

MOMENTUM





THE MOMENTUM 2026 SOURCEBOOK

(Updated 7.2.26)

THIS IS A DRAFT, LIVE DOCUMENT EVOLVING DAILY.

**IT MAY CONTAIN ERRORS OR CONFLICTING STATEMENTS
WHILE IT IS IN DEVELOPMENT.**

The Momentum 2026 Sourcebook functions as a living field record that draws together foundational reference information, the voices and perspectives of participants, and newly generated, actionable models emerging from this summer's work. In spirit, it reflects other field-rooted synthesis work, grounded specifically in cultural ecosystem engagement and collective authorship.

All information included within the Sourcebook will be freely available for piloting, adaptation, and use by anyone. We ask only that when ideas, language, or models are directly utilized, credit is given to Momentum and to the Momentum partners, sponsors, contributors, and participants whose insights shaped the work.

The Sourcebook contains eight sections, which will have information added regularly from March to October 2026. A final version of the Momentum 2026 Sourcebook will be published following this cycle, and future editions including case studies on pilot activities may be updated in future years.

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Section 1: Quotations and Media

"A board will only be strong in what you recruit the members to do. If you recruit mainly for fundraising, *you can't expect them to be able to do everything else.*"

DIANE RAGSDALE, EDUCATOR & THOUGHT LEADER



"The board models we use now are simply the least flawed options we've been able to figure out so far."

LAURA ZUCKER

**CULTURAL STRATEGIST & PAST DIRECTOR,
CENTER FOR BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT OF THE ARTS
CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY**



"We all have to acknowledge the problem and put our collective and creative brains together to redesign it. This means that we have to consider that nothing in [our] industry practices to this point should be considered sacred, beyond question, or unchangeable."

MICHAEL BOBBITT, CEO OF OPERA AMERICA

"Having served on boards for decades, I am eager to see what models we can create that can free governance to operate independently and alongside fundraising, rather than always wrapping them together."

CYNTHIA HUFFMAN, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AMERICAN THEATRE



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"It was one of the most thoughtful, restorative, and intellectually generous conferences I've attended. There is something rare about bringing together people who are willing to question not only what we do, but why we do it and how our institutions might evolve to better serve artists and communities."

DR. LEE BYNUM, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Additional materials and links to media will be added here after the MOMENTUM 2026 launch and in an ongoing way through the end of 2026.

Section 2:

Overview of Identified Models and Approaches



The following Models have been offered by participants so far for exploration. More will be added prior to launch in late June, with details expanding on them throughout the summer.

1. **Active Leadership Boards:** Board members devote focused, part-time leadership in specific areas such as finance, development, or partnerships, going far beyond traditional advisory roles.
2. **Partner Boards:** Instead of sitting “above” staff, this body operates as a self-contained partner, similar to common partner foundations that steward endowments or buildings or partner volunteer organizations like ushers or promotional groups, with mutual obligations and accountability flowing in both directions.
3. **Staff-Board Mutual Accountability Structures:** Board members provide oversight, evaluation, and hiring/firing for senior staff members, and the staff provides oversight, evaluation, and control over board member invitations, terms and renewals. (Alternately, an independent staff-run Board Recruitment Committee.)
4. **Holistic Organizations (Version A: Explicit Roles):** The distinction between staff, board, and artists is intentionally removed; everyone is part of one team, with shared agreements, expectations, and compensation, and certain members take on legal sign-off responsibilities as part of their job. In this version, people still hold clear, explicit roles or lanes within the shared team. (Also: Liberatory Governance; developed and practiced by Change Elemental.)
5. **Holistic Organizations (Version B: Everyone Does Everything):** A fully shared version of the holistic model in which roles are not divided into lanes at all. Rather than each person owning a defined area, everyone can and does take on any part of the work, rotating responsibilities as needed. The trade-off is maximum flexibility and shared ownership against the clarity that fixed roles provide.

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6. **Nonprofit with No Board / Worker-Controlled:** A structure in which the organization's bylaws assign the board seats to a defined set of senior staff positions, so the people running the organization also hold its governance and fiduciary authority. There is no separate external board; control rests with the workers who occupy those designated roles.
7. **Focused Boards (also: Minimally Viable Board, MVB):** A small group of three to five people handles only legal obligations such as budget signoff, executive oversight, and legal compliance. These members may be recruited for their expertise and compensated. Other common responsibilities are delegated to ambassador, fundraising, or advocacy groups without legal oversight roles.
8. **Network Boards (Central Oversight — Version A: Audit Group):** An independent oversight group of finance, legal, and community leaders, possibly supported by funders or civic groups, that can provide efficiency and consistency across multiple organizations. In this version the central body functions as a lighter-touch audit or oversight group rather than a full governing board. Each organization maintains its own advocacy, donor, or ambassador groups.
9. **Network Boards (Central Oversight — Version B: Full Oversight Board):** The same central-oversight structure, but the shared body operates as a full board with real governance authority over the network rather than a lighter-touch audit group. It carries the oversight and decision-making weight for the organizations it convenes.
10. **Network Boards (Mutual Support — Version A: One Shared Board):** A single collective board shared by a group of organizations, made up of rotating staff from those organizations, allowing oversight and mutual strategic aid by colleagues at related institutions.
11. **Network Boards (Mutual Support — Version B: Shared Seats Across Boards):** Rather than forming one shared board, member organizations exchange representation by rotating their own staff members into seats on one another's boards. Each organization keeps its board, but staff serve across the network, spreading knowledge and mutual accountability. (The First Americans Museum is one example.)
12. **Shared Seat (One Member, Multiple Boards):** A structure in which a specific standing seat — for example, a regional funder, a nonprofit-law specialist, or a context and accountability role — is designed to sit on several organizations' boards at once. The shared occupant carries perspective, consistency, or expertise across all of them by design.
13. **Complementary Internal Boards (Version A: Independent Power):** Model where multiple, mutually independent boards (such as a financial board and a mission board)



have responsibility and authority over different areas of the organization, and then coordinate where those areas connect.

14. **Complementary Internal Boards (Version B: Sociocracy):** A governance system in which authority is decentralized among semi-autonomous circles, each responsible for a specific domain of the organization’s work. Decisions are made by consent rather than consensus: a proposal passes as long as no one has a paramount objection, which means dissenters are accountable for offering counter-proposals rather than simply blocking. Circles are connected through representatives who carry information between them, with “double-linking” used where deeper integration is needed. Practiced and documented by SociocracyForAll.org.
15. **Community Boards (Version A: Democratically Elected):** Boards made up of elected representatives from the community being served by the organization’s mission or programming.
16. **Community Boards (Version B: Assigned Seats):** Boards made up of a set of defined seats, each held by a cycling representative from a particular constituency that self-selects who represents them. (Potentially including staff, served constituencies, local partners, neighbors/communities, donors, major funders, etc.)
17. **Community Boards (Version C: Government-Appointed):** A public-entity version in which board members are appointed by a governing authority — a governor, mayor, or similar — for fixed terms, rather than elected or self-perpetuating. It is less flexible than other community models but reflects the real structure of many arts entities attached to government.
18. **Community Boards (Version D: History-Informed Legacy Focus):** Accountability and representation for the organization is led by people who have past standing in the constituent community or in the organization, and have enough time with the organization or community to provide a long-form view when considering decisions and value of collective activities.
19. **Intergenerational Board:** A board built around explicit seats defined by age or history in the community — deliberately seating both elders and the youngest members to hold multiple generations of perspective. These seats are typically non-fiduciary, focused on cultural continuity, community-building, and connection across generations.
20. **Cultural Evolution Board:** A board whose defining priority is an intentionally diverse mix of individuals, with power balanced equally across the chosen diversity measures. Its primary work is building understanding, collaboration, and investment across a specific set of identities or communities — and then serving as an example, or beacon, for the rest of the organization’s work.



21. **Initiative or Project Boards:** A board where membership intentionally turns over regularly around short-term initiatives. When a particular initiative or effort or cycle completes, a new cycle is defined and a new group of leaders is brought on to guide and support for maximum effectiveness in the next cycle. This can also be used to pass resources and legitimacy forward when a particular reason for the organization's existence has been achieved.
22. **Fluid / Collaborating Boards:** A structure in which the boards of multiple organizations come together — through bylaws changes — to unify their work for a defined period or until circumstances change, then separate again. It allows organizations to formally join governance for a shared purpose without permanently merging.
23. **Licensed or Certified Boards (Version A: Certified / Trained Board):** A system where board members in a community receive consistent training and are certified against a standard, creating trust in governance and potentially reducing compliance burdens from partner funders. This version describes a board that has itself been trained or certified.
24. **Licensed or Certified Boards (Version B: Status & Recognition):** A recognition-based version in which boards earn visible, tiered status for demonstrated accomplishments rather than completing up-front training. Boards self-identify into a level through an outside reward system that marks what they have achieved.
25. **Nonprofit Shareholder Boards:** A board that brings funders and donors directly into governance as stewards of the resources they provide, and makes the relationship between contribution and control explicit: authority is directly proportional, or tiered-proportional, to the money contributed, functioning like a nonprofit shareholder structure.
26. **No Conflict of Interest Board:** A board deliberately composed of people with no direct stake in the organization — no donors, and no one who could be engaged or employed by it. By excluding anyone with skin in the game, the model aims for fully disinterested oversight, often pairing with a separate donor circle or complementary body for those who are excluded.
27. **Responsibility-Specific Board Seats:** Instead of appointing general board members who are then elected to primarily hierarchical officer positions (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary), this model identifies specific responsibilities — essentially job descriptions — for each board seat, and recruits for interest, capacity, and capability to execute on those responsibilities for a defined term.
28. **Departmental Service Board Members:** Each staff member or staff department — depending on the size of the organization — recruits and brings on its own board member. The staff area selects someone who can advise and support its particular work,



and the two collaborate closely through the year. These board members still convene on their own, independent of staff, to carry out the usual fiduciary and oversight business of a board; but each also reports back to the staff area that recruited them, and that staff area holds the authority to extend or end its board member's term.

29. **Rotating Pipeline Board:** An intentionally rotating group of people who each serve roughly a year across three different boards, moving between them to build firsthand understanding of different situations, structures, and options. The rotation itself is the point — exposure across contexts rather than long tenure in one.
30. ...to be added

More models and approaches will be added throughout Summer 2026.



Section 3: Joy Points and Pain Points

Across the MOMENTUM convenings, participants respond to two open prompts — one about joy, one about pain. Their individual responses are gathered, unattributed, into the body of work. What follows is a synthesis of the recurring themes across all responses, along with the singular ideas worth keeping in view.

Joy Points

What would you love to see happen in your artistry, community, or organization that would make you really happy that alternative board, leadership, ownership, accountability or support structures could contribute to? You don't have to know HOW that would work, or WHAT that adjusted model might be — just that there is an outcome you can imagine that would make you happy, joyful, or satisfied.

Recurring themes across the responses:

Role clarity and shared goals — Board, staff, and leadership all clear on their responsibilities and working toward common goals, with a shared understanding of the organization's business model and the board's actual role.

Boards that understand and engage with the work — Members who grasp the art and the field deeply enough to be genuine thought partners, who show up, and who bring resources and audiences rather than creating work for staff.

Trust, respect, and collaboration across staff, board, and artists — Less hierarchy and fewer silos, genuine mutual energy, and transparency about how each person's contribution feeds the whole.

Boards that reflect mission and community — Membership balancing theater and non-theater people regardless of wealth, valuing expertise as a contribution, and giving artists a consistent, powerful voice.

Mentorship and the next generation — Leadership mentorship and apprenticeship, with accountability and learning flowing in both directions between members and staff.

Sustainable resources and infrastructure — Strong cash reserves, capital investment in facilities, addressed deferred maintenance, and access to funds beyond traditional foundations and fundraising.

Artist wellbeing and fair compensation — Salaries treated as a priority from the board down, and health and wellness understood as essential rather than as overhead.

Active inclusion and accessibility — Proactive (not illusory) inclusion and a full experience for everyone, with programming and audiences that reflect the communities served.

Connection across the ecology — Organizations, individuals, and communities lifting each other up; collaborative "lighthouse" relationships; and advocacy alongside institutional partners.

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Artistic ambition — Resources genuinely pushing the art forward, new-work infrastructure (especially for local playwrights), and reaching wider audiences.

Boards that drive evolution, not preservation — Boards, and whole organizations, built to foster cultural and organizational evolution rather than defend the status quo, changing with the field instead of resisting it.

Also raised, by individual voices:

Partnerships with international companies (the only international-scope aspiration).

A geographic balance of theatres across high- and low-income neighborhoods, each acting as a collaborative “lighthouse.”

Treating expertise as a currency for board membership, so a seat doesn’t depend on personal wealth.

Connecting to partners’ donor and sponsor networks without competing with those partners’ own funding needs.

Artist and gig-worker healthcare (e.g., through CAATA).

