

The Weaver Foundation is an active member of the Council on Foundations. As such we recognize these Stewardship Principles and use them as standards of measurement for our activities. The principles issued by the Council contain a number of options that foundations may consider that help determine the extent to which a principle is attained. These options may be found at the Council on Foundations web site, www.cof.org.



STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLES FOR FAMILY FOUNDATIONS

Adopted by the Committee on Family Foundations, September 2004

INTRODUCTION

Family philanthropy is “a unifying and ennobling odyssey for families with the means and the determination to make a difference in the world around them.”

— Paul N. Ylvisaker (1921-1992), professor and family foundation board member

Through their philanthropy, families aspire to achieve a lasting and positive impact on society. Families’ resources extend well beyond money to include leadership and reputation, time and talent, passion and commitment.

Families strive to be responsible stewards of their foundation resources, to uphold the public trust and to practice their philanthropy in ways that reflect fundamental values, including honesty, integrity, fairness and trust. As private entities operating for public purposes, family foundations must comply with federal, state and local law—but most go further.

These Stewardship Principles and Practice Options to Strengthen Performance describe how family foundations can reflect these fundamental values in their board governance, management and grantmaking.

HOW TO USE THE PRINCIPLES

The Stewardship Principles and the Practice Options to Strengthen Performance are goals toward which to strive. They correspond to an array of philosophical and practical issues faced by all family foundations. With this document as a framework, family foundation boards and staff can discuss issues *before* they arise, enabling them to proactively develop thoughtful policy and practice that improve over time.

Family foundations can take many forms. Thus, the Practice Options to Strengthen Performance are not checklists. The degree to which a foundation can adopt individual Practice Options will depend on the following:

- Where it is in its life cycle
- The requirements and restrictions in its governing documents
- Its asset size
- Whether it is staffed or unstaffed
- Cost effectiveness
- Whether the board is composed entirely of family members or includes others.

This is not a static undertaking. As the foundation evolves, so too should the choice of Practice Options to Strengthen Performance. The most significant, ongoing reward will accrue to those foundations that employ these principles with consideration, thoughtfulness and commitment, and with consistent evaluation and appropriate revision.

STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLES FOR FAMILY FOUNDATIONS

GOVERNANCE

- I. We have a governing board that establishes the mission, guides the operations, oversees the effectiveness and ensures the ethical conduct of the foundation.**
- II. Authority is vested in the governing board as a whole, and each member is equipped to advance the foundation's mission.**
- III. We consider multiple strategies to further our mission.**
- IV. Our governing board exercises active fiscal oversight.**

ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- V. We recognize and act upon our obligations to multiple stakeholders: the donor and the donor's family, grantees and grantseekers, the public and governmental bodies.**
- VI. We respect our nonprofit partners' missions and expertise and strive for relationships based on candor, understanding and fairness.**
- VII. We welcome public interest and communicate openly.**

FAMILY LEGACY

- VIII. Our governing board respects donor intent and later generations' interests while also considering the demands of a changing world.**
- IX. We plan for family leadership continuity.**