

# Governance

2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

**Building a Framework  
for Decision-Making**

THE  
FAMILY GIVING  
LIFECYCLE

1

Philanthropic  
Purpose

2

Impact Vehicles  
& Structures

**3**

**GOVERNANCE**

4

Impact Strategies  
& Tools

5

Assessment  
& Learning

6

Operations  
& Management

7

Succession  
& Legacy



NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
FAMILY PHILANTHROPY

# About the Series



The Family Giving Lifecycle is a seven-stage framework that encompasses the breadth and inflection points of family philanthropy and orients donors to effective outcomes.

***Governance: Building a Framework for Decision-Making***

is the third primer of the series. The primers include worksheets to help you apply the concepts to your work as well as a playbook that you can create with your family to codify decisions and plan your course of action. The Lifecycle framework applies to families at all stages of their philanthropy, whether they are wealth creators just starting out or multi-generational families improving their practice. It is important for donors and their families to revisit the seven inflection points over time as their philanthropy evolves. Please visit the National Center for Family Philanthropy (NCFP) [website](#) for the complete series of primers and related resources.

# Table of Contents

Overview .....	4
People .....	14
Principles .....	29
Policies .....	32
Practices .....	38
Next Steps .....	48
Governance Playbook .....	49

# Overview

**Governance is a framework in which you name *how decisions will get made in your philanthropy and by whom*. Establishing a form of governance enables you and others, whether they be family members or community partners, to work together, make sound decisions, and measure the effectiveness of your giving.**

A practical governance framework breaks the *who* and *how* of decision-making into four elements: people, principles, policies, and practices.<sup>1</sup> Formalizing a governance framework brings a level of thoughtfulness, intention, effectiveness, and collaboration to your philanthropy.

Governance is often most closely associated with private foundations because they are governed by boards of trustees or directors. However, you do not need to have a private foundation to use good governance practices. Setting up a simple governance framework can be useful for any charitable vehicle, including outright gifts, donor-advised funds, or limited liability companies. Governance is essential to success at all stages of your philanthropic journey, and you can rightsize the governance framework to meet the needs of any scale of giving or type of entity you are using to create change.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from [\*The Family Governance Pyramid: Enhancing and Guiding Your Family Philanthropy\*](#), by Patricia M. Angus, Esq., 2021.



## The Elements of Governance

**People**

**Principles**

**Policies**

**Practices**

## Why is governance important?

Establishing clear decision-making principles, policies, and practices ensure long-term success in your philanthropic endeavors. A structured governance framework increases the ability of a group to:

- **Navigate decisions** with clarity of purpose
- **Respect a variety of perspectives**, leading to more productive conversations when decisions are controversial or complex
- **Maintain compliance** with laws and regulations
- **Focus on making the best decisions for the collective philanthropy** over any individual, keeping members of the group accountable to each other and something larger than themselves
- **Create continuity** during leadership transitions

Ultimately, adding structure to philanthropy creates more freedom. With structure, decision-making becomes more straightforward, streamlined, and satisfying, leading to more impactful results.

# Why is stewardship important for good governance?



Good governance also concerns the fundamental questions of stewardship. Stewardship stems from the moral and ethical values of cultures and faith traditions from around the world and is central to the practice of effective family philanthropy. The stewardship role of a family often involves caring for shared assets such as investments, personal relationships, the environment, community health and well-being, the welfare of employees and professional partners, and more.

Philanthropic stewardship is rooted in a commitment to direct resources for the benefit of the public. Therefore, when you or your family are stewarding assets in a social impact vehicle such as a private foundation or charitable trust, laws in the United States and many other countries hold you to a high degree of accountability. This legal responsibility for managing assets on behalf of others is called a fiduciary role or investment steward role. Fiduciaries have three primary duties: care, loyalty, and obedience. (See page 8.)

Effective governance frameworks structure and reinforce a commitment to accountability that acknowledge the promise of stewardship. While laws and regulations direct some of our actions, each family and philanthropy must decide to whom and for what they are accountable.

Accountability in philanthropy ought to be rooted in the communities, people, and causes you serve. As an effective steward of your family's philanthropy, you'll answer to whom and for what you are accountable by considering factors such as:

- **Shared values and principles** that bind decision-makers together and ground them in empathy and shared histories with others
- **Context of the ecosystem** in which your philanthropy exists, such as long-standing injustices, increasing economic inequality, and environmental problems
- **Increased transparency** to counter the growing public mistrust of institutions, including nonprofits and private foundations

## How to Create a Culture of Effective Stewardship

Research has shown that an effective culture of stewardship is based on six practices:<sup>2</sup>

- 1. Intrinsic motivation:** Participants are naturally motivated to work on behalf of the organization rather than their own interests.
- 2. Organizational identification:** Leaders and employees identify with the organization's mission, vision, and objectives.
- 3. Personal power:** People use personal power built on trust-based interpersonal relations rather than power based on their position.
- 4. Collectivism:** Motivations and actions promote the collective good and organizational goals over personal gain.
- 5. Low power distance:** Unlike high power distance organizations, where power is concentrated at the top and hierarchical position confers privileges, low power distance organizations are egalitarian, with members treated equally.
- 6. High-involvement orientation:** People feel invited to be involved in decision-making and important organizational processes.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the [Ideas for Leaders summary](#) of research in *Leading a Family Business: Best Practices for Long-Term Stewardship*, Craig and Moores, 2017.

# What Do Private Foundation Boards Do?

More than 100,000 private foundations operate in the United States, and more than 60 percent are family foundations. They range widely in their resources, governance frameworks, strategies, lifespans, and many more factors. However, the role and responsibilities of boards commonly include:

- Providing leadership, oversight, and direction for the foundation or philanthropy
- Setting policies and strategies on investments, spending, grantmaking, board compensation, personnel (if applicable), and more
- Keeping clear and accurate records
- Staying accountable and transparent to the public trust
- Abiding by rules and laws governing private foundations/charitable giving

The book *Governance as Leadership*<sup>3</sup> categorizes nonprofit and foundation board governance into three modes: fiduciary, strategic, and generative.

**1. Fiduciary governance or oversight** requires being faithful to the mission, accountable to the organization, and compliant with laws. Laws surrounding fiduciary duty vary by jurisdiction, but for nonprofits and foundations, the laws typically describe three primary duties:

- **Duty of Care:** Directors will make careful and informed decisions as stewards of the organization. They also commit to creating and understanding the organization's policies and practices and keeping clear and accurate records.
- **Duty of Loyalty:** Directors will act in the best interest of the organization, including putting organizational interests ahead of personal interests or preferences. They will avoid self-dealing (financial transactions with disqualified persons as defined by the IRS) and have policies and practices to manage real and perceived conflicts of interest.

<sup>3</sup> Chait, Ryan, and Taylor. *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of the Nonprofit Board*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2005.



- **Duty of Obedience:** Directors will be faithful to the organization's mission and governing documents, stewarding funds in a way that honors the public's trust in the organization. The directors will abide by and ensure the organization follows federal, state, and local regulations and laws governing private foundations and charitable giving.

**2. Strategic governance or foresight** focuses on gaining clarity of purpose and setting priorities for the family philanthropy. Activities include strategic planning, developing grantmaking/giving strategies, communicating with grantees and the public, and identifying ways to contribute that go beyond giving.

**3. Generative governance or insight**, asks the board of directors to monitor the progress of the philanthropy and guide its ongoing learning and development. Generative governance activities include clarifying requirements for service, planning for leadership succession, engaging the next generation of family members, and constant learning and leadership development.

The three types of governance are by no means mutually exclusive. The most effective governing bodies embrace all three. You might naturally start with focusing on one type of governance, which is perfectly fine. Yet, like a three-legged stool, you must address all three modes to keep your philanthropy in good standing over time.

# Defining Why

Governance is the framework a group uses to name how decisions will be made and by whom. It also takes into account how to effectively steward assets. Even in its simplest form, a governance framework documents people, principles, policies, and practices to improve intentionality and effectiveness in your philanthropy. Consider the questions below to begin developing or updating your framework.