An abundance rather than scarcity mindset, with genuinely shared power and models designed not to reproduce the oppressive systems participants are working to leave behind.

Room to let life happen, releasing the reliance on volunteers for essential work so people can make space for their lives, not only the organization’s needs.

Pain Points

What about how organizations are currently led, owned, held accountable, or how they are supported frustrates you?

Recurring themes across the responses:

Board–staff disconnect — Too little mutual understanding, an us-vs-them divide, and a lack of genuine human connection that makes it hard to operate as one organization.

Unclear roles and weak accountability — Overlapping job lines, no real review or assessment of how things are going, blame-shifting, and no clear succession.

Boards that either overreach or disengage — Meddling in artistic programming without the knowledge to do so, or being distant, inconsistent from board to board, and not even showing up to the work.

Boards lacking the skills they need — Weak at finance, budgeting, planning, fundraising, and conflict management, sometimes with no working business model or plan to move forward.

A commercial mindset crowding out mission — Success measured by commerce over impact, money driving decisions, and a field-wide lack of financial accountability; “nonprofit” treated as a tax status rather than a sustainable model.

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Overwork and under-capacity — Too few staff for the work and the events, everyone stretched thin, and ideas generated without the support to carry them out.

Gatekeeping and access barriers — Valuing tenure and time-served over skill and potential (keeping new and young practitioners out), and policies that reduce accessibility and push patrons away.

Weak connection between organizations — Few or no channels for organizations to communicate, share, and learn from one another.

The shared-leadership reality gap — Little true understanding of the time, support, and structures that collaborative leadership actually requires — the idea versus the reality.

No system for passing on knowledge — Onboarding and institutional memory left to chance, so every interaction feels like starting the education over.

The training and higher-education gap — Leaders arriving in their roles untrained for the actual work: degree and conservatory programs that never taught reading a budget, talking about one's own work, or earning a living, and leadership hiring so dominated by fundraising need that there is little room to teach the rest or to experiment.

Technology and AI as an untapped tool — Technology, and increasingly AI, left unleveraged in ways that could connect and support the work, treated as a threat to jobs or a source of theft rather than a tool to use, alongside missed chances to share resources and expenses instead of competing.

Trust as the missing foundation — A pervasive lack of trust across boards, staff, and the wider field, with the recognition that every one of these models ultimately rests on trust, something the conventional model already struggles to earn.

Also raised, by individual voices:

The embodied colonial / corporate / patriarchal / racist power systems and dynamics — and the absence of practices or policies to surface and address them, including susceptibility to bad actors (often board members) pursuing agendas at odds with the mission.

Leading without a board inside an academic institution whose increasingly corporate systems run counter to the work, including contractual values around pay and tenure.

Ownership versus intellectual property (the only mention of IP).

Negotiation between cultures.

Passion mistaken for sacrifice, the assumption that scarcity proves resilience and that passion justifies self-sacrifice (“some of this is inhumane”), when pay often cannot feed a family.

Mission overreach, organizations taking on problems outside their skill set (“we’re not social workers”; a musical won’t solve a housing crisis) and chasing the unknowable.



Section 4: Modeling Details

Think of this section as both a menu and a user manual.

The menu: Each of the board models identified in Section 2 is laid out here in full, examined through the same lenses, so you can browse, compare, and notice what might be worth trying in your specific context. Nothing here is a prescription or a silver bullet - these are options.

The user manual: Each lens is designed to give you practical traction on a model. This outlines not just a description of what each model is, but what it actually requires, who it tends to suit, what it might free up, and what it asks of the people involved. This section will grow through the MOMENTUM 2026 convenings over the summer, filled in by practitioners working in real organizations who have tried these approaches or are thinking seriously about them.

An introduction to the models will be added here. It will frame a set of principles, identified across this work, that can apply broadly across these approaches, and it will describe how specific implementation tools will be provided to support putting the models into practice. Many individuals are already working with this resource to create hybrid models, drawing on elements of several of these approaches together.

Identified principles to consider:

1. Anyone who is compensated for their participation should have specific and referenceable accountability for the value they create for the organization.



1. Active Leadership Boards

Board members devote focused, part-time leadership in specific areas such as finance, development, or partnerships, going far beyond traditional advisory roles.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Often described as a “mentorship model,” with members actively leading in specific areas rather than only advising
- Sometimes read as a “working board” — members filling staff-like roles where there is little or no paid staff
- Frequently the most common real-world model, especially where volunteers run the work in place of staff
- Tends to break down when roles are left undefined and members drift in and out
- Can also work as distributed oversight: regional or area leads who each hold a part and report to one another

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Fits organizations that are very lean financially
- Suits missions where shared, hands-on work is what builds capacity

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Raises recurring questions: is the work done by volunteers or by executive staff, and how much time does it ask of members?
- Benefits from checks-and-balances even around a designated leader: a shared manual, system, or calendar so critical deadlines are not single-point dependencies
- Needs a real tracking / project-management system and shared calendar (one tool noted: monday.com, free for nonprofits up to ~10 seats)
- Rewards deep institutional memory, and a way to capture it so knowledge does not leave with a departing member
- In-person time tends to raise accountability and buy-in; remote can sustain it afterward, and works best one-to-one rather than in large group meetings

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Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

- Whether members are paid is often unsettled — the model spans “no paid staff,” “paid staff,” and mixes of both
- Frequently a volunteer-in-place-of-staff arrangement, adopted in response to limited funds or staffing
- One idea to keep it engagement-driven rather than pay-to-play: a cap on any donation attached to a seat

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Often seen as a fit for newer, mostly volunteer-run organizations
- Some feel it is less suited to a large, established company
- Others suggest it is not really about age at all, but about any organization that needs help getting the work done

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

- Best suited to smaller organizations
- The close, day-to-day involvement it depends on gets harder to sustain as an organization grows; often felt to be a poor fit for a large company

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Generates varied forms of capital: relational, human, social, political, in-kind, not only money
- Lets an organization do intentional, targeted outreach for the specific kind of capital it needs

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

- Brings in members who already have the skills and training the work needs

Joy Points

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What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- The satisfaction of shared work, and of goals actually being met together

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Relies on volunteers to carry sustained, focused work, and that reliability can be uneven
- Accountability lines can blur (“who’s holding whom accountable?”)
- Depends heavily on project-management capacity
- Risks substituting board labor for paid staff; deep board involvement in daily operations can also insulate the organization and add to staff overwork
- A dominant “know-it-all” member can bully staff and other members
- Single-point dependence: when one leader holds a role, their absence or a missed handoff can cause real gaps

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

- Where one or two staff work alongside members acting as de facto department leads, staff often hold deeper organizational knowledge than the members now holding oversight — a common source of friction
- Watch for the model quietly absorbing roles that paid staff should hold

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Tends to run heavy on active management: members doing hands-on work need tracking, check-ins, and project management to stay coordinated
- Even a designated leader needs shared checks-and-balances (a manual, system, or calendar), so it is not set-and-forget
- Because members carry real work, though, it can add capacity even as it adds coordination

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

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- A major donor who is also an active leader can be awkward to hold accountable; nagging risks pushing them away
- Can double as a cultivation path, drawing in newer and younger members (including future philanthropists) rather than only established funders

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Centers on learning to delegate — “kindly letting go of tasks”
- Can convert an existing volunteer base into leaders, for example through an info session led by an engagement-focused seat
- Terms without a strict consecutive-term cap let an organization keep a strong active leader and move on from a weak one
- A mentee attached to a seat creates both a succession plan and an entry path for people new to boards
- For distributed organizations, local recruiting is easy, but strong candidates in other regions or time zones can be hard to include

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

- May connect to a specific community or context (for example, rural), though not necessarily tied to a place

2. Partner Boards

Instead of sitting “above” staff, this body operates as a self-contained partner, similar to common partner foundations that steward endowments or buildings or partner volunteer organizations like ushers or promotional groups, with mutual obligations and accountability flowing in both directions.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Often a single function (ushers, an endowment, a building) is pulled out as a separate, independent entity that staff and board cannot direct, connected through defined interaction points
- Some versions are logistical self-running (the partner body runs its own meetings and records) rather than a change in authority
- As written, it tends to reduce board authority to core matters rather than to increase accountability
- In artistic ensembles, some board-held authorities may shift to artistic leadership
- The term “self-contained” drew questions — what it means, and how such a body stays connected to the mission

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Possibly a fit for volunteer bodies

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?



To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

- Raises questions about how the board connects to the mission and where the interconnected points are
- Interconnection is often handled through a set number of cross-pollinating seats shared across the two boards (as with a company and a separate building entity)

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- May reduce or flatten hierarchy, moving some authority off the board

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- If a board operating as a partner starts making programming decisions, it can drift into work that belongs to staff
- Ambiguity of authority — “who’s in charge?”
- Mission creep
- Some organizations do not see themselves in this model at all

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Can be lighter day-to-day when the partner body is logistically self-running (it runs its own meetings and records)
- But coordinating the defined interaction points between the two bodies is ongoing work

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- Requires a clear, explicit delineation of responsibilities and communication expectations before adoption
- Two questions need settled answers up front: where executive decision-making authority lives, and how fiscal responsibility is shared when the board acts as a partner rather than above staff
- Can call for heavy legal resources

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

3. Staff-Board Mutual Accountability Structures

Board members provide oversight, evaluation, and hiring/firing for senior staff members, and the staff provides oversight, evaluation, and control over board member invitations, terms and renewals. (Alternately, an independent staff-run Board Recruitment Committee.)

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Often personality-driven, and can imply the absence of an executive director
- Sometimes adopted as a band-aid after a crisis
- For many, the strongest piece is an independent, opt-in, staff-involved board-recruitment committee, especially in a membership org or coalition where staff are closer to the community
- Some prefer to read it as building mutual trust structures rather than mutual policing

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Often described as cause-based: works best when an organization has a clear mission commitment (for example, anti-racism), so evaluation centers that goal at every level
- Some see a fit for a larger organization in transition; others describe it as very structured and oversight-oriented

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Cause-based; suits people oriented around a shared mission commitment

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Well-written bylaws are succinct (the legal essentials, with the rest left open to stay nimble), and a bylaw rewrite should run in tandem with the change
- Best treated as a living document

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

- Paid-versus-volunteer matters sharply: a paid side can change the other's finances (hire, fire, raise), while a volunteer board faces no equivalent stake
- Staff often carry real skin in the game; board members' stake is different — reputation, cultural cachet, or legacy



Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Views conflict: some see it fitting brand-new, all-hands-on-deck organizations; others see it fitting established, larger ones
- Widely felt to be a poor fit for a startup, and far easier built from scratch than imposed on an existing dynamic

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

- Size, age, and (non-linear) lifecycle stage matter a great deal
- In volunteer-run or tiny-staffed organizations, the added accountability layer can burden already-overworked staff

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

- May rely on a fair amount of third-party hires (marketing and the like)

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Good for relationship-building
- An independent, staff-involved recruitment committee can lower barriers to board service, especially in a membership org or coalition

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- When staff shape who sits on the board, the board's independence, and its ability to provide genuine oversight, can be undercut

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- If staff evaluate the very people who can fire them, the mutual accountability can be more pretense than real
- Can collapse into a self-serving loop (“I won’t call you out, you won’t fire me”) that could shelter fraud
- “Turning the titanic” — slow and hard to shift, and often adopted reactively after a crisis rather than as a durable long-term model
- Probably needs emotional distance between board and staff, and raises real questions about harassment or assault risk between the two
- Letting the board choose the entire senior staff, not just the ED, is seen by some as problematic

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

- Adds an accountability layer that can weigh on already-overworked staff, especially in small or volunteer-run organizations
- Assumes everyone shows up as their best self, with shared orientation on what is acceptable

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Generally adds work: the mutual-oversight layer is documentation-heavy and can weigh on already-overworked staff
- Standing it up is especially demanding, since a bylaw rewrite has to run alongside

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- Clarify how the board approves new members
- Needs bylaws that are clear on board oversight, renewal, and terms

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

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- Far easier built from scratch than imposed on an existing dynamic
- A bylaw rewrite should run alongside the change
- Some ask “what problem are we solving?” — the model can imply a problem has already happened

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

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4. Holistic Organizations (Version A: Explicit Roles)

The distinction between staff, board, and artists is intentionally removed; everyone is part of one team, with shared agreements, expectations, and compensation, and certain members take on legal sign-off responsibilities as part of their job. In this version, people still hold clear, explicit roles or lanes within the shared team. (Also: Liberatory Governance; developed and practiced by Change Elemental.)

