

## Position Your Nonprofit for Long-term Sustainability

While there is no single activity that will insulate your nonprofit from the occasional downturn, there are proven standards that foster long-term organizational effectiveness and financial wellness.

**Follow these recognized best practices** to help guide staff members and your board as you work together to move toward sustainability.



- **Create a job description for every position.** That goes for both staff and volunteers, and review it annually. Update it, if necessary. A job description is one of the best ways to hold people (and the organization) accountable.
- **Appoint your ambassadors.** That is, ensure that every board member is ready and able to be an ambassador for the organization. Regularly set aside time for “professional development” for board members, making sure all are caught up on the challenges the organization faces and the wins it has achieved.
- **Stop living month to month**—that’s no way to run a household or an organization on a long-term basis. Work with your board to devise a financial sustainability plan. Create a reserve fund policy and build that reserve—sooner rather than later.

# The Expert Manager

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- **Create diversified income strategies** for the organization as a whole and for each individual program. Be sure that each program not only helps to fulfill your mission but that each has a business model that supports (through designated raised and/or earned dollars) its true costs. **Put an evaluation protocol in place that provides data to show what is working, what is not and where and how things can be improved.** Use this data to make decisions as to which programs to expand, which to discontinue and which to put on a time-delimited performance improvement plan to determine its fate.
- **Know your core competencies** and stick with them. Don't be afraid of innovating but make sure you remain true to your organizational mission. Keep core values alive in the organizational culture and hold everyone—from staff to board members and other volunteers—accountable for walking them out every day.

**Is your organization financially stable? Which of these tips resonate with you? Where might your nonprofit diversify how it receives income?**