**1. How are you and your family currently making decisions together? What is working well and what could be improved?**

**2. Why does effective governance matter to you?**

**3. What do you most hope to accomplish by developing or updating your decision-making or governance framework?**

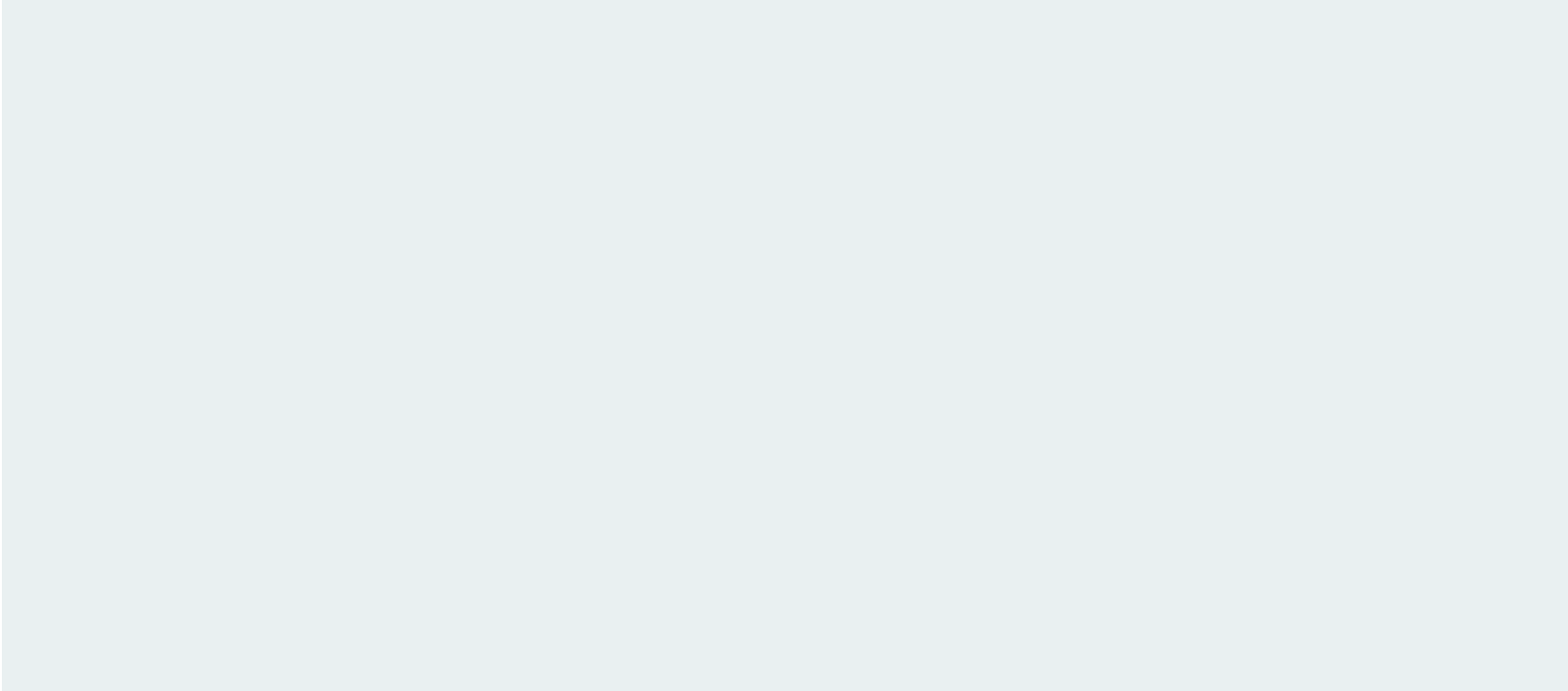
**4. Think about potential changes in your life, family members' lives, and philanthropic resources in the next five years. How might your current governance framework need to adapt to those changes?**

**5. What does stewardship mean to you and your family?**

**6. How might your family become more intentional stewards of your resources?** Those resources could include financial assets, properties, relationships, culture, reputation, and more.



**7. How might your family become more intentional stewards of the world around you?** Examples include the ability of other people to be safe and thrive, public resources such as parks and schools, and the environment.



# People

In the early stage of your philanthropic efforts, deciding **who** will make decisions is relatively clear. It might be a single generation—you and your spouse or partner, you and your siblings, and/or you and a few friends, employees, or informal advisors.

Later, you may involve more people as your philanthropic efforts become more complex and you are prepared to embrace diverse perspectives, which means clarifying roles and lines of authority will be critical. Your governance framework must answer five questions about the people involved and their roles:

1. What **decision-making roles** or **governing bodies** do you need?
2. **Who** do you hope will participate in those roles now and in the future?
3. How will you **structure** those roles (authority, size, and decision-making rules)?
4. How will you **recruit** the members, based on what criteria?
5. How will you **onboard and support** the members to ensure their success?

# Decision-Making Roles and Governing Bodies

A **governing body** is a group of people authorized to guide an organization or strategy. As you reflect upon your philanthropy, it is important to consider what roles and structures you need to make the necessary and appropriate decisions.

For an incorporated philanthropic vehicle such as a private foundation, the authority of a governing body is outlined in public laws and regulations (at both the state and federal levels), the organization's incorporation documents and policies, and other agreements. Standard governing bodies include:

- **A board of directors or trustees:** A group of individuals appointed or elected to set the direction of an organization, ensure it complies with legal and ethical standards, and (if applicable) hire executive leaders. Directors or trustees commit to following applicable laws and internal policies, making decisions in the best interest of the entity over their individual interests, and being thoughtful stewards of resources. (See “What Do Private Foundation Boards Do?” on page 8.)
- **Committees and task forces:** A designated group of individuals appointed by the board of directors or trustees who oversee and direct a specific function. The bylaws of an organization as well as internal policies establish committees, their authority, their membership, and the ability of the directors or trustees to change committee structures. Typical committees include executive, finance, and grantmaking.
- **Advisory council:** A set of individuals who advises and supports the board of directors or trustees, a committee, or staff members but typically does not retain decision-making authority. The council members are often ambassadors for your philanthropy, provide specialized expertise, or build bridges to a community or cause. For instance, if your philanthropic goal is revitalizing small towns, you might invite residents to inform your social impact strategies.

Donors often embrace similar governing bodies to guide direct gifts, donor-advised funds, and other charitable vehicles.

## Family Structures that Can Inform Governance

Families who choose to work together across generations often find they need a forum for family decision-making that is separate from their philanthropic vehicle or family business. While these forums live outside of the philanthropic vehicle, their activities and outcomes can help guide the governance of that vehicle:

- **Family constitution or charter:** A document that identifies family members' vision, values, and expectations. It ensures clarity and transparency in decision-making and helps families know what to do when there are disagreements. It also clarifies the roles of each governing body and the relationship between those bodies.
- **Family meetings or assemblies:** Gatherings where family members learn about things that are relevant to the family and build strong relationships across branches and generations of the family. Educational topics may range from the family's business or trusts to navigating the use of wealth or family-owned properties. Assemblies might be special day-long events or built into family vacations and include fun or age-appropriate learning activities for children.
- **Family council:** A subcommittee of family members tasked with the "business of the family." It manages family meetings, maintains the family constitution or other rules, and develops family members' shared values, will, and capabilities for collaborative decision-making. In addition, the council may be a conduit for ideas and talent between the larger family or family assembly and a family foundation or family business.





# Who Should Be Involved?

Families often start their governance frameworks by involving people close to them. As they settle into work together, they often realize they would benefit from new perspectives on an issue. After all, research has repeatedly shown that decision-making and performance improve when teams are more diverse (including by age, ethnicity, race, gender, personality type, socioeconomic status, and more).

To gain the power of diverse perspectives, consider inviting members of the following groups to help you make decisions:

- **Family members:** Different generations of blood relatives, spouses or partners, adopted children or stepchildren, or others who can build on family traditions and legacy.
- **People with local knowledge:** Residents of a geography who can share local context, identify good ideas to support, win over local skeptics, and build sustainable momentum for a social impact strategy. Inviting people from different cultures or economic situations can help bridge divides and reduce unintended biases in a philanthropic strategy.
- **Lived experience:** People who have experience with an issue or challenge, who are marginalized from community decision-making processes, or who are served by a nonprofit. Individuals with lived experience bring insights into the value of nonprofits' programs and can infuse a sense of personal connection into philanthropy.
- **Trusted allies:** Professional advisors, faith leaders, and mentors who can act as honest brokers in conversations and often smooth tensions between family members.
- **Issue experts:** Researchers, nonprofit leaders, product designers, artists, and anyone else who can bring insights about an issue or strategy or provide operational skills.

Family foundations are adding more non-family members to their boards and frequently integrating new perspectives into their grantmaking and governance structures. Research shows that inclusive decision-making leads to more effective outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Larson, E. "New Research: Diversity + Inclusion = Better Decision Making at Work," *Forbes*.  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/eriklarson/2017/09/21/new-research-diversity-inclusion-better-decision-making-at-work>.