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Fits ensembles and new organizations; the distinction between staff, board, and artists is intentionally removed so everyone is part of one team
- In this version people still hold clear, explicit lanes or job descriptions; the shift is often more cultural (how decisions get made together) than a full restructure
- Alternate framings heard: “everyone is the board,” “the board are the visitors,” “no hierarchy” — the company holds the power rather than a separate board
- “Liberatory” is read as liberation from hierarchy; developed and practiced by consulting groups such as Change Elemental (who are not the only practitioners)

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- A collective approach, fitting organizations oriented around shared, collective work

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Depends on trust, commitment, and an inclination to stay long-term and to collaborate
- Rests on not concentrating power in one point, a shared artistic vision, and a commitment to value each person
- Trust and shared values are the real prerequisite; a newer and a long-tenured member can feel equally, or un-, invested
- Risk that values or priorities drift over time

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Depends on real skill in giving and receiving feedback across the team; without it, shared sign-off can collapse into a rubber stamp rather than genuine accountability
- A shared mission and vision
- Raises an expertise question: build capacity within, or bring in an outside consultant who sits with the ensemble



- Open question: if roles are flat and someone goes on leave, how are roles, and shared agreements or compensation, redistributed?

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Often seen as a fit for new organizations, paired with an intentional culture approach
- But not only for newcomers: long-established ensembles (twenty to fifty years old) adopt it intentionally
- Could also serve an organization on the downslope of its life-cycle, as a reinvention or reset
- A generational note: many younger companies skip the nonprofit/board route entirely (co-ops, LLCs, fiscal sponsorship) to avoid a board

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

- Generally small; fewer people means less siloing
- Some feel it can scale “small to bigger,” depending on the organization

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

- Expertise questions recur: build within, or hire an outside consultant who sits with the ensemble
- Some functions (like marketing) “only work as a collective,” even if one person handles technical execution

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Shifts where power sits, from “the board” to “the company”
- Strong work product and morale
- Reframes board-type work (say, a few hours a week making introductions) as a compensable role, with different roles possibly carrying equal pay because they are simply different jobs



Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

- Eliminates the constant work of recruiting board members
- Removes some of the usual power dynamics
- Keeps everyone close to the mission

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- A sense of ownership, feeling valued, strong morale, and great productions
- “Equal skin in the game” is felt as a real plus

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Without a clear hierarchy, key decisions can stall
- Unclear ultimate accountability — “who does the buck stop with?”
- Burnout, and loss of outside perspective
- Some people simply do not want that much responsibility
- “Equal skin in the game” is also a risk, and the trust it needs tends to require a tightly-knit community
- The structure is brittle and usually small; a schism, a departure, or burnout can break it
- A true collective needs everyone to be strong; if some specialize, you re-silo the very thing the model avoids

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Removes some recurring work (no constant board recruitment), but shifts the load onto the collective, where burnout is a real risk
- Redistributing roles when someone goes on leave is an open management question

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

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- Typically rests on a partnership agreement
- Raises “who gets sued?” — the founder or company is often personally in the line of fire (for example, IP or copyright exposure)
- Bylaws can do a lot: strip the board of power, require ED consent to amend, and place fiduciary responsibility on the company or rotating leadership rather than a board alone

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

- Funders tend to be positive once they see the work is done, but less so before then
- May require carefully crafted documents to convey the vision and explain why the risk is manageable

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Often described as a “clean break”
- For some, it is genuinely unclear how to get there from a conventional structure

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

- The collective is a long-standing tradition
- Tends to need deep roots to work

5. Holistic Organizations (Version B: Everyone Does Everything)

A fully shared version of the holistic model in which roles are not divided into lanes at all. Rather than each person owning a defined area, everyone can and does take on any part of the work, rotating responsibilities as needed. The trade-off is maximum flexibility and shared ownership against the clarity that fixed roles provide.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- This version removes fixed lanes entirely: rather than each person owning a defined area, everyone can and does take on any part of the work, rotating responsibilities as the moment requires
- The more structural of the two readings, a genuine restructure of who does what, not only a change in decision culture
- Rotating artistic leadership (every two to three years) can live inside it
- Alternate framings heard: “everyone is the board,” “no hierarchy,” effectively “no board” — the company holds the power

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- A collective approach, fitting organizations oriented around shared, collective work

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Depends on trust, commitment, and an inclination to stay long-term and to collaborate
- Rests on not concentrating power in one point, a shared artistic vision, and a commitment to value each person
- Trust and shared values are the real prerequisite; a newer and a long-tenured member can feel equally, or un-, invested
- Risk that values or priorities drift over time

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Depends on real skill in giving and receiving feedback across the team; without it, shared sign-off can collapse into a rubber stamp rather than genuine accountability
- A shared mission and vision
- Raises an expertise question: build capacity within, or bring in an outside consultant who sits with the ensemble



- Open question: if roles are flat and someone goes on leave, how are roles, and shared agreements or compensation, redistributed?

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Often seen as a fit for new organizations, paired with an intentional culture approach
- But not only for newcomers: long-established ensembles (twenty to fifty years old) adopt it intentionally
- Could also serve an organization on the downslope of its life-cycle, as a reinvention or reset
- A generational note: many younger companies skip the nonprofit/board route entirely (co-ops, LLCs, fiscal sponsorship) to avoid a board

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

- Generally small; fewer people means less siloing
- Some feel it can scale “small to bigger,” depending on the organization

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

- Expertise questions recur: build within, or hire an outside consultant who sits with the ensemble
- Some functions (like marketing) “only work as a collective,” even if one person handles technical execution

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Shifts where power sits, from “the board” to “the company”
- Strong work product and morale
- Reframes board-type work (say, a few hours a week making introductions) as a compensable role, with different roles possibly carrying equal pay because they are simply different jobs



Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

- Eliminates the constant work of recruiting board members
- Removes some of the usual power dynamics
- Keeps everyone close to the mission

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- A sense of ownership, feeling valued, strong morale, and great productions
- “Equal skin in the game” is felt as a real plus

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Without a clear hierarchy, key decisions can stall
- Unclear ultimate accountability — “who does the buck stop with?”
- Burnout, and loss of outside perspective
- Some people simply do not want that much responsibility
- “Equal skin in the game” is also a risk, and the trust it needs tends to require a tightly-knit community
- The structure is brittle and usually small; a schism, a departure, or burnout can break it
- A true collective needs everyone to be strong; if some specialize, you re-silo the very thing the model avoids

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Same trade-off as Version A: no board recruitment to run, but the load sits on the collective
- Rotating everyone through everything adds coordination, since no one person owns a given task, and the leave-coverage question looms larger without fixed roles

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?



- Typically rests on a partnership agreement
- Raises “who gets sued?” — the founder or company is often personally in the line of fire (for example, IP or copyright exposure)
- Bylaws can do a lot: strip the board of power, require ED consent to amend, and place fiduciary responsibility on the company or rotating leadership rather than a board alone

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

- Funders tend to be positive once they see the work is done, but less so before then
- May require carefully crafted documents to convey the vision and explain why the risk is manageable

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Often described as a “clean break”
- For some, it is genuinely unclear how to get there from a conventional structure

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

- The collective is a long-standing tradition
- Tends to need deep roots to work

6. Nonprofit with No Board / Worker-Controlled

A structure in which the organization's bylaws assign the board seats to a defined set of senior staff positions, so the people running the organization also hold its governance and fiduciary authority. There is no separate external board; control rests with the workers who occupy those designated roles.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

The organization's bylaws assign its board seats to a defined set of senior staff positions, so the people who run the organization also hold its governance and fiduciary authority. There is no separate external board; control rests with the workers who occupy those designated roles.

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

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Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

7. Focused Boards (also: Minimally Viable Board, MVB)

A small group of three to five people handles only legal obligations such as budget signoff, executive oversight, and legal compliance. These members may be recruited for their expertise and compensated. Other common responsibilities are delegated to ambassador, fundraising, or advocacy groups without legal oversight roles.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Essentially a small “Executive Committee” or legal board: a few people who carry the fiduciary and legal duties
- The fiduciary and legal liability (“who gets sued”) stays with the 3-5 person board, legitimizing what many small nonprofits already do informally
- Expertise is critical; the model honors skillsets and interests, separating them from the legal sign-off duty
- Matches a common board-member plea: “let me champion you, but don’t make me sit through budget meetings”

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Rests on trust of the director

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Ancillary fundraising and advocacy groups are essential, not optional (sometimes you simply need a paid lawyer)

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

- Typically compensates the small legal board but not the fundraising or negotiating roles, which some see as inverting the usual equity question (“why is only the small group paid?”)
- If board members are paid, some ask to whom they are then accountable, and where the oversight sits



- A separate reason to compensate is equity of access: reimbursing community members who cannot afford unpaid service (about who can serve, not org work)

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Feels transitional; helpful post-crisis or during major change, and framed as a maturity step (“young to adolescent”)
- Some see it for newer orgs, though “reducing down to this” can seem risky if it is public knowledge

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

- Well suited to smaller organizations, particularly where a larger board has not produced board-led fundraising and a conventional board consumes significant staff time
- Presupposes a small staff; generally small to mid-sized

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- People are not asked to weigh in on things they do not understand; accessibility through focused responsibility
- Lowers the barrier to participation and can build a future-officer or mentorship pipeline
- Can serve as a recruitment tool; the ED or AD retains controlling power

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

- Reduces overtaxed staff managing a large board (the “20-person board” that is often 3 doing the work and the rest rubber-stamping)

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- Prioritizes expertise for the core tasks

Potential Risks

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What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Paring the board back to legal minimums removes a traditional fundraising engine, so that capacity has to be deliberately built elsewhere or it can fall away
- The sharpest risk: recruiting someone for non-legal reasons, then asking them to rubber-stamp legal and financial decisions they are not equipped for, a good person in a bad spot that can turn antagonistic
- Siloing into groups can narrow perspective; overload during peaks of need or disasters
- Fiduciary tension: how does a small board carry fiduciary responsibility while embedded in daily operations?

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

- Two readings on ED time: some worry the lone ED must attend every delegated group's meeting; others find wrangling four core members far easier than fifteen

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Often less board-management work: a three-to-five-person core is easier to wrangle than a fifteen-to-twenty-person board
- But the delegated fundraising and advocacy groups still need support; one reading warns the ED may end up attending all of them, so the load can shift rather than shrink

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

- Fundraising moves to separate non-legal groups, raising the question of how it is resourced and supported

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Probably fairly easy; many orgs may already be doing this without naming it

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- A departing legal member could mentor a successor

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

8. Network Boards (Central Oversight — Version A: Audit Group)

An independent oversight group of finance, legal, and community leaders, possibly supported by funders or civic groups, that can provide efficiency and consistency across multiple organizations. In this version the central body functions as a lighter-touch audit or oversight group rather than a full governing board. Each organization maintains its own advocacy, donor, or ambassador groups.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- The central body operates as a lighter-touch audit or oversight group with a narrow mandate, a fractional shared model, while each org keeps its own advocacy, donor, and ambassador groups
- Its underlying impulse is often education (exposure to how peers operate) rather than control
- Where one dominant funder or arts council exists, they often already do this de facto through whom they fund and connect
- Can be reframed as a fractional shared-services group (legal, accounting, nonprofit-management help none could afford alone), though “all lawyers are not interchangeable”

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Member missions need to be at least parallel or complementary
- Often cause-specific and time-bound (legislation, ARPA funds); can be a multi-sector coalition around a common cause, or orgs sharing a building
- Makes particular sense for resident companies at a venue, or very small fiscally-sponsored orgs lacking real board capacity

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Educating boards and giving them context on how other organizations operate

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Works best with a narrow mandate, a fractional shared model
- Link orgs by structural similarity, not discipline (a space-less theater may have more in common with a nomadic dance company than with a peer theater)



Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- A crisis can bring together new, small, fiscally-sponsored orgs
- Also fits orgs already in a unified structure (a resident company, shared services)

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Opportunities for coordination and more context for oversight
- Comparative judgment: most board members have served only one org; a body seeing many orgs and budgets side by side can ask “this budget looks funky, why?”

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Centralized oversight can narrow artistic possibility, even where it helps set consistent working conditions and standards across organizations

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- Whose judgment governs?
- Gets complicated when member orgs are very different from one another
- Territoriality between orgs, and the risk of the same few people “in charge of everything forever,” which argues for strict term limits
- “Consistency” is a loaded word: undefined across independent orgs it can feed a “one right way” mindset, and comparative context can wrongly brand an outlier “the problem child”

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- More to manage than a single-org board, since it coordinates across several organizations, though a narrow audit mandate keeps it lighter
- The transition into it is heavy (delegation, contracting the group, new dynamics)

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- Key committees

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Lots of work and a real shift of power, significantly more than transitioning to a Focused/MVB board

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

- Analogous to chambers of commerce or “Main Street” organizations

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9. Network Boards (Central Oversight — Version B: Full Oversight Board)

The same central-oversight structure, but the shared body operates as a full board with real governance authority over the network rather than a lighter-touch audit group. It carries the oversight and decision-making weight for the organizations it convenes.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- The central body operates as a full governing board with real authority over the network, rather than the lighter-touch audit group of Version A
- It carries the oversight and decision-making weight for the organizations it convenes

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Member missions need to be at least parallel or complementary
- Often cause-specific and time-bound (legislation, ARPA funds); can be a multi-sector coalition around a common cause, or orgs sharing a building
- Makes particular sense for resident companies at a venue, or very small fiscally-sponsored orgs lacking real board capacity

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Educating boards and giving them context on how other organizations operate

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Works best with a narrow mandate, a fractional shared model
- Link orgs by structural similarity, not discipline (a space-less theater may have more in common with a nomadic dance company than with a peer theater)

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?



