



## LEADERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS:

### You're A Candidate For The Board Of Directors Of A Nonprofit Organization, Now What?

You've been a member of your nonprofit organization for a couple years. You've attended meetings and participated in events. Now, you've been nominated for, or you've decided to seek election to, the board of directors. Getting involved with any organization involves responsibility as well as some degree of risk. A bit of due diligence 'sooner than later' is prudent practice. Here are ways to prepare:

1.

Review the strategic plan/business plan/program of work. Is the organization doing what is specified in the plan? If not, determine if there is a reason.

2.

Review organizational documents like bylaws, articles of incorporation, charter, organizational chart, IRS designation letter, secretary of state nonprofit designation certification, and board of directors meeting minutes. Look for up-to-date documents.

3.

Familiarize yourself with the budget. Compare the current year budget with prior years. If available, delve into the financial reports. Examine 990 filings. Look for timely filings. Identify trends. Look for financial 'hot spots' - particularly, the programs that are under-performing or are not meeting expectations. Ask yourself 'why'?

4.

Talk with the incoming board chair. Find out his/her thoughts and vision for the upcoming year. Are there special projects that might dovetail with your expertise and interests?

5.

Talk with the retiring board chair and retiring board members. Ask them to evaluate their year. Find out what they would change if they could 're-do' the year.

6.

Talk with the CEO. Identify needs of the organization that are currently not being met. Decide if you can be an advocate for those needs.

7.

Talk to other members. Find out their opinions of the organization and its performance. Identify areas that they would like addressed or changes they would like to see.

8.

Talk to stakeholders. Find out if the organization is meeting their expectations. If not, see if you can determine why.

9.

Talk to non-members. Find out why they don't belong to the organization. If they've got a gripe, maybe you can resolve it once you're on the board.

LEADERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS is part of The Leadership Center's Inspiring Organization & Leadership Excellence program.

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**Walters and Griffin** are the principals of The Leadership Center, a Savannah, GA-headquartered firm providing organization consulting and management services to nonprofit groups, their leaders, and stakeholders.