# Structuring the Roles

To be a valuable contributor to the collective effort, everyone involved deserves to have clarity about their roles and the roles of the decision-making groups. An effective governance framework describes the following for each group:

- **Expectations:** What is the anticipated commitment of time, expertise, and preparation? What ground rules or codes of conduct guide how people should work together? What happens if participants don't follow the rules?
- **Responsibilities:** What are the group's primary duties and decision-making authority? For inspiration, see the Spectrum of Shared Decision-Making graphic on page 21 and information on decision-making options in the *Fundamentals of Family Philanthropy* primer.
- **Size:** What is the minimum and maximum number of people needed to make effective decisions?
- **Terms:** How long will members serve? What term limits or rotation policies will bring fresh perspectives?
- **Evaluation:** How will the group's performance be evaluated? How will you define success or failure?

Flexibility helps increase the likelihood of successful engagement in governance roles. The time and energy people are able to dedicate to a role will change in different phases of their lives. Consider clarifying the availability of off-ramps or sabbaticals—the space to gracefully step away from the family philanthropy and then return as time and interest allow.<sup>5</sup>

The DARE model offers one way to clarify roles:

- **Deciders** are empowered to make the final choices.
- **Advisors** help shape the conversation and are often important people in the family or community.
- **Recommenders** research options, analyze pros and cons, and offer suggestions for effective paths forward.
- **Executors** must implement the decisions. Deciders involve them before or during the decision-making meeting to ask clarifying questions and spot flaws in the choices.

<sup>5</sup> Binder-Kopchick, C. "[A Guide to Meaningfully Engaging Next-Generation Adults in Your Philanthropy](#)," NCFP.

# Recruitment

Effective governance requires transparency about who can be involved and how you are engaging them. It also requires a thoughtful plan and set of processes to recruit and retain new talent. Consider documenting:

- **Eligibility:** What are the criteria for serving in the decision-making group? Examples include minimum and maximum age, values alignment, personal experiences, volunteer or professional background, and willingness to put the goals of the collective above personal goals.
- **Selection process:** What is the process to identify group members (e.g., self-nominations, nominating others, appointment by advisors, open call for applications)?
- **Election process:** Who can nominate or recommend potential decision-makers? Who has the authority to confirm their election? What advance notice is needed? What decision-making process and, if applicable, what are the vote thresholds?

Throughout the lifecycle of your philanthropy, think invitation rather than obligation. Ensuring a welcoming sense of invitation and opportunity allows people to be honest about their interest, readiness, and capability to be a productive member of a decision-making team.

# Onboarding and Support

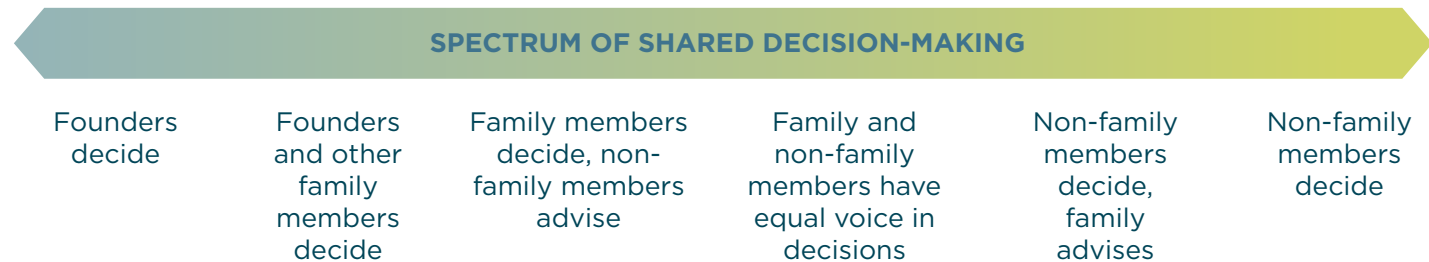
Lastly, family members must consider the tenets of successful engagement. Who will ensure members of decision-making groups succeed in their work, and how? What on-ramps will you create to the governance roles?

- **Pre-service preparation:** Philanthropic families can start preparing younger members for future service many years before they're eligible. Parents and others are well-positioned to help youth develop skills in healthy group dynamics, an understanding of the needs of others, and a commitment to community service and generosity. And, if you as a family are bringing on non-family trustees—particularly for the first time—what work are you doing as a family to prepare for a changed dynamic? What information will you share about the family's history or legacy that will be helpful grounding? Visit the *Succession and Legacy* primer for more information.
- **Onboarding:** What materials and discussions might help new members understand the history, principles, priorities, and culture? Is there an orientation to the strategies, goals, and finances of the family's philanthropy and social impact vehicles?
- **Support:** Is there a process for ongoing learning about community issues and philanthropy? Is there a budget for professional development or relevant memberships and subscriptions?



# Why is sharing power important?

A strong governance framework recognizes that a decision-making group is answerable to people both inside and outside of the group. The framework helps founders and families imagine how they might share and cede power and hold themselves accountable to the communities they serve.



Philanthropy holds an inherent power imbalance between those who make decisions about how to use resources and those who rely on those resources to do good in the world. Ignoring that power imbalance can cause irreparable harm to the community. It can also undermine the reputation of a funder, as well as its effectiveness and impact. Similarly, families can experience tensions when power imbalances between generations and family branches occur. Ignoring those tensions diminishes family cohesion and the likelihood the shared philanthropic goals will continue.

A growing number of donors and funders are proactively bridging the power divide between themselves and the communities and grantees they serve. They understand that to do their best work, they must create more trusting and empathetic relationships. The graphic above shows options for sharing decision-making power across a spectrum from a founder's tightly held control to the family ceding control to others.

As mentioned earlier, a culture of stewardship calls for a group to consider accountability by revisiting the following two questions continually:

- **For whom are our decisions made?**
- **To whom are we most accountable?**

Each family will seek its own balance between being accountable to legacy and donor intent, the changing needs of the people involved in decision-making, and the changing needs of the populations and places the family philanthropy serves. Being accountable to people outside the family shows a deeper respect for and trust in others. That respect and trust are returned in more honest and useful feedback to strengthen the family's governance framework and philanthropic strategies.

## How to Have Effective Conversations About Power, Privilege, and Money

Power, privilege, and money are hard topics to discuss. Families who've navigated those conversations successfully suggest using one or more of these starting points:

- **Name and claim power differences and power dynamics**, including those within the family and decision-making group.
- **Explore the origins of the resources you're using** (e.g., corporate success or wealth built on unfair labor practices).
- **Listen to, collect, and showcase** the stories, ideas, and solutions of people closest to a problem. Then, act together on their ideas and shared hopes.
- **Treat grantees and other partners as you would like to be treated.** Build a more inclusive culture and more equitable policies and practices.
- **Share or even transfer decision-making authority to another group.** Examples include neighborhood residents overseeing an investment fund, high-school students deciding on grants to youth programs based on peer feedback, former scholarship recipients updating criteria and applications based on their own experiences, or people with disabilities ensuring programs and services are fully accessible.

# People and Roles

Use the following worksheet to outline the decision-making roles you wish to establish to govern and advise your philanthropy and the type of people you hope to fill those roles. Note that there are no right or wrong answers. But it will help to consider how your choices might alter relationships within your family and with the communities you serve.

## 1. Looking Ahead

Before you develop or revise your governing bodies, first consider these questions:

Who is my philanthropy serving? To whom do I feel my philanthropy is most accountable?

Are there decisions about my philanthropy for which I trust others to have complete discretion and authority?

Are there decisions for which I want complete discretion and authority? Will that level of control last until a specific date or throughout my lifetime?

How will the answers above affect how my family and community see my legacy of generosity and social impact?

## 2. Governance and Decision-Making Roles Needed

Think about the next five years. What decision-making roles and governing bodies will you need to manage your social impact strategy or philanthropic vehicle successfully? You can duplicate the worksheet for each role or governing body.