- A crisis can bring together new, small, fiscally-sponsored orgs
- Also fits orgs already in a unified structure (a resident company, shared services)

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Opportunities for coordination and more context for oversight
- Comparative judgment: most board members have served only one org; a body seeing many orgs and budgets side by side can ask “this budget looks funky, why?”

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Whose judgment governs?
- Gets complicated when member orgs are very different from one another
- Territoriality between orgs, and the risk of the same few people “in charge of everything forever,” which argues for strict term limits
- “Consistency” is a loaded word: undefined across independent orgs it can feed a “one right way” mindset, and comparative context can wrongly brand an outlier “the problem child”
- At scale this can strain: a roughly 70-person central oversight board holding perspective across very different orgs (very different budgets and reputations) can feel more complicated than the benefits

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Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Heavier than the audit-group version: a full oversight board carries real decision-making across many orgs
- The transition is significant, and scale multiplies the coordination

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- Key committees

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Lots of work and a real shift of power, significantly more than transitioning to a Focused/MVB board

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

- Analogous to chambers of commerce or “Main Street” organizations

10. Network Boards (Mutual Support — Version A: One Shared Board)

A single collective board shared by a group of organizations, made up of rotating staff from those organizations, allowing oversight and mutual strategic aid by colleagues at related institutions.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- A single collective board serves several organizations, each contributing staff: one board over multiple orgs
- The crux is oversight: who can “throw the flag and pull the brakes” when staff go wrong; here that lever sits with peer staff
- Clarity questions recur: what is oversight, and how are the member institutions “related”?
- Becomes viable when the group self-identifies around real commonalities and oversight is narrowly scoped (e.g., “your financial health,” “your city-advocacy”) so orgs keep authority over their own resources

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Assisting and consolidating resources (space and others) among like-minded, need-based organizations

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Collaborative, like-minded, and need-based; member orgs of similar purpose; needs real buy-in

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Institutions genuinely willing to share staff and resources

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

- Often solves the “is the board paid?” question: members are paid through their home-institution salary as part of the rotating duty, so no central financing is needed

Newer vs. Established Organizations



Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Views vary: “better for new,” “benefits both (or harms, depending),” or better adopted later by several orgs to manage responsibilities together

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

- Size matters less where there is genuine mutual strategic aid; smaller is often good, or pair a larger org with a smaller one

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

- Collaboration is the whole point; it needs a good partnership agreement

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Oversight done by experts who understand the arts; ecology-building; peer-cohort learning
- Allocation and access of shared resources, information sharing, and capacity relief

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

- Removes reliance on board members who do not understand the arts
- Responsibilities spread over time

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- Resource allocation, capacity relief, and mentorship

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Competition among member orgs, for money, partnerships, or programming, is it real or not?
- Existing culture, and burnout as a labor issue
- Will members build and keep proper institutional memory?
- Some ask whether this is really a board model or a peer-cohort / advisory workaround

Staff Impact

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If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Can relieve capacity overall, since responsibilities spread across member orgs, but coordinating one shared board and its partnership agreement is ongoing work, with burnout a noted risk

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- A partnership agreement, clear bylaws on who does what, and an executive committee

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

- Funders may see one consolidated entity

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Some call it a “clean break”; others feel it is better adopted later by several orgs together

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

- Strong tribal-to-rural and niche-need roots (the First Americans Museum is an example)

11. Network Boards (Mutual Support — Version B: Shared Seats Across Boards)

Rather than forming one shared board, member organizations exchange representation by rotating their own staff members into seats on one another's boards. Each organization keeps its board, but staff serve across the network, spreading knowledge and mutual accountability. (The First Americans Museum is one example.)

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Rather than one shared board, staff serve on one another's boards, regional staff cycling among several orgs' boards
- The First Americans Museum is a live example: some staff directors serve on smaller networked orgs' boards as part of the job
- Same clarity questions apply: how are the institutions "related," and oversight of what?

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Assisting and consolidating resources (space and others) among like-minded, need-based organizations

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Collaborative, like-minded, and need-based; member orgs of similar purpose; needs real buy-in

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Institutions genuinely willing to share staff and resources

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

- Often solves the "is the board paid?" question: members are paid through their home-institution salary as part of the rotating duty, so no central financing is needed

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?



- Views vary: “better for new,” “benefits both (or harms, depending),” or better adopted later by several orgs to manage responsibilities together

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

- Size matters less where there is genuine mutual strategic aid; smaller is often good, or pair a larger org with a smaller one

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

- Collaboration is the whole point; it needs a good partnership agreement

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Oversight done by experts who understand the arts; ecology-building; peer-cohort learning
- Allocation and access of shared resources, information sharing, and capacity relief

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

- Removes reliance on board members who do not understand the arts
- Responsibilities spread over time

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- Resource allocation, capacity relief, and mentorship

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Competition among member orgs, for money, partnerships, or programming, is it real or not?
- Existing culture, and burnout as a labor issue
- Will members build and keep proper institutional memory?
- Some ask whether this is really a board model or a peer-cohort / advisory workaround

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Similar capacity relief, with the added logistics of staff cycling among several orgs' boards to keep track of

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- A partnership agreement, clear bylaws on who does what, and an executive committee

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

- Funders may see one consolidated entity

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Some call it a “clean break”; others feel it is better adopted later by several orgs together

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

- Strong tribal-to-rural and niche-need roots (the First Americans Museum is an example)

12. Shared Seat (One Member, Multiple Boards)

A structure in which a specific standing seat — for example, a regional funder, a nonprofit-law specialist, or a context and accountability role — is designed to sit on several organizations' boards at once. The shared occupant carries perspective, consistency, or expertise across all of them by design.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

A specific standing seat — for example, a regional funder, a nonprofit-law specialist, or a context and accountability role — is structurally designed to sit on several organizations' boards at once, carrying consistent perspective or expertise across all of them.

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

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Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

13. Complementary Internal Boards (Version A: Independent Power)

Model where multiple, mutually independent boards (such as a financial board and a mission board) have responsibility and authority over different areas of the organization, and then coordinate where those areas connect.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- The distinctive thing is focused ownership of one responsibility — “I’m on the finance board, so I stand up for finance and am relieved of fighting for everything”
- Essentially gives each area its own internal board that convenes often: a top tier with several boards below (much like how government is structured)
- The crucial connective tissue is the “coordinate where areas connect” clause — how the separate boards link and unify
- Sometimes read as a weaker cousin of Responsibility-Specific or Departmental seats: it aims at focused ownership but can silo too easily

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Born from a lot of needs, tasks, or projects
- Fits multi-site or umbrella realities (research-area focus groups feeding a whole), though who makes the final call stays a live question

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations



Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Helps established, larger organizations

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

- Fits a very large or global org (Shubert, Doctors Without Borders) far more than a small one
- Confirmed large-or-huge only: multiple boards cannot run on five people

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Has the potential to decouple money from being a primary driver of board membership, opening seats to expertise and contribution rather than giving capacity, provided each board's responsibilities are defined in detail
- Separate power centers could break the unquestioned influence of deep-pocketed board members (a theater with three artistic directors forced to agree produced good decisions)

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

- Takes away much of the "burden" feeling by giving each group a focused remit

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Independent boards with separate authority can come into conflict where their interests diverge, and coordinating across them grows complex when communication or alignment slips
- If members are rooted only in their own area, you get no consensus or a lowest-common-denominator one; those forced to weigh in outside their expertise get swayed by the loudest voice

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- The silo risk is real, and it depends heavily on capacity: a perfect structure fails without it, and coordination only holds where there is buy-in and reciprocity
- A lived negative version: the center asks for feedback but does not act on it (even overriding a group's own rankings), and sub-groups cannot see one another

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Runs heavy: multiple boards mean more meetings and coordination, and ensuring each board's output is adopted falls to the center
- Depends entirely on capacity; it does not work without enough bought-in people

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- Needs a lot of bought-in people and a clean division of tasks

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

- Funders would need to be into this kind of structure and into growing the work
- Draws funders mainly if it attracts people excited to build a new civic structure (a “self-governing-system” appeal), a specific taste

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

14. Complementary Internal Boards (Version B: Sociocracy)

A governance system in which authority is decentralized among semi-autonomous circles, each responsible for a specific domain of the organization's work. Decisions are made by consent rather than consensus: a proposal passes as long as no one has a paramount objection, which means dissenters are accountable for offering counter-proposals rather than simply blocking. Circles are connected through representatives who carry information between them, with "double-linking" used where deeper integration is needed. Practiced and documented by SociocracyForAll.org.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Defined and documented by SociocracyForAll.org; the terms need care (see the glossary)
- The point is a structured "no": you must propose an alternative, not just block, countering boards' defensive "everything is a no" posture
- Consent, not consensus: a proposal passes unless someone has a paramount objection
- The defining feature is decentralization into circles, though "semi-autonomous circles" is undefined — who lives in them (staff? board? community?) and what "semi-" means
- Several modular decision-culture mechanisms live here: a "late ouch" (a way to revisit a decision afterward, since in-the-moment pressure suppresses objection) and a first-reading / second-reading norm
- A recurring, unresolved question: what is it "complementary" to?

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Best fit is participatory programming (season, education, cultural) where the community has a say, not the "big legal stuff"

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Raises the question of how much alignment members need for it to work

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?



To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Sometimes floated as a startup fit

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Consent-based decision-making across semi-autonomous circles can be slow, and without clear rules against blocking it can stall or deadlock
- Reopening decisions from the board level creates staff headaches (a committee approves a contract, the ED signs it right after the meeting, then it is reopened)
- On a “players committee,” the lone dissenter can get pressured to fix things — healthier if the dissenter points direction than owns the solution

Staff Impact



If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- More process to run: consent rounds, circle links, and first/second readings add overhead, and reopened decisions can create staff headaches
- Needs sophisticated staff and board leadership to manage well

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- Needs sophisticated staff and board leadership
- IRS rules fix what a fiduciary nonprofit board must do, so consent-not-consensus really presumes the absence of hard legal obligations: it fits an advisory board or an LLC better than a fiduciary board

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

15. Community Boards (Version A: Democratically Elected)

Boards made up of elected representatives from the community being served by the organization's mission or programming.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Essentially a membership model — like an HOA (proposed as a clarifying label), a school “parent board,” or a religious or community org
- Elected by the community (however defined) rather than by the existing board, which removes board “self-dealing”
- But “what is the community?” needs defining: the arts community, the city, a neighborhood, the org’s audience?
- A reframe: the shift from a board of the community’s moneyed power to a board of the served population (often a different group from the funders)

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Fits organizations whose surrounding community genuinely supports the arts, since the model draws its legitimacy from that public backing; the trade-off is exposure to shifts in popular opinion, which can pull programming toward what is currently in favor
- A default for membership organizations (HOAs, culturally specific, religious, or community orgs); community can mean a metro or coalition
- Represents a niche community “not necessarily place, but people”

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Democracy; allows short- or long-term service

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Requires a defined, motivated electorate (a zip code, dues, demonstrated heritage)
- Does not fully remove the recruitment burden: you still must encourage nominations, and may lack a needed skill (a treasurer), possibly needing a bylaw exception for an outside expert

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?



To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

- Needs a decent-sized, invested community
- Best small, local, and intimate; works nationally or internationally but less efficiently, and can break down once real money is involved

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Removes a board's ability to self-replace, and allows removal if the community does not feel served
- Addresses the "boards are only accountable to themselves" pain point: external accountability that is not staff or a funder

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- Easy to get board members; a clear accountability mechanism

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Only addresses expertise through "does the community trust them," not competence
- Can lean preservationist (the community elects who likes the status quo) or force adaptation (the community demands change)

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- Majority rule can drown out minority voices, and long-term majority rule is a risk
- Low turnout can mean capturing a few very active voices rather than many
- For a theater or symphony, letting the served community dictate direction can go astray — “beloved does not equal good board member,” and the community may not know the business
- Sits awkwardly with donor cultivation: if a would-be major donor is not elected, do you lose them?

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Mixed: elections can make seats easier to fill, but you take on running the election and still must encourage nominations, so the recruitment burden shifts rather than disappears

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- 501(c)(3) membership-status orgs default to community-elected boards unless the bylaws are changed

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Strong support for a hybrid: one or two community-elected seats on an otherwise standard board, as a bridge toward assigned-seat community boards

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

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- Roots in consortiums and member associations (leagues, congregations, labor unions, professional societies), and in culturally-specific heritage groups (demonstrate heritage, pay dues, elect the board)

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16. Community Boards (Version B: Assigned Seats)

Boards made up of a set of defined seats, each held by a cycling representative from a particular constituency that self-selects who represents them. (Potentially including staff, served constituencies, local partners, neighbors/communities, donors, major funders, etc.)

