

# LIFE STAGES OF NONPROFIT BOARDS

## ORGANIZING BOARD

### Leading

Circle of leaders with shared vision

or

### Following

One leader gathers supportive group

#### Characteristics:

- ♦ small
- ♦ homogeneous
- ♦ informal
- ♦ committed
- ♦ involved in everything
- ♦ find it difficult to hire/trust first staff members and share power
- ♦ founders think they know best

### Original structure is strained by:

- ♦ Growth
- ♦ Overwhelming tasks
- ♦ Burnout
- ♦ Crisis (financial or organizational)
- ♦ Division on key issue

### Transition

- ♦ in face of new demands, board and staff must redefine roles,
  - open organization to new people
- ♦ some founding members leave
- ♦ roles are renegotiated
- ♦ development of systems, clearer job descriptions

## GOVERNING BOARD

#### Characteristics:

- ♦ board accepts responsibility for "traditional" board tasks
- ♦ board is enlarged, diversified
- ♦ committee structure allows some tasks to be delegated
- ♦ staff may gain new responsibilities and decision-making power

### Transition

- ♦ established organization becomes increasingly "professionalized"
- ♦ fundraising function of Board increasingly important

## INSTITUTIONAL BOARD

#### Characteristics:

- ♦ focus on recruiting a large board which includes wealthy and influential people
- ♦ serving on the Board is considered prestigious
- ♦ board oversight responsibilities delegated to committees, including a strong executive committee