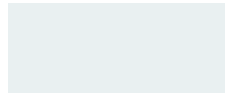
**Decision-making role or governing body**

**Primary responsibilities**

**Expectations**

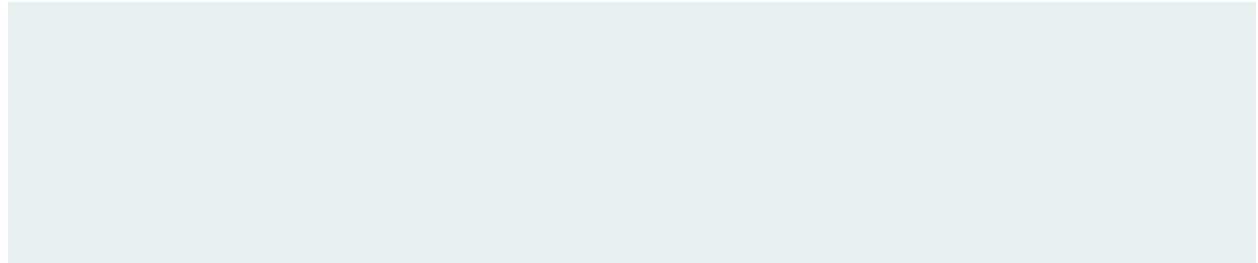
How much work is involved annually? What ground rules should guide their work?

**Ideal number of members**



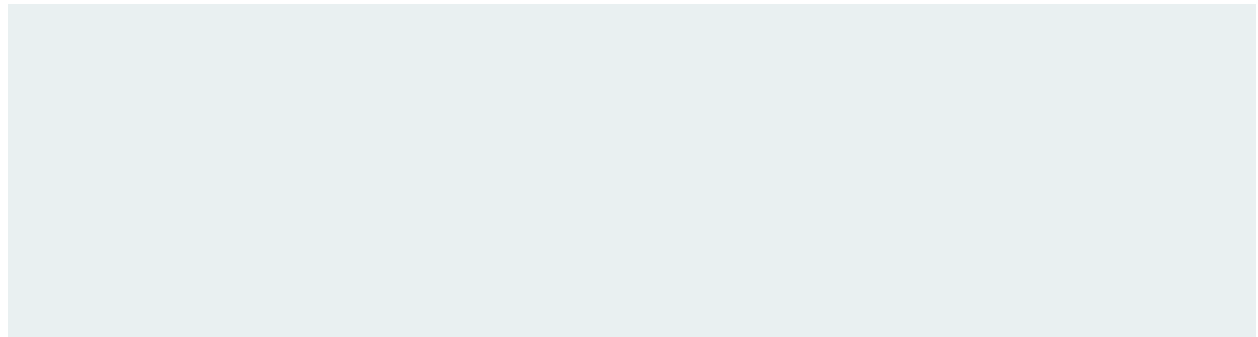
**Terms and maximum length of service**

How will you make room for new voices and perspectives?



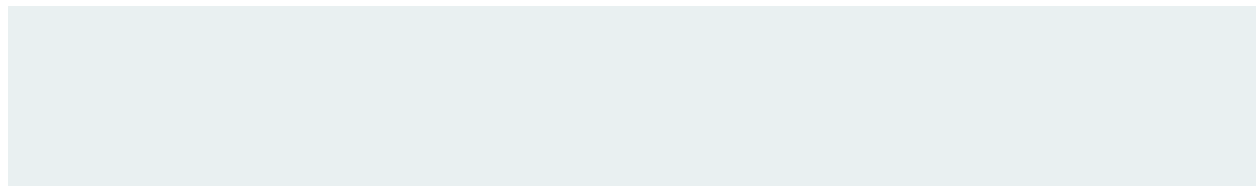
**Eligibility criteria**

What experiences, skills, knowledge, relationships, or personal qualities are ideal?



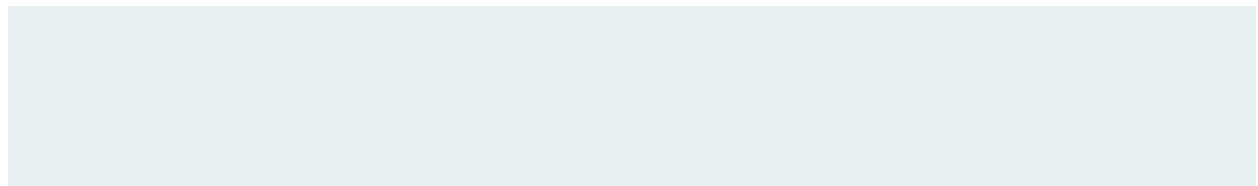
**Recruitment process**

How will you find the talent you need?



**Election process**

Who will make the decisions and how?



### Support

What materials or ongoing education will help them succeed?

### Performance

Who will assess the group's work based on what criteria?

## 3. People to Invite

List who you will invite to fulfill the roles and responsibilities you've described above:

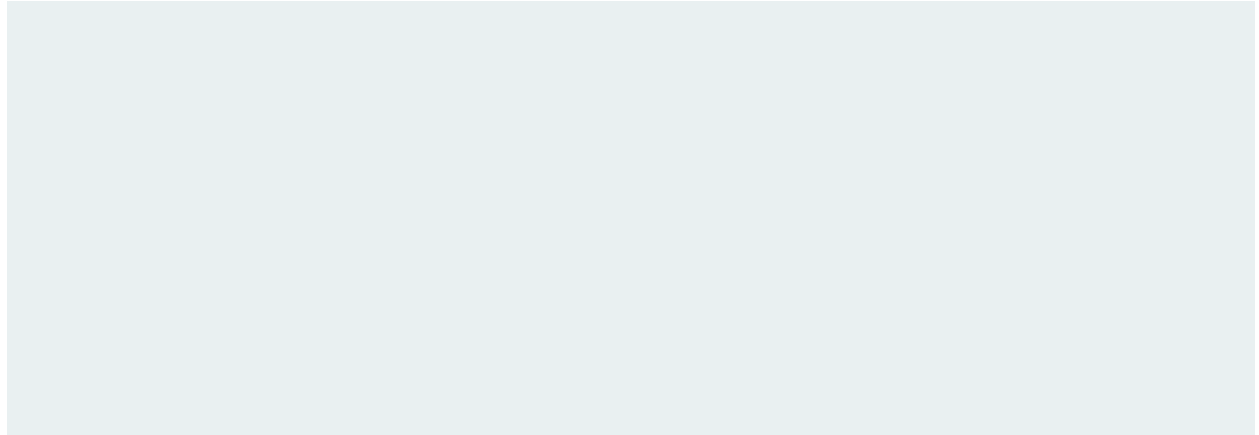
- **Person(s):** a specific name (including yourself) or type of person (e.g., children, cousins and spouses, advisors, community voices, experts, or those with lived experience).
- **Interest:** Indicate their level of interest in being involved based on what you know today: Very Interested (VI), Interested (I), Tentative (T), or No Interest (NI), or Unknown (U).
- **Notes:** What factors might limit their participation (e.g., time, not old enough yet, geography, lack of knowledge of funding areas, career or family responsibilities)? What concerns might they have before they say yes?

Person(s)	Envisioned Role(s)	Interest	Notes

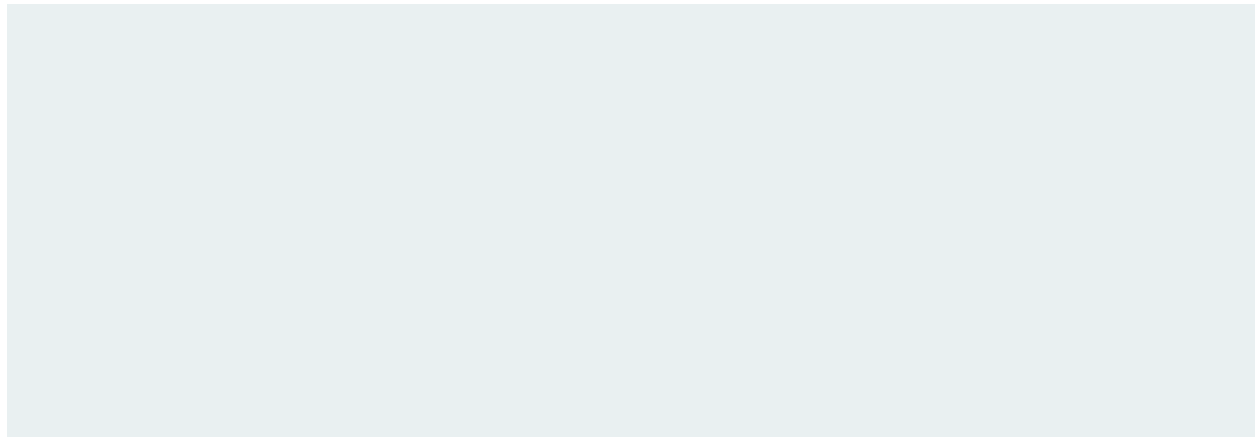


#### 4. Next Steps

Who do I want to talk with, or what more do I want to learn to clarify my choices about decision-making roles and the people involved?