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Also called a “caucus model”: a caucus of viewpoints rather than of expertise
- The organization itself does not change; what changes is a wider range of representation
- A crisp contrast with Responsibility-Specific seats: there you are assigned a seat by expertise or interest; here by who you are and where you come from, regardless of expertise
- The core distinction is constituency seats vs. proportional demographics: mirroring demographics (say 70/20/10) still leaves a minority with one powerless seat, while defining constituencies and weighting them equally actually changes who can influence decisions
- Often the constituency self-selects its cycling rep, but that needs a defined, askable group (ten funders are easy to poll; “the Black community” is not); hard to find a truly pure version

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Seats should derive from the mission: if a mission genuinely centers a specific community, the seats represent it; if the mission is “highest-quality art for its own sake,” constituency seats fit less naturally
- Good for civic-minded, broad-mission orgs, and for rebalancing under-represented voices

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- You have to be willing to change what you do if your community says so
- Suits strong, responsible representatives and subject-matter experts

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Clear definitions and a clear tie to mission; make sure all constituencies can actually be involved

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?



To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Views differ: some say better for more established orgs (they “know their constituency”); others do not think age matters

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

- Generally medium to large

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

- Collaborative by its nature

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Representation, with the rep accountable to the constituency they represent (they return or they do not)

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

- More people’s voice; addresses lack of voice, gatekeeping, and sustainability

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- Breaks down barriers and silos

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Little control over who ends up on the board, and are there enough people to choose from?
- Can perpetuate whatever inequity already exists within the chosen constituency; who defines the constituencies, why, and whether it is revisited or “in perpetuity”
- Power questions: what happens when a given constituency holds leadership (say, the major-funder rep is board president)?

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- The half-measure failure mode: a traditional wealthy board plus a token neighborhood seat keeps power where it already was

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Adds the work of defining constituencies, coordinating how each selects its rep, and making sure every seat can actually be filled

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- Bylaws defining the seats

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

- Gives funders a literal seat; some funders like the representation, others do not

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Best done incrementally, by evolving rather than switching all at once

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

- Civic and representative traditions (one contributor reached for the “Boston Tea Party”)

17. Community Boards (Version C: Government-Appointed)

A public-entity version in which board members are appointed by a governing authority — a governor, mayor, or similar — for fixed terms, rather than elected or self-perpetuating. It is less flexible than other community models but reflects the real structure of many arts entities attached to government.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

Board members are appointed by a governing authority — a governor, mayor, or similar — for fixed terms, rather than elected or self-perpetuating. It is a public-entity structure: less flexible than other community models, but the real shape of many arts entities attached to government.

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

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To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

18. Community Boards (Version D: History-Informed Legacy Focus)

Accountability and representation for the organization is led by people who have past standing in the constituent community or in the organization, and have enough time with the organization or community to provide a long-form view when considering decisions and value of collective activities.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Preservation at the core
- A legacy seat can be tied to a needed resource or relationship (e.g., “there always needs to be a member of the X family on the board,” a building or funding legacy)
- One reading is a constituent-community “elder” or “auntie” board: people who have lived in or led a community for forty or fifty years and genuinely know it
- The language needs work: a phrase like “accountability and representation are led” is opaque, and a single crowdsourced sentence is not enough

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- A pillar of continuity, good records, offsets the risk of the org’s history walking out the door

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Builds the wisdom and knowledge of the board, and preserves institutional knowledge
- A concrete mechanism is a board “why-book”: a source book (not minutes) recording what was discussed and why, building the wisdom of the board rather than of individuals
- A useful bridge when new leadership must reconstruct an org’s earlier history from long-serving members

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- Institutional knowledge

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Centering long-tenured or legacy voices risks entrenchment, with leadership becoming resistant to change over time
- Can lock the board into “we have always done it this way” and treat community as fixed, but community changes generationally, not just demographically, so how do you guarantee responsiveness to now?
- The long-serving members who hold the history often are not people you want on the board forever
- Ultimately comes down to trust, which even the traditional model lacks

Staff Impact



If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- The distinctive work is documentation: maintaining a board “why-book” and institutional memory is an ongoing effort, not a one-time task

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

19. Intergenerational Board

A board built around explicit seats defined by age or history in the community — deliberately seating both elders and the youngest members to hold multiple generations of perspective. These seats are typically non-fiduciary, focused on cultural continuity, community-building, and connection across generations.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

The board is built around explicit seats defined by age or history in the community, deliberately seating both elders and the youngest members so multiple generations of perspective are always present. These seats are typically non-fiduciary, focused on cultural continuity and connection across generations.

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

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Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

20. Cultural Evolution Board

A board whose defining priority is an intentionally diverse mix of individuals, with power balanced equally across the chosen diversity measures. Its primary work is building understanding, collaboration, and investment across a specific set of identities or communities — and then serving as an example, or beacon, for the rest of the organization's work.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

The board's defining priority is an intentionally diverse mix of individuals, with power balanced equally across the chosen diversity measures. Its central work is building understanding, collaboration, and investment across a specific set of identities or communities, then modeling that for the rest of the organization.

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

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To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

21. Initiative or Project Boards

A board where membership intentionally turns over regularly around short-term initiatives. When a particular initiative or effort or cycle completes, a new cycle is defined and a new group of leaders is brought on to guide and support for maximum effectiveness in the next cycle. This can also be used to pass resources and legitimacy forward when a particular reason for the organization's existence has been achieved.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Provides a “psychological target for completion” and needs a clear long-term narrative
- Turnover does not have to be everyone at once, so the work does not stop
- Links turnover to the org doing a thing: recruit people good at the thing, and when it is accomplished, deliberately move on, the opposite of the preservation model
- A “vessel vs. occupant” framing: arts orgs already cycle artists per show; this applies that to the board (or staff, or the whole org)
- Can be read as a sub-board beside the fiduciary board, with power over programming and community-facing work, which opens space to seat community members and youth

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Fits long-term as well as short-term initiatives, and defined life-cycle chunks (raise for a building, then staff the building) more than a whole life cycle
- Often best as a sub-functional group; initiatives can also be structural (expanding the org chart, moving into a new building, where community input matters most)

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Evolution, not preservation (a deliberate contrast with the legacy model)
- Raises a question about what it means for consistency for the workers and staff

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Needs a “pillar of continuity,” good records, a shared drive of institutional knowledge, or a continuing person, to offset turnover
- Onboarding matters, since relationships and history can leave with people

Compensation and Volunteer Roles



Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Good for explicit life-cycle chunks; works where there is not already heavy staff turnover

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Short-term commitment, and buy-in is already answered
- Attracts “make something happen” people (high-impact, MBA, or impact-investing types) who want to accomplish something rather than do open-ended oversight, a real “why do you want me for three years?” appeal

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- Buy-in is already answered

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Frequent board turnover around initiatives can make the organization lurch from cycle to cycle and complicate long-term planning

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- Fresh advisors every season or project can bleed institutional memory (from “nobody knows the Canva password” to “who the audience has been”)
- Much board value is relational: donors give because a specific person is on the board, or a bank gives while its employee serves, so rotating people off can break giving that funds salaries
- A full sweep would break the “dramaturgical” lineage of why past choices were made; better to renew some terms and cycle others off

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Turnover creates recurring work: each cycle means onboarding new people and deliberately preserving continuity (good records, a continuing person) so knowledge does not reset

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- You do not pick one structure forever; structures can blend, morph, and cycle as the org changes
- Exit by goal-completion can be a cleaner trigger than a term clock, though some still value term limits

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

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22. Fluid / Collaborating Boards

A structure in which the boards of multiple organizations come together — through bylaws changes — to unify their work for a defined period or until circumstances change, then separate again. It allows organizations to formally join governance for a shared purpose without permanently merging.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

The boards of multiple organizations come together, through bylaws changes, to unify their work for a defined period or until circumstances change, then separate again. It lets organizations formally join governance around a shared purpose without permanently merging.

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?



To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

23. Licensed or Certified Boards (Version A: Certified / Trained Board)

A system where board members in a community receive consistent training and are certified against a standard, creating trust in governance and potentially reducing compliance burdens from partner funders. This version describes a board that has itself been trained or certified.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- The naming matters: “certification” is an act, “certified” is a status; this model describes a board that has been trained or certified, not one that does the certifying (some suggest renaming it a “continuing-education” or “informed” board, CME-style)
- Alternate names floated: “Certified,” “Continuing Education Board,” “Law Board”
- Two tracks: certify individual board members, or certify organizations (a stamp), one or both
- Best if it certifies against any of several valid ways to meet a standard (not one “right” model), with certifications that differ by org type and size
- The intent, at its best, is “replace the police with teachers”: educational, not gatekeeping

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Appetite for cross-org training that counts across boards (harassment training done once, honored everywhere); some content is common, some org-specific
- Needs strong documentation and processes

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations



Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Different orgs need different information

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Efficiency in educating boards, and a shared standard across a community
- Members can arrive “trained not to do the things people hate about boards”: understanding nonprofit budgets, the earned/contributed model, what an AD does
- Funder-facing, a certified board might earn a lighter grant application

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

- Reduces lack of expertise and lack of awareness on boards

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- A specific mission met

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Can shift standard-setting from internally informed to externally imposed, leaving the board accountable to an outside body rather than its own judgment; requirements can also exclude capable people who lack the time
- The core risk is “who certifies the certifier?": the certifier benefits from certifying (a capture problem); if a consultancy certifies, orgs pay it; if a big funder certifies, its agenda is unaccountable
- Equity: could privilege large orgs (dev departments clear the bar) or pile far more work on a tiny volunteer org; risks “more policing” of the field rather than more trust

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- Harm reduction, not harm prevention: a piece of paper does not stop embezzlement; residual risk remains

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Front-loads work: training or certification takes time and strong documentation up front, though it can reduce friction later once members are up to speed

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- Strong documentation and processes

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Fairly easy to apply, though established board members may resist
- Term limits plus a mentorship pipeline: those who complete licensing become eligible to join the licensing board (rotating, not all at once)

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

- Fits a specific need for oversight of a contested function (e.g., certifying “intimacy coordination”), and pairs well with a mentorship or apprentice pathway; noted as controversial in some fields



24. Licensed or Certified Boards (Version B: Status & Recognition)

A recognition-based version in which boards earn visible, tiered status for demonstrated accomplishments rather than completing up-front training. Boards self-identify into a level through an outside reward system that marks what they have achieved.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

Rather than completing up-front training, boards earn visible, tiered status for demonstrated accomplishments, self-identifying into a level through an outside reward system that marks what they have achieved.

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

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External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

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To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

25. Nonprofit Shareholder Boards

A board that brings funders and donors directly into governance as stewards of the resources they provide, and makes the relationship between contribution and control explicit: authority is directly proportional, or tiered-proportional, to the money contributed, functioning like a nonprofit shareholder structure.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- The framing is blunt: “dollars are your power,” analogous to a shareholder model or corporate board seats, with provocative “pay-to-play” and “stop pretending” language
- The argument: the biggest donors’ word already carries the room even when they are not officers; this model just makes it explicit
- A thesis underneath it: the nonprofit model “was structured to protect the money of people who wanted to use it for good things” (a tax write-off plus retained control); this makes that explicit
- A useful line vs. sponsorship: sponsorship earns perks or name-on-the-wall, but not control; control is “the shareholder thing”
- Relabeling the standard best-practice board as the pay-to-play or shareholder model frees room to propose alternatives

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

- Provokes the question: “how is a nonprofit the alternative to a shareholder model?”

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations



Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Ties power directly to money; when funders hold seats, an org can feel as though its funders are running it, making the work about money and financial-abuse exposure part of employees' everyday experience; a deliberate check on funder power is worth building in from the start
- Conflict of interest is "all over this" and needs definition, along with "fiduciary duty" and "oversight," all under-defined here
- An ethics question: boards often entice someone on, they feel responsible, and the org extracts more money; acceptable only if transparent from the start (agency and informed choice)
- A sharp inversion: the same conflict-of-interest logic used to bar staff from boards (livelihood at stake) applies to big donors, an argument that donors, too, should not hold board power

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Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Recruitment can be simpler when a seat follows the money, but managing conflicts of interest, and defining fiduciary duty and oversight clearly, becomes the ongoing work

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- Bylaws can entrench power (e.g., “chairman for life”)
- Bylaws and gift-acceptance policies can also encode ethics and whom you will take money from (a cancer org refusing tobacco money), a possible counterweight

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

26. No Conflict of Interest Board

A board deliberately composed of people with no direct stake in the organization — no donors, and no one who could be engaged or employed by it. By excluding anyone with skin in the game, the model aims for fully disinterested oversight, often pairing with a separate donor circle or complementary body for those who are excluded.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

The board is deliberately composed of people with no direct stake in the organization: no donors, and no one who could be engaged or employed by it. By excluding anyone with skin in the game, it aims for fully disinterested oversight, often pairing with a separate donor circle for those who are excluded.

