisions once made	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	Decision-making dominated by small group of stakeholders; members undermine board decisions
Board only hires Executive Director (ED); ED hires and supervises others; **one** board member manages and evaluates ED on behalf of organization	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	Board is involved in hiring for all positions; board members give conflicting management direction to ED and other staff; individual board members require individual briefing and input from staff
Board nomination process follows clear procedures; Board as a whole has strategic mix of talents, connections and perspectives	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	Board nominations are eccentric and random — members drawn from same well
Leadership development is intentional	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	No attention paid to developing/supporting new leaders

STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE, continued

More effective		Less effective
Volunteers are trained, managed, rewarded and have fun	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5	Volunteer development haphazard, successes uncelebrated — all work and no play
Organization publicizes itself effectively and actively reaches out to new constituents	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Organization is hesitant to invest in communications or outreach to new constituents

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, OPERATIONS

More effective		Less effective
Budgeting begins with realistic assessment of needs and with what organization thinks it can or should *raise*	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Budgeting often begins with what the organization thinks it can or should *spend*
Board uses budget as management tool and to set priorities	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Board regularly spends outside the budget
Fundraising is planned, staffed, maintained by clear systems and multiple strategies	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Fundraising is scattershot, whimsical, an afterthought; often heavy reliance on a few core donors
Organization sees fundraising as a public education & communications tool, a way to advance mission and goals	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Organization sees fundraising only as means to budget goal
Relies on individual contributors, foundations and other funding sources	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Relies exclusively on government and foundation grants
100% board giving, no matter what the level	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Few board members make financial contributions, think volunteering is enough
Short and long-term financial planning and cash management policies in place	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Frequent cash flow crisis
Board understands what budget and financial documents convey	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Nobody reads or understands the budget or budget documents
Organization understands it must invest in itself to survive and grow	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Organization hesitant to invest in fundraising infrastructure; fears spending on anything but program
Organization open to new strategic alliances to achieve goals and strengthen connections with constituents and other in the communities it serves	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Organization rejects alliances offhand with any other organization
Decisions regarding strategic alliances consistent with the goals of the organization	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Organization aligns with organizations with conflicting goals or without investigating nature of organization and making informed board decision
Organization is aware of and coordinates with other organizations providing similar or complementary services in their communities	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 - 5	Organization does not research or seek out other organizations with similar goals and may provide duplicate services