Based on the answers above, are there legal documents that may need to be updated?



# Principles

Principles convey your *why*. They provide the values and moral compass that drive your philanthropy and social impact. They also guide how governing members work together and see their roles as stewards of philanthropic resources.

Governance principles often include statements about ethics, integrity, accountability, transparency, leadership, effectiveness, or stewardship. To support effective philanthropic governance, include principles in documents such as bylaws or trust instruments, board and committee descriptions, and a code of conduct for meetings. Clearly documented principles enable you as a leader to empower others to make decisions aligned with the family's beliefs and commitments.

When creating governance principles, you might start with cultural or faith traditions or turn to a code of conduct used in your profession. As you create your principles consider the [four principles of effective family philanthropy](#) below, which lead to meaningful and lasting outcomes:

- 1. Accountability:** Ensure accountability to each other (within the family and decision-making groups), applicable laws and regulations, staff members, partners such as grantees, and the populations and communities you serve.
- 2. Equity:** Commit to reducing inequities through policies, practices, strategies, and results.
- 3. Reflection and learning:** Prioritize continuous reflection and learning to inform and improve governing bodies, their strategies, and their work.
- 4. Relationships:** Strive to build trusting relationships that share power and transparency among internal and external stakeholders.

# Principles

**Principles** convey an organization's why. Use this worksheet to draft principles that will guide decision-making in your philanthropy or social impact vehicle. Consider combining ideas inspired by your personal or family experiences with frameworks from professional associations.

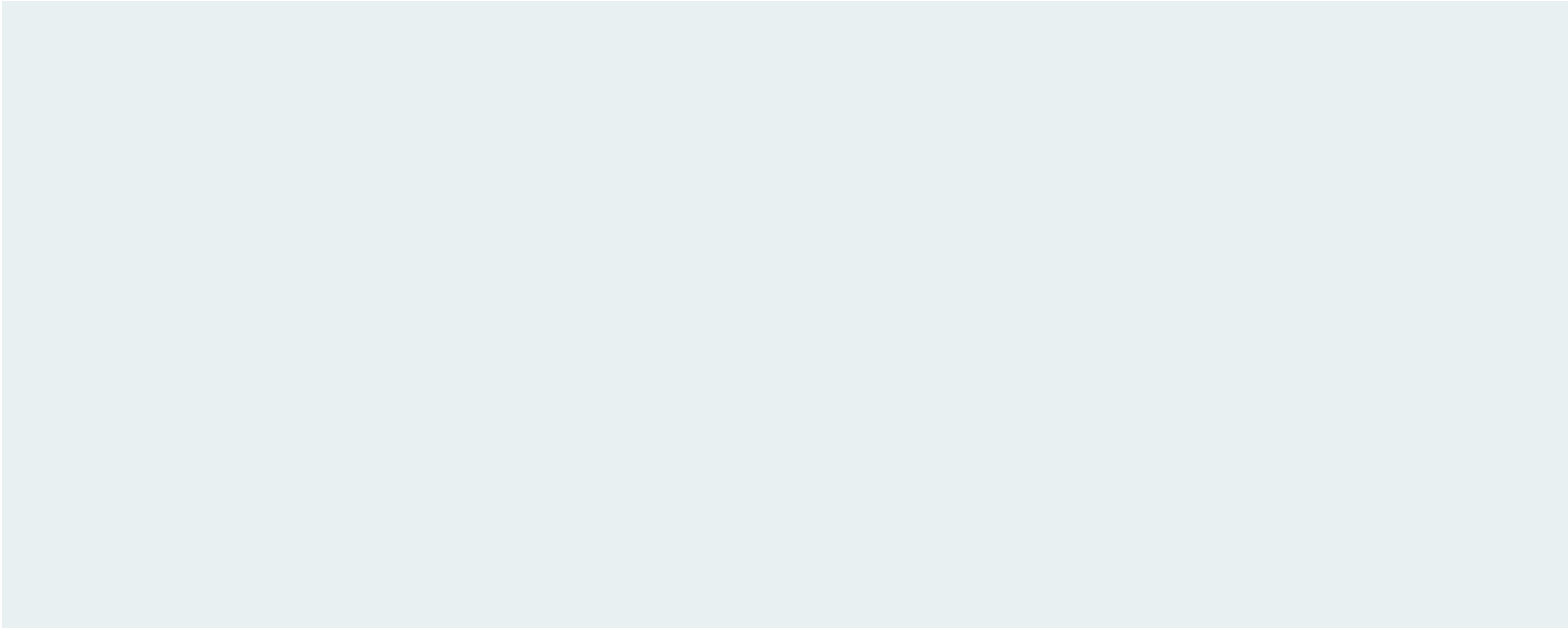
## 1. What three to five values should guide your family's collective decision-making in its philanthropy?

The *Philanthropic Purpose* primer can help you and your family choose and discuss shared values.

## 2. What would those values look like when put into action (i.e., as principles driving your work)?

Hint: Principles are typically short phrases or sentences with verbs, e.g., "leave the world in a better condition than we found it" or "always show respect for our nonprofit partners' expertise and time."

**3. Do my decisions in the *People and Roles Worksheet* in the previous chapter reflect our values and principles?** How can I ensure values alignment in the structure of the decision-making groups, the recruitment and onboarding processes, and the ongoing support the groups will need?



# Policies

***Policies*** are the rules, guidelines, and parameters applying your principles to everyday issues. They give direction to and provide oversight for your governing bodies, your philanthropic activities, and uses of your resources (financial, human, and more). You can find the most needed policies in the worksheet that follows. There are two common types:

- **Legal and regulatory policies** are created by the founding documents of a legal entity and by regulators, such as state and federal government agencies or financial institutions. For instance, if you have a nonprofit vehicle (e.g., a private foundation), the IRS requires a conflict-of-interest policy during incorporation and asks about the existence of other policies in annual tax filings.
- **Organizational policies** are created by the action of a governing body. Founding documents, such as bylaws or a statement of donor intent, often inform these policies.

Governance experts recommend regularly reviewing and updating your policies to ensure they remain relevant to your work and compliant with changing laws and best practices. Governing bodies often review policies every three to five years, breaking them into smaller sets to tackle each year.

## Why are policies important?

Written policies are critical for transitioning from informal family decision-making to the structured governance of family philanthropy vehicles. When they implement even the simplest of policies, they:

- **Reduce risks** by providing controls that ensure legal compliance.
- **Increase credibility and trust** within the family and the community.
- **Align governance and operations** with philanthropic purpose, donor intent, and social impact strategy.
- **Set a precedent** for a more purposeful and effective family and organizational culture.

# Essential Policies Checklist

Use this checklist to review gaps in your policy implementation. Start with the core policies essential for effective family philanthropy, no matter the philanthropic vehicle used.<sup>6</sup> Review the policies the IRS suggests if you use a legal entity such as a foundation to achieve social impact. Then, review the additional policies to determine which will strengthen your governance and strategies.

Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
<b>Formation documents</b>			
			<b>Legal papers</b> such as articles of incorporation, bylaws, declaration of trust, or fund agreement; annual federal and state tax filings.
			<b>Guidance from founders</b> such as a donor intent letter or video, legacy video, ethical will, or purposeful trust.
<b>Core Policies</b>			
			<b>Philanthropic purpose or family charter</b> , including elements such as vision, mission, values, principles, and donor intent.
			<b>Roles and responsibilities</b> for the board (or another governance body), built on information in your bylaws and articles of incorporation.

<sup>6</sup> If you have a donor-advised fund or fiscally sponsored project, ask the host organization for copies of its governing policies and for help in adapting them to your governance framework and social impact strategies.



Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
			<b>Conflict of interest:</b> The criteria for real or perceived conflicts and how the group will disclose and manage the conflicts. Some donors will add ideas about ethics or values. Decision-makers should annually sign disclosures of conflicts.
			<b>Confidentiality,</b> to clarify which information is not to be shared with the public and/or with advisors, consultants, and grantees. (Nonprofits and foundations must disclose their annual tax returns to the public.)
			<b>Investment</b> (if applicable), including philanthropic purpose, definitions of duties, objectives and asset allocation framework, risk and liquidity, and operations and decision-making guidelines.
			<b>Spending/distribution</b> (if not included in the investment policy).
			<b>Grantmaking (or scholarship, fellowship, etc.)</b> to clarify priorities for impact and roles in recommending, reviewing, and awarding.
			<b>Diversity, inclusion, and equity:</b> A statement or policy describing the organization's overall goals and values. Having this in place will require you to review and possibly revise other policies and practices (e.g., diversity of the board or a culture of inclusion in grants processes).

Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
<b>Policies the IRS recommends as essential</b>			
			<b>Whistleblower protection</b> to protect an employee or volunteer from retaliation when they choose to report misconduct. (Also required by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.)
			<b>Document retention and destruction</b> to protect from accidental or intentional destruction of paper and electronic files and communications. (Also required by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.)
			<b>Joint venture</b> to identify, disclose, and manage any relationships with for-profit businesses.
			<b>Gift acceptance</b> (if you're fundraising from other donors or grantmakers) to review, accept, and substantiate contributions.
<b>Policies to add over time</b> <i>Add these policies to create more clarity, especially before new generations, advisors, volunteers, or staff members join you in your work.</i>			
			<b>Committee charters</b> , which may be informed by your bylaws.
			<b>Criteria for service</b> for both board and committee members.
			<b>Meeting</b> frequency, format (e.g., virtual, in-person) and agenda formulation.

Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
			<b>Financial oversight policies</b> addressing compensation, budgeting, spending authority, travel, and reimbursable expenses.
			<b>Communications or media and social media policies</b> which ensure trusting relationships and the desired level of transparency.
			<b>Assessment and renewal</b> of the governing bodies, people involved, and organization.
			<b>Operational policies</b> that put your philanthropic purpose into action such as green or sustainable workplace, employee volunteerism, or employee wellness.
			<b>Creation and dissolution</b> of additional philanthropic vehicles.

## Next Steps

Who should oversee the review of existing policies?

Who should oversee research into and drafting of new policies?

Do current governance documents and policies reflect the values and principles chosen in the previous chapter's principles worksheet? Who will I work with to make any modifications?

# Practices

**Practices** are procedures to fulfill stated objectives or parameters in your policies. They are also another means of putting your organization's values and principles into action. Your governing body can use written policies and practices to:

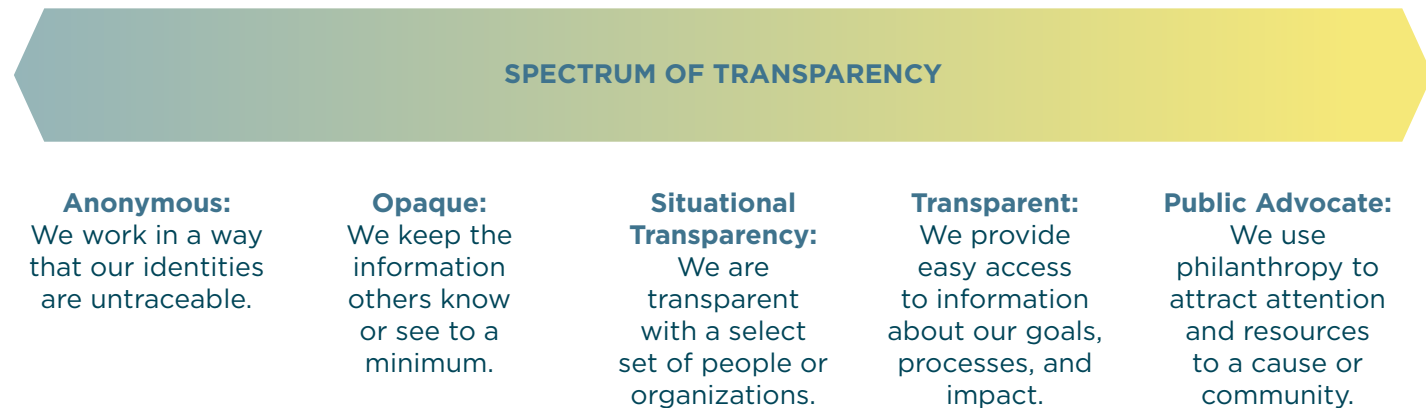
- **Create a more effective working environment** for volunteers and paid staff members and advisors.
- **Improve the wise use and development of resources** (people, money, facilities, and more).
- **Hold staff members, contractors, advisors, and each other accountable** for serving your philanthropic purpose and social impact strategy.
- **Ensure your philanthropic vehicle complies** with the standards you establish and standards regulators enact.

There are a several practices to consider to manage your philanthropy. At a minimum, you'll want to establish written practices for meeting and financial record-keeping, expectations for participation, and oversight of uses of money and other assets. Then consider additional procedures in three areas:

- 1. Governance practices** include scheduling and managing family and/or board meetings, ensuring transparent decision-making processes, clarifying stakeholder communication, and educating current and future generations. You'll find guidance for creating decision-making practices in the *Fundamentals of Family Philanthropy* primer and creating legacy and succession practices in the *Succession and Legacy* primer.
- 2. Operating practices** guide how you implement your social impact strategy. They include grant or scholarship application processes, impact investment due diligence processes, ensuring a decision-making process is fair and transparent, and regular assessments of your strategy and impact. You'll find advice for establishing practices for grantmaking and other social impact tools in the *Impact Strategies & Tools* primer and *Assessment & Learning* primer.
- 3. Administrative procedures** help you run your philanthropy efficiently, consistently, and responsibly. Examples include an employee handbook, facilities use and management rules, step-by-step rules for financial oversight, and record-keeping practices. You'll find more information in the *Operations & Management* primer. Small business assistance organizations offer sample documents, and the [National Council for Nonprofits](#) lists optional standards and guidelines for excellence.

# Why are practices that increase openness and trust important?

One of the essential questions to address in philanthropy is, “How transparent will I be about my giving?” It is important to create basic guidelines regarding transparency and revisit your assumptions every few years. Generous families and their social impact vehicles consider the range of transparency options in the graphic below.



Many donors and family philanthropies are shifting practices to encourage better communication and information sharing.

- **They see increased openness as a means for more effective work.** By ensuring family members and other decision makers are on the same page, a family can minimize conflict and confusion, and support improved self-assessment.
- **Younger generations of family members have higher expectations for transparency** within their families and from governing bodies of family businesses and foundations. They also want to engage with nonprofits more openly.
- **They want to rebuild community trust.** Americans continue to distrust<sup>8</sup> foundations, wealthy donors, and corporate philanthropy, and the philanthropic sector is increasingly exploring and addressing criticisms of its privilege, power, and opacity.

<sup>8</sup> [Trust in Civil Society](#), Independent Sector and Edelman Data & Intelligence, 2022



# Essential Practices Checklist

Use the following worksheet to develop a list of **governance practices** you wish to maintain. We've provided a few essential practices common to many social impact vehicles,<sup>9</sup> and you can add to the list. Worksheets to help you determine operating, grantmaking, and administrative procedures are in other primers in the Family Giving Lifecycle.

Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
			<b>Governing bodies:</b> Procedures and standards for recruiting, onboarding, training, and assessing the performance of members of governing bodies; ensuring the bodies invite and respect diverse perspectives.
			<b>Renewal:</b> Periodically reviewing and updating values, vision, mission, principles, and other statements of purpose; regularly ensuring governance frameworks and activities reflect those statements.
			<b>Code of conduct:</b> Group agreements or principles for preparation for meetings and conduct and decision-making in the meetings; ensuring differing voices (family and community) are invited and respected.
			<b>Code of ethics:</b> Guidelines for doing the right thing, being fair, and building trust.

<sup>9</sup> If you have a donor-advised fund or fiscally sponsored project, ask the host organization for copies of its practices and for help in adapting them to your governance framework and social impact strategies.

Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
			<b>Regulatory compliance:</b> Ensuring compliance of board and committee members with applicable laws and regulations (e.g., conflict of interest and self-dealing).
			<b>Fiscal oversight:</b> Developing and monitoring a budget, overseeing audit and tax filing processes.
			<b>Record keeping:</b> Creating, sharing, and storing agendas, minutes, and related materials for board, committee, task force, and other meetings.
			<b>Meeting logistics:</b> Scheduling and managing logistics of meetings, managing communications about the meetings.

## Next Steps

Who should oversee the review and updating of existing practices?

Who should oversee research into and drafting of new practices?

Do current practices reflect the values and principles chosen in the previous chapter's principles worksheet?  
Who will I work with to make any modifications?

# Transparency Practices<sup>10</sup>

Use this worksheet to outline your desired levels of openness with different audiences about each aspect of your philanthropy. There are no right or wrong answers. However, consider how embracing increased transparency could improve relationships, accountability, equity, and learning in your governance framework and social impact strategies.