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

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To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

27. Responsibility-Specific Board Seats

Instead of appointing general board members who are then elected to primarily hierarchical officer positions (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary), this model identifies specific responsibilities — essentially job descriptions — for each board seat, and recruits for interest, capacity, and capability to execute on those responsibilities for a defined term.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Clear, targeted, and intentional: there are still board members, but recruited to specific responsibilities rather than to general seats
- A crisp contrast with Community Assigned Seats: here you are assigned a seat by expertise or interest, not by who you are
- Does it replace hierarchical officer positions or sit alongside the legally-required officers (someone must still sign the forms)? Read as recruiting you directly to be, say, the secretary or a future president
- Feels to some like a process that can be bolted onto other models rather than a standalone one, a modular element

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

- Self-awareness and intention; subject-matter experts recruited to specific responsibilities

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

- Specific skill sets, with resources and needs defined up front

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

- Works for either or any



Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

- A midsize board, not tiny and not a mega fundraising board, the middle zone the traditional structure serves poorly (one contributor leaned larger)

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

- Can reach other sectors (accountant, legal), though the focus is largely internal

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Transparent expectations and clear expertise tied to recruitment; “everything covered”
- From lived experience: recruited for a specific role, “it made such a huge difference because I knew what I was doing”
- Lets board and staff plan, and can ease the board-management burden that otherwise falls to staff

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

- Reduces lack of clarity

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

- Clarity, transparency, using people’s strengths, and the ability to plan

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- You have to know what you need, and know the people who can do it
- People can feel pigeonholed, with limited growth options on the board

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload



Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Aims to reduce effort: clear, pre-defined roles let board and staff plan, and can lift the board-management burden that otherwise falls to staff, if the seats are filled well
- The upfront work is defining the seats and finding the right people for them

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- Bylaws should include the positions; clear definitions and parameters

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

- Generally very positive

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

- Relatively easy: map what exists vs. what is missing, and it is easier from an existing board (define seats around who is already there, recruit as terms end)
- The access gap is hardest for younger or under-resourced orgs (we know what we need but do not know those people); an open public call can work (one under-resourced board posted roles and drew about 300 applicants)

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

28. Departmental Service Board Members

Each staff member or staff department — depending on the size of the organization — recruits and brings on its own board member. The staff area selects someone who can advise and support its particular work, and the two collaborate closely through the year. These board members still convene on their own, independent of staff, to carry out the usual fiduciary and oversight business of a board; but each also reports back to the staff area that recruited them, and that staff area holds the authority to extend or end its board member’s term.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

- Board membership is mapped one-to-one to staff areas: each staff member or department recruits, partners closely with, and is advised by its own board member
- The board members still convene together, independent of staff, for shared fiduciary and oversight duties, but each also reports back to the staff area that recruited them, which holds the authority to extend or end that member’s term
- The distinctive move is the inversion: rather than the board governing staff, each staff area brings on and directs the board member who serves it
- Recruitment can pull from a general pool or from targeted community and funders, both valid structures of the same idea
- A key distinction from ordinary committees: here staff go get their own board member, whom they know and trust, rather than being handed a committee they may not know

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

- Raises the compensation question directly (one imagined version: a flat “table” of directors, all equally compensated, with a small MVB alongside)



Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

- Improves board-to-staff communication, with a clear duty to report back on that area
- Solves the common large-org problem of staff and board members having no relationship, and seats members who can intelligently advocate for specific areas; can expand the org's network

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

- Because each staff area can extend or end its own board member's term, the board's independence and its capacity for genuine oversight can be compromised
- Needs a clear answer for how fiduciary accountability is preserved when the people being overseen also control the standing of those overseeing them
- Coordination is demanding: a board of separately recruited, department-tied members has to work deliberately to act as one accountable body

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Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

- Distributes some work, since each staff area manages its own board member, but adds coordination: assembling separately recruited, department-tied members into one accountable body takes deliberate effort
- Needs a strong checks-and-balances and voting structure to run

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

- Needs a very strong system of checks, balances, and voting structure, a real governance challenge
- Pairs closely with the fiduciary piece

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

29. Rotating Pipeline Board

An intentionally rotating group of people who each serve roughly a year across three different boards, moving between them to build firsthand understanding of different situations, structures, and options. The rotation itself is the point — exposure across contexts rather than long tenure in one.

Distinguishing Features

What features make this model distinct from conventional board structures?

An intentionally rotating group whose members each serve roughly a year across three different boards, moving between them to build firsthand understanding of different situations, structures, and options. The rotation itself is the point: exposure across contexts rather than long tenure in one.

Organizational Purpose and Mission Fit

What kinds of organizational purposes or missions (if any) mesh best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Values Alignment

What values of the people involved fit best with this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Practical Resources Required

What practical resources — physical, financial, time, space, and skills — are most needed to activate this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Compensation and Volunteer Roles

Who is compensated and who is a volunteer in this model, and how does that division shape who can participate and how the work gets done?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Newer vs. Established Organizations

Does this approach lend itself better or worse to newer/founding organizations compared to established ones?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Organizational Size

Does this approach lend itself better to organizations of a particular size, in terms of numbers of human beings involved?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



External Collaboration and Support

Does this approach require the collaboration or support of others outside of the specific team or organization?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Primary Benefits

What are the primary benefits people see being generated from this approach?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Pain Points Reduced or Eliminated

What pain points from common board models would be reduced or eliminated in this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Joy Points

What joy points could be realized through adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Potential Risks

What risks, downsides, or failure modes should an organization weigh before adopting this model?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Staff Impact

If this model were activated, what would it mean for staff — how might it support the people doing the daily work, and where could it leave them exposed?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Workload

Is this likely to require more, the same, or less work for someone to manage than common models?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Legal and Structural Prerequisites

Are there legal requirements, bylaw configurations, or structural conditions that must be in place before this model can be adopted?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Relationship to Funders and External Stakeholders

How does this model present to funders, regulators, and other external stakeholders? What narrative or documentation support may be needed?

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To be developed through Summer 2026.

Transition Pathway from a Conventional Board

Is this model something an existing organization can evolve into incrementally, or does it require a clean break and rebuild? How disruptive is adoption?

To be developed through Summer 2026.

Cultural Roots and Traditions

Does this model draw from specific cultural, community, or historical traditions? What lineage or attribution should be acknowledged?

To be developed through Summer 2026.



Section 5: Existing Case Studies, Articles, and Examples

Section 5 includes two parts.

The first part organizes known examples, organizations, and resources by model — so if you're exploring a specific approach, you can quickly find who else has tried it and what's been written about it.

The second part is primed to feature or reference narratives about organizations that have made significant governance changes: what they did, why, and what happened.

Both parts will expand substantially through the MOMENTUM 2026 convenings as practitioners share their own organizational stories and others are contributed.

Part 1: Examples and Resources by Model

Each model below lists organizations known to use or experiment with this approach, along with relevant articles and resources. When an example is relevant to multiple models, it appears under each. Entries drawn from Part 2 featured narratives are marked with ►.

Active Leadership Boards

Ghost Light Theatre Company — A practitioner from this small theatre described its board already operating this way day to day: it keeps the board more accessible and involved, while also bringing some insulation and overwork. Contributed at the MOMENTUM kickoff.

Partner Boards

No documented examples are in the Sourcebook at this time. Organizations whose boards operate as self-contained partners rather than as a body above staff are encouraged to share their experiences at MOMENTUM convenings.

Staff-Board Mutual Accountability Structures

► A Contemporary Theatre (ACT), Seattle, WA — The post-dissolution board rebuild at ACT included explicit structures for staff voice and bidirectional accountability between staff and governance. See Part 2.

Additional examples to be developed through MOMENTUM 2026 convenings.

Holistic Organizations (also: Liberatory Governance)

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► Change Elemental — The originator and primary practitioner of Liberatory Governance, the version of this model in which a governance team replaces the board of directors and staff participate directly in decision-making. Change Elemental has documented their approach extensively on their website and in public writing. See Part 2.

Ananda Valenzuela, co-chair of Change Elemental’s board, authored the three-part “Reimagining Nonprofit Boards” series in Nonprofit Quarterly (2025) that draws directly on Liberatory Governance principles. Available at nonprofitquarterly.org.

Additional examples to be developed through MOMENTUM 2026 convenings.

Focused Boards (also: Minimally Viable Board, MVB)

► Never Too Late (NTL), Canada — A youth-serving nonprofit that uses the MVB model (three members, meeting primarily to fulfill legal obligations) alongside a Trusted Advisory Council of volunteers with no formal authority. NTL’s “Board Lead” Aviva Zukerman Schure is quoted in Vu Le’s book on the transformative effect of asking ‘what is the bare minimum the government requires?’ See Part 2.

Enspiral (New Zealand) — The network credited with originating and naming the MVB model. A video explaining the thinking behind MVB is available through Enspiral’s resources at enspiral.com.

Additional examples to be developed through MOMENTUM 2026 convenings.

Network Boards (Version A: Central Oversight Board)

No documented examples are in the Sourcebook at this time. Organizations using or experimenting with independent cross-organizational oversight bodies are encouraged to share their experiences at MOMENTUM convenings.

Network Boards (Version B: Mutual Support Board)

No documented examples are in the Sourcebook at this time. Organizations using rotating staff or cross-organizational board service are encouraged to share their experiences at MOMENTUM convenings.

Complementary Internal Boards (Version A: Independent Power)

No documented examples are in the Sourcebook at this time. Organizations using parallel or complementary internal boards with divided authority are encouraged to share their experiences at MOMENTUM convenings.

Complementary Internal Boards (Version B: Sociocracy)

► Nonprofit Enterprise at Work (NEW), Detroit, MI — CEO Yodit Mesfin Johnson is cited in Vu Le’s book as describing sociocracy’s capacity to disrupt power hoarding while building in accountability for dissenters. See Part 2.

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SociocracyForAll.org — The primary documentation and training hub for sociocracy practice across nonprofit, education, and community contexts. Includes implementation guides, case studies, and a practitioner community.

Community Boards (Version A: Democratically Elected)

- ▶ A Contemporary Theatre (ACT), Seattle, WA — The entire ACT board resigned and the organization undertook a community-centered rebuild process with explicit commitments to community representation. See Part 2.
- ▶ Rainier Valley Corps (RVC), Seattle, WA — Vu Le's former organization used an open quarterly gathering model, prioritizing community member participation and interest-based committees. Le describes it as the most effective governance structure his org ever had. See Part 2.

SETC (Southeastern Theatre Conference) — A board on which ten members are elected by community committees and councils, an existing instance of community-elected seats. Contributed at the MOMENTUM kickoff.

Additional examples to be developed through MOMENTUM 2026 convenings.

Community Boards (Version B: Assigned Seats)

No documented examples are in the Sourcebook at this time. Organizations using defined constituency seats for community representation are encouraged to share their experiences at MOMENTUM convenings.

Community Boards (Version C: History-Informed Legacy Focus)

No documented examples are in the Sourcebook at this time. Organizations centering long-term community relationships in board composition are encouraged to share their experiences at MOMENTUM convenings.

Initiative or Project Boards

No documented examples are in the Sourcebook at this time. Organizations using cycle-based or initiative-specific board membership are encouraged to share their experiences at MOMENTUM convenings.

Licensed or Certified Boards

No documented examples are in the Sourcebook at this time. Organizations using consistent board training, certification, or credentialing requirements are encouraged to share their experiences at MOMENTUM convenings.



Departmental Service Board Members

No documented examples are in the Sourcebook at this time. Organizations experimenting with department-recruited board members are encouraged to share their experiences at MOMENTUM convenings.

Part 2: Featured Narratives

The following narratives go deeper on specific organizations and governance stories — what changed, why, and what followed. These are drawn from published sources and are cross-tagged to the relevant models from Part 1. Narratives generated through MOMENTUM 2026 convenings will be added here through the end of 2026.

A Contemporary Theatre (ACT) — Seattle, WA

Relevant models: Community Boards ▶ Staff-Board Mutual Accountability Structures ▶ Transition Pathway

In August 2022, after reading and discussing Michael Bobbitt's 2021 essay in *American Theatre*, "Boards Are Broken, So Let's Break and Remake Them," the entire board of A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle voluntarily resigned, with the exception of three positions required by law. ACT leadership cited two specific elements from Bobbitt's article as driving the decision: that most boards no longer represent the communities they serve, and that most have not resolved the tension between creative vision and fiduciary responsibility.

ACT undertook a deliberate process of reconstituting its governance with explicit commitments to community representation, staff voice, and bidirectional accountability between staff and board. Mike Davis's 2025 follow-up reporting in *American Theatre* confirmed ACT as a key reference case for the field.

Never Too Late (NTL) — Canada

Relevant models: Focused Boards (also: Minimally Viable Board, MVB)

Never Too Late is a Canadian nonprofit serving youth who are aging out of the child welfare system. The organization uses the Minimally Viable Board model — a small board whose primary function is meeting legal compliance obligations — paired with a Trusted Advisory Council of volunteers who have no legal authority but whose expertise and time are called upon as needed.

NTL's "Board Lead" Aviva Zukerman Schure describes the mindset shift the MVB model produces: by constantly asking "what is the bare minimum the government requires from this?"

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the organization consistently finds itself opened up to new possibilities rather than constrained by traditional governance assumptions. Schure also notes the ongoing challenge of funder skepticism, with some funders treating the absence of a conventional board as a credibility problem despite NTL’s track record.

Source: Le, Vu. *Reimagining Nonprofits and Philanthropy*. Berrett-Koehler, 2024, pp. 74–76.

Rainier Valley Corps (RVC) — Seattle, WA

Relevant models: Community Boards

Before converting to a traditional board model, Vu Le’s former organization — Rainier Valley Corps, a capacity-building nonprofit serving BIPOC-led organizations in Seattle — operated with what Le describes as a community board structure, though the organization never formally named it. Quarterly gatherings were open and welcoming to anyone invested in the organization and the community it served; meetings were held in the evenings with childcare and dinner provided to reduce access barriers. Work was structured to be both meaningful and relationship-building, with small group conversations about community needs leading into larger full-group dialogue, and interest-based committees meeting between gatherings. Le describes the decision to convert to a traditional board model as one that “haunts me to this day,” and uses RVC as a primary example of what community-centered governance can look like in practice.

Source: Le, Vu. *Reimagining Nonprofits and Philanthropy*. Berrett-Koehler, 2024, pp. 76–77.

Change Elemental

Relevant models: Holistic Organizations (also: Liberatory Governance)

Change Elemental is a nonprofit that partners with organizations and networks to build a more just world by addressing inequity through leadership, strategy, and collaboration. They are the originator and primary practitioner of **Liberatory Governance**, the version of the Holistic Organizations model in which a “governance team” replaces the traditional board of directors, and staff and governance team members work closely together to make decisions grounded in shared values.

The organization has documented their model extensively, including a staff liaison role that recruits governance team members based on where their knowledge and connections would be most relevant — a deliberate contrast with conventional board recruitment that prioritizes wealth, fundraising capacity, and professional credentials. Change Elemental prioritizes governance team members who “already embrace and practice inner work, multiple ways of knowing, experimentation, and emergent strategy.” Resources and documentation are available at changeelemental.org.

Sources: changeelemental.org. Le, Vu. *Reimagining Nonprofits and Philanthropy*. Berrett-Koehler, 2024, pp. 77–79. Valenzuela, Ananda. “Reimagining Nonprofit Boards” (three-part series). *Nonprofit Quarterly*, 2025.



Clayton, Douglas and Calida Jones. “Rethinking the Nonprofit Model.” *Minneapolis College of Art and Design*, October 20, 2025. A foundational essay by MOMENTUM’s co-founding team that traces the origins of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit structure, analyzes how it was designed primarily to protect money and prevent personal gain rather than to support the people doing the work, and argues that the model’s built-in trade-offs — including the erasure of founder equity, board accountability gaps, and structural misalignment with modern organizational values — make it increasingly unfit for purpose. Calls for a broader public conversation about hybrid structures, cooperatives, and social enterprises as viable alternatives. Published on the MCAD website and available at mcad.edu/posts/rethinking-nonprofit-model.

Nonprofit Enterprise at Work (NEW) — Detroit, MI

Relevant models: Complementary Internal Boards (Version B: Sociocracy)

Nonprofit Enterprise at Work is a Detroit-based organization that provides capacity-building support to nonprofits across Michigan and beyond. CEO Yodit Mesfin Johnson has described the organization’s experience with sociocracy as fundamentally disrupting internal power dynamics: the consent-based decision-making model, in which proposals pass as long as no one has a paramount objection, builds accountability for dissenters by requiring them to offer counter-proposals rather than simply blocking. Johnson describes sociocracy as opening governance to everyone in the organization, not just the board, and notes that the model encourages dissent as a generative force rather than treating it as an obstacle. NEW is one of the more prominent mid-sized nonprofits publicly associated with sociocracy practice.

Source: Le, Vu. *Reimagining Nonprofits and Philanthropy*. Berrett-Koehler, 2024, pp. 79–80. See also sociocracyforall.org.

Narratives from MOMENTUM 2026 Convenings

Governance stories, experiments, and organizational case studies surfaced through the MOMENTUM 2026 convenings will be added here on an ongoing basis through the end of 2026. Participants are encouraged to share their own organizational experiences — whether a model is fully implemented, in early experimentation, or simply under consideration. All contributions to this section become part of the non-proprietary Sourcebook and go to the field.

A Radically Inclusive Leadership Circle

Relevant models: Community Boards (Version A: Democratically Elected) ▶ Complementary Internal Boards (Version B: Sociocracy)

Offered as a model rather than a recommendation: a city-based theater and performance group built its governance around radical inclusion. Membership was open — taking part in the work meant having a voice in how the organization was run; in the founding spirit, if you wanted to be in the play, you were in the play. That open-membership mission was paired with a consensus-based leadership circle, where members came regularly to leadership meetings and shared in

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decisions, while an elected board held fiduciary oversight and stepped in only if consensus broke down. A structure like this can run for years without ever needing a board vote.

The kind of challenge that can develop here gathers around positional power and the durability of consensus. Because the model leans on good-faith participation rather than formal authority, it has limited recourse when a member with influence — having taken part in and agreed to a consensus decision — later works to undo it. The openness that makes the circle inclusive is also what can leave a decision exposed when someone chooses to reopen or undermine it after the fact. Naming where fiduciary authority finally rests, and when the elected board is empowered to close a question, is part of what keeps the model durable.

This story is not currently linked to a named organization; it will be explored and illuminated through the MOMENTUM 2026 convenings.

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Section 6: Reference Materials

Books

Le, Vu. *Reimagining Nonprofits and Philanthropy*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2024. The chapter “Governance and Boards” (pp. 76–81) covers the Minimally Viable Board, Community Board, Evolutionary Governance, Liberatory Governance, Circle Process, Sociocracy, and Mindful Meetings models, with real organizational examples and discussion questions.

Chait, Richard P., William P. Ryan, and Barbara E. Taylor. *Governance as Leadership: Reframing the Work of Nonprofit Boards*. Wiley/BoardSource, 2005. A widely cited framework arguing that effective nonprofit boards operate in three modes: fiduciary (compliance and asset protection), strategic (long-term direction), and generative (creative problem framing and sense-making). The generative mode is the least practiced and, the authors argue, the most transformative. A useful counterpoint to purely compliance-focused board models.

Carver, John. *Boards That Make a Difference: A New Design for Leadership in Nonprofit and Public Organizations*. Jossey-Bass, 3rd ed. 2006. The foundational text for the Policy Governance model, which draws a sharp distinction between board-level policy decisions and staff-level operational decisions. Often cited as an important influence on contemporary governance thinking and, in some communities, as a model that over-centralizes fiduciary thinking at the expense of mission and relationship.

Gordon, Seth. *Crossroads in the American Theatre*. Smith & Kraus, 2025. Based on interviews with artistic directors and theatre leaders at major nonprofit institutions, this book asks whether the American nonprofit theatre should consider abandoning the conventional board governance model entirely, and if so, what viable alternatives exist. Written by a theatre director and longtime faculty member at the University of Oklahoma.

Articles and Reports

Bobbitt, Michael J. “Boards Are Broken, So Let’s Break and Remake Them.” *American Theatre*, January 5, 2021. The op-ed that sent shockwaves through the arts sector, prompting the entire board of A Contemporary Theatre (ACT) in Seattle to resign and rebuild. Bobbitt argues that nonprofit theatre boards are unrepresentative and often oppressive, questions whether the board model was sound to begin with, and calls for artist- and staff-led governance reform. Available at americantheatre.org.

Davis, Mike. “Taking Governance Back to the Drawing Board.” *American Theatre*, Spring

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2025. A field report checking in with ACT, Mosaic Theatre, Dallas Children’s Theatre, and other organizations that have worked to reform their governance structures in the years since Bobbitt’s article. Davis concludes that boards have moved away from being elite social clubs but that change remains incremental. Available at americantheatre.org.

Theatre Communications Group. *In Whom We Trust VI: Governing Boards Survey 2024.* TCG, April 2025. The first comprehensive survey of nonprofit theatre governing boards in over ten years, covering 141 theatres across all budget sizes. Key findings include a significant increase in racial diversity on boards (from 85–89% white in 1998–2013 to 71% white in 2024), a sharp decline in give/get policies (from 78% to 43% of theatres), and continued staff time burdens averaging 25 hours per week spent on board relations. Available at tcg.org.

Valenzuela, Ananda. “Reimagining Nonprofit Boards” (three-part series). *Nonprofit Quarterly*, 2025. Three-part NPQ series tracing the history of how nonprofit boards evolved to protect wealth and class interests, proposing key mindset shifts toward accountability and shared leadership, and offering practical strategies for redefining board roles. Valenzuela is co-chair of the board of Change Elemental. Available at nonprofitquarterly.org.

Websites and Organizations

BoardSource (boardsource.org). The national membership organization for nonprofit board leadership research, training, and support. Publishes the biennial *Leading with Intent* national index of nonprofit board practices and the Purpose-Driven Board Leadership framework (2021). A primary source for sector-wide benchmarking on board composition, practices, and culture.

Change Elemental (changeelemental.org). Nonprofit that partners with organizations and networks to build a more just world by addressing inequity through transformative leadership, strategy, and collaboration. Originator and practitioner of Liberatory Governance, the version of the Holistic Organizations (also: Liberatory Governance) model in which a “governance team” replaces the traditional board structure. A primary resource for organizations seeking to implement values-first, staff-integrated governance approaches.

SociocracyForAll.org. Comprehensive resource on sociocracy as a governance system, which in the MOMENTUM framework is documented as Complementary Internal Boards (Version B: Sociocracy). In sociocracy, work is decentralized among semi-autonomous circles, with decisions made by consent (meaning no one strongly objects) rather than full consensus. Circles are linked by representatives who carry information between them, with “double linking” for circles that connect upward in the hierarchy. Yodit Mesfin Johnson, CEO of Nonprofit Enterprise at Work (NEW), is cited in Vu Le’s book as describing sociocracy’s core benefit as disrupting power hoarding while building accountability for dissenters to offer counter-proposals rather than simply blocking decisions. Available at sociocracyforall.org.

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Sustainable Economies Law Center / Nonprofit Democracy Network (theselc.org). SELC is an Oakland-based law and advocacy organization that originated the Worker Self-Directed Nonprofit (WSDN) model — a 501(c)(3) in which the board formally delegates management authority to the workers collectively, who govern through semi-autonomous circles rather than traditional hierarchy. SELC launched as a WSDN in 2009 and has since built the most legally documented framework for democratizing nonprofit governance while remaining legally compliant, including bylaws templates and practitioner guides. Their Nonprofit Democracy Network, a fiscally-sponsored project of SELC, supports organizations exploring or implementing worker self-direction through peer networks, training, and an annual cohort program (Collaborate to Co-Liberate, second cohort launching 2025) led by practitioners including adrienne maree brown. The WSDN model is distinct from but related to both Holistic Organizations and Sociocracy as described in this Sourcebook: it is a resource for organizations that want to democratize governance and also need to navigate the legal architecture of the 501(c)(3) structure. Resources at theselc.org/worker_selfdirected_nonprofits.

Governance Approaches and Philosophies

Evolutionary Governance (Vanessa LeBourdais / DreamRider Productions). A governance philosophy built on three principles: that all members of the organization trust in emergence and practice shared power; that the board functions as a genuine support structure for the executive leader, not as an oversight body; and that the board attends to the holistic well-being of the full field, including staff, funders, community, and even nature. Includes personal and organizational inner work as active governance practices. Draws on collective wisdom from Indigenous communities and other non-dominant leadership traditions. Referenced in Vu Le's *Reimagining Nonprofits and Philanthropy* (p. 77).

Circle Process (Living Justice Press). A meeting and governance facilitation method drawn from Indigenous traditions used for thousands of years. Core elements include a talking piece to structure who speaks and when, intentional conversations about values and group agreements, ceremony to open and close gatherings, and relationship-building treated as equally important as content and decisions. Practitioners describe the process as doing more than changing how meetings run—it shifts one's outlook on systemic injustice. See Living Justice Press (livingjusticepress.org) for full resources. Referenced in Vu Le's *Reimagining Nonprofits and Philanthropy* (pp. 78–79).