- 1. To whom do we feel most accountable in our philanthropy?** (e.g., founding donors, grantees, customers of a family business, or children in poverty)

- 2. How could being more anonymous or opaque help our philanthropic purpose or goals?**

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from ideas in [Transparency in Family Philanthropy: Opening to the Possibilities](#), Elaine Gast Fawcett, 2018; [Foundation Transparency: Opacity – It's Complicated](#), Robert J. Reid, 2018; and [What is My Giving Style?](#), Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, 2012.

**3. How could being more transparent or public help our philanthropic purpose or goals?**

**4. How might increasing our transparency help us better understand ourselves and others?**

**5. You might choose different levels of anonymity or transparency depending on the type of information and the audience.** Outline your plans by completing each cell in the table below using the definitions in the graphic on page 42 (anonymous, opaque, situational, transparent, public advocate) or your own terms.

	Family members not on the board	Friends	Most trusted nonprofits	General public	Other:	Other:
Philanthropic purpose					_____	_____
Names of decision-makers						
Family history or story						
Grant guidelines						
Governance policies						
Impact of grants						

	Family members not on the board	Friends	Most trusted nonprofits	General public	Other: _____	Other: _____
Contact info to ask questions						
Other: _____ _____						
Other: _____ _____						

# Next Steps

As you develop and implement your governance framework, keep in mind the following guidance for long-term success:

- **Rightsize:** Start with a simple framework that documents your initial goals for the elements of effective governance: people, principles, policies, and practices. Then add to it as you include new people in decision-making and new resources and goals in your philanthropy.
- **Be inclusive:** Inclusive decision-making ensures people understand and buy into their roles in your philanthropy.
- **Purposefully reassess:** Make time to revisit your assumptions of and goals for decision-making and governance every few years. Some families establish a standard policy and practice review cycle (e.g., every five years).
- **Adapt:** Experiences such as a community crisis, death or marriage in the family, generational transitions, or a significant wealth event will alter how people work together. Effective governing bodies use those times of change as opportunities to revisit and strengthen their governance frameworks.

Remember that your governance framework will guide your choices in the other Family Giving Lifecycle primers. You'll see decisions about people, principles, policies, and practices in everything from social impact strategies to operations and from assessment to legacy and succession.



# Family Governance Playbook

NAME OF FAMILY OR SOCIAL IMPACT VEHICLE

UPDATED ON

NEXT REVIEW SCHEDULED FOR

FAMILY AND/OR BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS INVOLVED

ADVISOR(S) TO THE PROCESS

# Instructions

This **Family Governance Playbook** will help you and your family codify decisions related to your governance and plan your course of action.

The prompts will help you synthesize the information you individually completed using the primer's worksheets, allowing you to co-create a plan that will guide your shared social impact vehicle's governance. Family members should consider it a living draft to test as they practice philanthropy together. As such, some language will be imperfect, and some answers might be "to be determined."

Before you begin, you'll want to clarify who you will include in completing each section of the playbook. Some families have a member of founding or controlling generation complete a draft based on their vision for the family's philanthropy, to then discuss with the group. Other families develop a draft together or form a small group to do so.

Then choose how you'll make decisions. For instance, will you work toward consensus or take votes? If you need help with the choices, review the *Fundamentals of Family Philanthropy* primer. Lastly, ensure everyone involved can access materials that inform a shared governance framework, such as documents related to your philanthropic purpose (e.g., values, principles, mission, donor intent, legacy letter), the founding of your social impact vehicle (e.g., bylaws or fund agreement), and your social impact strategy.

## Guiding Principles for Collaborative Work<sup>11</sup>

Consider these tips from other families as you facilitate family conversations about the template:

- **Be inclusive.** Welcome children, their spouses, and others into dialogue early and often to ensure support later.
- **Be transparent with advisors and potential successors.** This is especially true for founding generations who must align their governance framework with legal documents such as fund agreements, estate plans, or foundation bylaws. Likewise, your successors and advisors should know in advance the expectations of the roles they will fill.
- **Take your time.** It will take multiple meetings to create a governance framework. A successful process gives everyone time to tell their stories, listen and learn from each other, and adjust answers based on what they are hearing. It also offers time to bring in new ideas—stories, articles, or conversations with other families or experts—to help family members answer the worksheets more comfortably.
- **Concentrate on areas of agreement.** It is natural for family members' interests in roles and policies to differ. Each family member will have their own goals for individuating from the family, using their expertise and their relationships. Try to steer conversations to a legacy of shared purpose, even if family members take different routes in acting on that purpose.

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from [\*Splendid Legacy 2: Creating and Re-Creating Your Family Foundation\*](#), National Center for Family Philanthropy, 2017.

## Guiding the conversations


To determine the appropriate **people and roles** for the family philanthropy, start with a broader discussion about everyone's aspirations. For instance, invite each person to share:

- What would effective stewardship of the family's philanthropy look like to them?
- What skills, knowledge, resources, or relationships would they want to contribute?
- What uses of their time or skills would frustrate them or cause them to decline participation?
- Do they want to focus their personal leadership energies in the family's philanthropy, or other areas like a family business, parenting, their own business, local charities, or a political office? Might that decision change later in their life?

As you discuss, challenge yourselves to question the usefulness of typical roles and organizational structures. For instance, does the family need a formal chairperson of a group, or could the chairperson role rotate with each meeting? Or could a group work as a loose, nimble network or task force instead of a formal committee?

As you reflect on **shared principles**, employ one of the following activities:


- Look for similar underlying values or ideas (e.g., self-reliance and empowerment, or growth and opportunity) and list both. Many families use groups of terms rather than trying to find a single word for an idea.
- Make time to listen to stories about why values or principles are important to individuals. Those stories often illuminate opportunities to use other phrases.
- Review significant philanthropic or business decisions family members have made and see if any principles show up more often in those decisions.



Families often assign initial **policy and practice** review and development to an executive committee or governance task force. As your family discusses each policy and practice, invite them to consider:

- How does it help the family live out its philanthropic purpose? What would purpose-filled governance actions look and feel like?
- How might it help the family be more accountable to the communities and populations their philanthropy serves? What community relationships and trust might it improve?
- How might it help the family be more accountable to each other? What family relationship challenges might it prevent?

# Shared Governance Framework



**This governance framework outlines how our family will collaboratively make decisions and steward the resources in our care.**

This governance framework is a living draft to test as our family works together. As such, some language will be imperfect, and some answers might be “to be determined.” We’ll revisit and refine the choices over time.

SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

1. People

We envision the following decision-making roles and governing bodies are necessary to oversee and advise our family’s philanthropy. We hope the following people will fill those roles in the near term and plan for others’ involvement later.

Decision-Making Role/Governing Body	
Primary responsibilities	
Expectations How much work is involved annually? What ground rules should guide their work?	
Ideal number of members	
Terms and maximum length of service How will you make room for new voices and perspectives?	

## SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

<b>Eligibility criteria</b> What experiences, skills, knowledge, relationships, or personal qualities are ideal?	
<b>Recruitment process</b> How will you find the talent you need?	
<b>Election process</b> Who will make the decisions and how?	
<b>Support</b> What materials or ongoing education will help them succeed?	
<b>Performance</b> Who will assess the group's work, and based on what criteria?	
<b>Initial group of people involved</b>	
<b>People we may want to involve later</b>	



SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Decision-Making Role/Governing Body	
Primary responsibilities	
Expectations How much work is involved annually? What ground rules should guide their work?	
Ideal number of members	
Terms and maximum length of service How will you make room for new voices and perspectives?	
Eligibility criteria What experiences, skills, knowledge, relationships, or personal qualities are ideal?	

SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

<b>Recruitment process</b> How will you find the talent you need?	
<b>Election process</b> Who will make the decisions and how?	
<b>Support</b> What materials or ongoing education will help them succeed?	
<b>Performance</b> Who will assess the group's work based on what criteria?	
<b>Initial group of people involved</b>	
<b>People we may want to involve later</b>	

SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Decision-Making Role/Governing Body	
Primary responsibilities	
Expectations How much work is involved annually? What ground rules should guide their work?	
Ideal number of members	
Terms and maximum length of service How will you make room for new voices and perspectives?	
Eligibility criteria What experiences, skills, knowledge, relationships, or personal qualities are ideal?	

SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

<b>Recruitment process</b> How will you find the talent you need?	
<b>Election process</b> Who will make the decisions and how?	
<b>Support</b> What materials or ongoing education will help them succeed?	
<b>Performance</b> Who will assess the group's work, and based on what criteria?	
<b>Initial group of people involved</b>	
<b>People we may want to involve later</b>	

SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Decision-Making  
Role/Governing Body

<b>Primary responsibilities</b>	
<b>Expectations</b> How much work is involved annually? What ground rules should guide their work?	
<b>Ideal number of members</b>	
<b>Terms and maximum length of service</b> How will you make room for new voices and perspectives?	
<b>Eligibility criteria</b> What experiences, skills, knowledge, relationships, or personal qualities are ideal?	

SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

<b>Recruitment process</b> How will you find the talent you need?	
<b>Election process</b> Who will make the decisions and how?	
<b>Support</b> What materials or ongoing education will help them succeed?	
<b>Performance</b> Who will assess the group's work, and based on what criteria?	
<b>Initial group of people involved</b>	
<b>People we may want to involve later</b>	

SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

<p><b>Notes</b></p> <p>Why did we make the choices in the charts above? How did our values, the structure of our philanthropic vehicle, or social impact strategy inform our reasons?</p>	
<p><b>Learning agenda</b></p> <p>What do we want to learn or do next about developing the governing bodies and preparing people to join them? Are there roles we want to explore for potential addition later?</p>	
<p><b>Action agenda</b></p> <p>Who will manage the invitation, preparation, and onboarding processes?</p>	

2. Governance Principles

These are the beliefs and rules of the road we believe should most influence our decision-making.

Our Shared Principles

Other principles that were important to individuals	Principle	Individuals' name(s)
<b>Notes</b> Why were the shared principles important? What should people not involved in the discussion know about the choices?		



SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Notes <i>continued</i>	
<b>Learning and action agenda</b> What might we want to learn next about applying our principles?	

## SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

### 3. Governance Policies

We want to use the following policies to guide our decision-making and use of resources. We've checked the policies we wish to continue as currently written, the policies to review for potential revision, and the new policies we wish to create. Rows without checks indicate policies we do not plan to use.

Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
<b>Formation documents</b>			
			<b>Legal papers</b> such as articles of incorporation, bylaws, declaration of trust, or fund agreement; annual federal and state tax filings.
			<b>Guidance from founders</b> such as a donor intent letter or video, legacy video, ethical will, or purposeful trust.
<b>Core Policies</b>			
			<b>Philanthropic purpose or family charter</b> , including elements such as vision, mission, values, principles, and donor intent.
			<b>Roles and responsibilities</b> for the board (or another governance body), built on information in your bylaws and articles of incorporation.
			<b>Conflict of interest:</b> The criteria for real or perceived conflicts and how the group will disclose and manage the conflicts. Some donors will add ideas about ethics or values. Decision-makers should annually sign disclosures of conflicts.

## SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
			<b>Confidentiality</b> , to clarify which information is not to be shared with the public and/or with advisors, consultants, and grantees. (Nonprofits and foundations must disclose their annual tax returns to the public.)
			<b>Investment</b> (if applicable), including philanthropic purpose, definitions of duties, objectives and asset allocation framework, risk and liquidity, and operations and decision-making guidelines.
			<b>Spending/distribution</b> (if not included in the investment policy).
			<b>Grantmaking (or scholarship, fellowship, etc.)</b> to clarify priorities for impact and roles in recommending, reviewing, and awarding.
			<b>Diversity, inclusion, and equity:</b> A statement or policy describing the organization's overall goals and values. Having this in place will require you to review and possibly revise other policies and practices (e.g., diversity of the board or a culture of inclusion in grants processes).

## SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
<b>Policies the IRS recommends as essential</b>			
			<b>Whistleblower protection</b> to protect an employee or volunteer from retaliation when they choose to report misconduct. (Also required by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.)
			<b>Document retention and destruction</b> to protect from accidental or intentional destruction of paper and electronic files and communications. (Also required by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.)
			<b>Joint venture</b> to identify, disclose, and manage any relationships with for-profit businesses.
			<b>Gift acceptance</b> (if you're fundraising from other donors or grantmakers) to review, accept, and substantiate contributions.
<b>Policies to add over time</b> <i>Add these policies to create more clarity, especially before new generations, advisors, volunteers, or staff members join you in your work.</i>			
			<b>Committee charters</b> , which may be informed by your bylaws.
			<b>Criteria for service</b> for both board and committee members.
			<b>Meeting</b> frequency, format (e.g., virtual, in-person) and agenda formulation.

## SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
			<b>Financial oversight policies</b> addressing compensation, budgeting, spending authority, travel, and reimbursable expenses.
			<b>Communications or media and social media policies</b> which ensure trusting relationships and the desired level of transparency.
			<b>Assessment and renewal</b> of the governing bodies, people involved, and organization.
			<b>Operational policies</b> that put your philanthropic purpose into action such as green or sustainable workplace, employee volunteerism, or employee wellness.
			<b>Creation and dissolution</b> of additional philanthropic vehicles.

SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

<p><b>Notes</b></p> <p>Why did we choose the new policies? How do we see them improving our work or preventing future problems?</p>	
<p><b>Learning and action agenda</b></p> <p>Who will start the review of existing policies? Who will research and draft new policies?</p>	

SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

4. Governance Practices

We need the following written practices and procedures to implement our policies. We will use the practices to strengthen our governance, ensure we comply with laws and regulations, and hold ourselves accountable to our philanthropic purpose and principles. Worksheets to help you determine operating, grantmaking, and administrative procedures are in other primers in the Family Giving Lifecycle.

Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
			<b>Governing bodies:</b> Procedures and standards for recruiting, onboarding, training, and assessing the performance of members of governing bodies; ensuring the bodies invite and respect diverse perspectives.
			<b>Renewal:</b> Periodically reviewing and updating values, vision, mission, principles, and other statements of purpose; regularly ensuring governance frameworks and activities reflect those statements.
			<b>Code of conduct:</b> Group agreements or principles for preparation for meetings and conduct and decision-making in the meetings; ensuring differing voices (family and community) are invited and respected.
			<b>Code of ethics:</b> Guidelines for doing the right thing, being fair, and building trust.
			<b>Regulatory compliance:</b> Ensuring compliance of board and committee members with applicable laws and regulations (e.g., conflict of interest and self-dealing).
			<b>Fiscal oversight:</b> Developing and monitoring a budget, overseeing audit and tax filing processes.

## SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Continue existing	Review or revise soon	Create new	
			<b>Record keeping:</b> Creating, sharing, and storing agendas, minutes, and related materials for board, committee, task force, and other meetings.
			<b>Meeting logistics:</b> Scheduling and managing logistics of meetings, managing communications about the meetings.

We have a range of choices for sharing information about our philanthropy, from being completely anonymous to being a public advocate. We have made the following decisions about anonymity and publicity in different aspects of our philanthropy, knowing these may evolve over time.

**Desired level of transparency or anonymity to these groups:** Anonymous, opaque, situational, transparent, public advocate

	Family members not on the board	Friends	Most trusted nonprofits	General public	Other:	Other:
Philanthropic Purpose						
Names of decision-makers						
Family history or story						
Grant guidelines						



## SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

	Family members not on the board	Friends	Most trusted nonprofits	General public	Other:	Other:
Governance policies						
Impact of grants						
Contact info to ask questions						
Other:						
Other:						

SHARED GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

<p><b>Notes</b></p> <p>Why did we choose the new practices and procedures? How do we see them improving our work or preventing future problems?</p>	
<p><b>Learning and action agenda</b></p> <p>Who will start the review of existing practices and procedures? Who will research and draft new ones?</p>	

**The National Center for Family Philanthropy (NCFP)  
is a network of philanthropic families committed to  
a world that is vibrant, equitable, and resilient.**

We share proven practices, work through common challenges, and learn together to strengthen our ability to effect meaningful change. Our range of programs and services support family philanthropy at its many points of inflection and help families embrace proven practices and advance momentum. Explore our resources, all rooted in a Family Giving Lifecycle, by visiting [www.ncfp.org](http://www.ncfp.org).

Tony Macklin, CAP® wrote the second editions of this series based on materials drafted by Nick Tedesco, resident and CEO of NCFP, and Elaine Gast Fawcett, principal of PhilanthroComm; materials and family philanthropy stories collected over NCFP's history; and resources from experts across the country.

The information in this primer should not be taken as qualified legal, tax, or wealth planning advice. Please consult qualified advisors with questions about the topics' legal, tax, or wealth planning implications.

1

Philanthropic  
Purpose

2

Impact Vehicles  
& Structures

3

GOVERNANCE

4

Impact Strategies  
& Tools

5

Assessment  
& Learning

6

Operations  
& Management

7

Succession  
& Legacy



NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
**FAMILY PHILANTHROPY**

© 2025 National Center for Family Philanthropy. All rights reserved.