Mindful Meetings (The Swell Collective). A free guide offering an equity-centered alternative to Robert's Rules as a meeting methodology. Five phases: Check In (personal updates, rumors and elephants, victories, agenda additions); Calibration (grounding in purpose, adjusting agenda for emergent issues); Doing the Work (dialog and decisions, group memory practices); Check Point (reviewing decisions and time); Check Out (reflection on what worked and planning

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ahead). Available free from The Swell Collective. Referenced in Vu Le's *Reimagining Nonprofits and Philanthropy* (p. 80).

Worker Self-Directed Nonprofit (WSDN) (Sustainable Economies Law Center). A governance model in which a 501(c)(3) retains a legal board — because it must — but the board formally delegates all management authority to the workers collectively. Staff govern through semi-autonomous circles rather than traditional hierarchy, and the board's role shifts to overseeing whether the self-management system is functioning to advance the nonprofit's mission, rather than directing the organization. Leadership is distributed throughout: instead of flowing from the top down, small groups are empowered to lead within clearly defined zones of autonomy, with systems built to coordinate activity without placing anyone in a position of hierarchical authority. SELC launched as a WSDN in 2009 and has since built the most legally documented framework for democratizing governance within the 501(c)(3) structure, including bylaws templates and practitioner guides. The WSDN model is philosophically aligned with both Holistic Organizations and Sociocracy as described in this Sourcebook, and is most distinctive in its attention to the legal architecture that makes worker self-governance compliant — the piece that most other governance reform models leave for organizations to work out on their own. Primary resource: theselc.org/worker_selfdirected_nonprofits. Peer network and annual cohort program: Nonprofit Democracy Network (theselc.org).

Laws and Legal Frameworks

Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 (Pub. L. 105-19; 42 U.S.C. § 14501 et seq.). A federal law that gives volunteers of nonprofit organizations and governmental entities limited protection from personal liability for harm caused while acting within the scope of their volunteer responsibilities. It speaks directly to the recurring “who gets sued?” question raised across several of these models, and to the position of unpaid board members. Its central provision reads:

§ 14503(a) Liability protection for volunteers. — Except as provided in subsections (b), (c), and (e), no volunteer of a nonprofit organization or governmental entity shall be liable for harm caused by an act or omission of the volunteer on behalf of the organization or entity if—

- (1) the volunteer was acting within the scope of the volunteer's responsibilities in the nonprofit organization or governmental entity at the time of the act or omission;
- (2) if appropriate or required, the volunteer was properly licensed, certified, or authorized by the appropriate authorities for the activities or practice in the State in which the harm occurred, where the activities were or practice was undertaken within the scope of the volunteer's responsibilities in the nonprofit organization or governmental entity;
- (3) the harm was not caused by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed by the volunteer; and

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(4) the harm was not caused by the volunteer operating a motor vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or other vehicle for which the State requires the operator or the owner of the vehicle, craft, or vessel to (A) possess an operator's license; or (B) maintain insurance.

Note. The Act does not shield willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, or reckless misconduct, and it does not limit the liability of the organization itself. States may opt out or attach additional conditions, so its effect varies by state.

Additional references will be added throughout Spring and Summer 2026.

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Materials will be added here after the MOMENTUM 2026 launch
and in an ongoing way through the end of 2026.

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Section 7: Rolling Speaker Series



Throughout history, artists and cultural experiences have been our lighthouses—cutting through deep darkness, revealing truth, illuminating futures we couldn't yet name.

That light has never belonged to one person. A lighthouse is an ecosystem. It takes builders and visionaries to design it. Fuel to keep it alive. People willing to tend it in the harshest conditions. Smaller lights—lanterns, flashlights—to reach what the largest beams can't. And a culture of navigators who know how to recognize light, trust it, and move by it.

So what happens when we look at our cultural landscape this way? Who are the builders, the keepers, the fuel, the travelers? What are we actually sustaining, and what are we letting go dark? And what would it take for each of us to think differently about our roles, act differently within them, and together illuminate a future that is alive, responsive, and always becoming?

National Rolling Speaker Series

One theme, five speakers, one threaded conversation across the full summer. Each speaker responds not only to the prompt but to the ideas raised at every site before theirs. All speakers reconvene at the culminating webinar on September 8, 2026.

Calida N. Jones (San Juan)

Co-Founder, Creative Evolutions; Musician, Social Justice Advocate, and Educator

Calida N. Jones is a violinist, social justice advocate, educator, and Co-Founder of Creative Evolutions, the convening organization behind MOMENTUM. With more than 25 years of experience in performance, workshop and curriculum development, and equity-centered organizational leadership, she has guided arts and cultural organizations across the country in advancing inclusion, access, and community-rooted practice. A TEDx speaker and keynote at the Yale Innovation Summit, she has been honored with an Aspen Ideas Festival scholar fellowship, Grammy Music Educator Award nomination, and the Connecticut Arts Hero Award, among others. Her personal mission centers on ensuring that those with limited resources have access to arts opportunities, and on correlating the art of teaching to life skills and community

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building. In MOMENTUM's rolling speaker series, Calida speaks to the lighthouse metaphor through the lens of the keeper: the sustaining practices and conditions that make continuous illumination possible.

Speaking at the TCG National Conference kickoff, San Juan, Puerto Rico, June 10-13, 2026.

Dr. Lee Bynum (Oklahoma)

Director of Arts Administration, City University of New York

Dr. Lee Bynum is a composer, librettist, dramaturg, and nationally recognized arts leader whose twenty-year career bridges creative practice, strategic nonprofit leadership, and transformative work in equity and education. They currently serve as Director of Arts Administration at the City University of New York and on the faculty of Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. Previously, they served as Chief Education Officer at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, where they directed programs reaching hundreds of thousands annually, and as the founding Vice President of Impact at Minnesota Opera, where they launched the first department in classical music devoted entirely to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. Dr. Bynum is a Columbia University graduate and their research on race and culture has been published by the university presses of Oxford, Harvard, and NYU, among others.

Speaking at the University of Oklahoma, June 26-27, 2026.

Heather Sauyaq Jean Kwamboka Gordon, PhD (Iñupiaq) (Bahamas)

Principal Consultant, Sauyaq Solutions; enrolled member, Nome Eskimo Community

Dr. Heather Sauyaq Jean Gordon is Iñupiaq and an enrolled Tribal member of the Nome Eskimo Community. She owns and leads Sauyaq Solutions, an Indigenous minority and female-owned consulting business. With more than 13 years of experience in participatory research, she works with Indigenous Peoples and Tribes on community capacity building, emphasizing the role of self-determination in community sustainability and wellbeing. Her research and consulting spans Indigenous Knowledge and Methodologies, Historical Trauma, Futures Research, Indigenous Self-determination, Arctic Migration, Missing and Murdered Indigenous People, Restorative Justice, Indigenous data sovereignty, and Indigenous Culture as a Preventive and Protective Factor. She gives keynotes, workshops, and media interviews and is an active partner in research collaborations.

Speaking at the University of the Bahamas, July 14-15, 2026.

Lauren Ruffin (Seattle)

Lewis Latimer Fellow, Edison Awards; Governing Board, Black Innovation Alliance

Lauren Ruffin has spent the better part of two decades leading organizations that sit at the edges of what's expected — a national arts nonprofit with 75,000 members, a worker-owned cooperative, an innovation campus in Detroit, and a university futures lab. The through-line is less the sector than the work itself: building distributed teams, managing complex budgets, navigating the gap between what institutions say they value and what they actually do, and making things run well in places that don't always have a playbook. She holds a J.D. from

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Howard University School of Law and a degree in Political Science from Mount Holyoke College, and has moved fluidly across nonprofit administration, consulting, government affairs, and the classroom. Her current work centers on how emerging technologies — virtual and augmented reality, conversational AI, and immersive media — change the way people navigate the world, access public spaces, and tell their own stories; as a Lewis Latimer Fellow through the Edison Awards program, she explores how communities can shape and leverage AI on their own terms, asking who gets to design the tools, and for whom. Based in Michigan, she currently serves on the governing board of Black Innovation Alliance and has previously served on the boards of Main Street Phoenix Project and Black Girls Code.

Speaking at Seattle University / Cornish School of the Arts, July 25-26, 2026.

Lanxing Fu (Minneapolis)

Co-Director, HERE Arts Center; Co-Director, Superhero Clubhouse

Lanxing Fu is a Chinese-American multidisciplinary theater artist rooted in social practice. She is a writer, producer, performer, and educator, and Co-Director of Superhero Clubhouse, an interdisciplinary collective creating theater for climate justice. Her work has been seen throughout NYC in spaces such as The Public Theater, LaMaMa ETC, Brick Theater, and Baryshnikov Arts Center, and developed with institutions nationally and internationally. Previously Producing Associate with SITI Company, she has been a speaker and facilitator with Theatre Communications Group, The New School, Virginia Tech, Columbia University, and others. Her writings on theater, climate arts, and intersectional justice have been published across multiple platforms. She currently serves as Co-Director of HERE Arts Center.

Speaking at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, August 6, 2026.

Speaker Series Talks

Full responses are added here as the series rolls out, beginning with the inaugural talk at the TCG National Conference kickoff. Each speaker responds to the shared prompt above and to the talks that came before.

The Lighthouse and the Ecosystem

Calida N. Jones · Rolling Speaker Series, Speaker #1 · TCG Kickoff, San Juan · June 12, 2026

I believe we've actually been telling ourselves an incomplete story about the lighthouse. When most of us picture a lighthouse, we picture the bright, stunning beam — the thing you can actually see, the thing that's visible, the thing that's celebrated, that's alive, the thing everyone points to and says, "Oh my gosh, there it is."

But rarely do we stop and consider everything required to make that light possible. The architects who imagined it. The builders who constructed it. The people who supplied the fuel. The keepers who maintained it through storms. The smaller lights — the lanterns, the flashlights, the guideposts — that reach places the main beam never could. And perhaps most

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importantly, the navigators: the people who knew how to recognize the light when they saw it, who trusted it enough to change course and move because of it.

What if our cultural ecosystem works the same way? What if artists are only one part of a much larger constellation of people responsible for illuminating possibility? What if funders, educators, administrators, policymakers, board members, cultural organizers, audience members, and community members aren't standing outside the ecosystem observing it, but are actually helping determine whether the light stays on?

And if that's true, then we have some harder questions to ask ourselves. Who is building the conditions for cultural light to exist? Who gets the green light? Who is tending it? Who is fueling it? Who is benefiting from it? Who has been expected to keep it running without support, recognition, or rest? And what parts of our ecosystem have we become so accustomed to overlooking and dismissing that we've mistaken their exhaustion for sustainability?

Because if we're being raw and honest, many of our cultural lighthouses are operating on extraordinary acts of sacrifice — internally, in our bodies, and inside the organizations we work for. We've normalized burnout and called it commitment. I don't believe my ancestors laid down their lives for me to live in physical and internal pain with no recourse. And don't you dare speak of the problems — because then you're seen as a burden, a liability, instead of a beam of hope, an impactor, a culture builder.

We've normalized scarcity and called it resilience. We've normalized fragility and called it innovation. And then we wonder why so many lights are struggling to stay on.

So perhaps the question isn't simply, how do we support artists? Perhaps the deeper question to interrogate is: what ecosystem are we actually building around them? What are we sustaining? What are we starving? What futures are we investing in — and what futures are we quietly allowing to disappear? Because every decision we make — every policy, every investment, every partnership, every invitation, every omission — is helping determine what gets illuminated and what remains unseen.

The future is not shaped solely by the people holding the brightest lights. It is shaped by the people who decide where the light goes. And that requires a different kind of responsibility. Not admiration — participation. Not observation — stewardship. Not "What's my title?" but "What is my role in ensuring the light reaches further than it does today?"

Because the future of our work isn't a destination we're moving toward. It's something we're actively illuminating together. And the question each of us must wrestle with is this: when future generations look back at this moment, what will they say we chose to keep illuminated? Power? Control? And what will they say we allowed to go dark?

That's the piece I want you all to wrestle with.



Section 8: Local Speaker Panels

Each MOMENTUM convening features a site-specific panel of local and regional voices.

University of Oklahoma — June 26-27, 2026 – Local Panel

heather ahtone

Director, Curatorial Affairs, First Americans Museum (Chickasaw Nation citizen)

heather ahtone is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and descendant of strong Choctaw women. She currently serves as Director of Curatorial Affairs at First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City, and has worked in the Native arts community since 1993. Dr. ahtone has established a career as a curator, arts writer, and cultural researcher, and maintains service on numerous advisory boards advocating for Indigenous knowledge and scholarship. She is a board member of the Association of Art Museum Curators, Native American Art Studies Association, Clara Luper Civil Rights Center, and serves on the Smithsonian's American Art Journal editorial board. Her research explores the intersection between Indigenous cultural knowledge and contemporary arts. She earned her doctoral degree in Interdisciplinary Studies (Art History, Anthropology, Native American Studies) at the University of Oklahoma, and has published widely for institutions including the National Gallery of Art, Crystal Bridges Museum, and the Heard Museum.

Speaking at the University of Oklahoma, June 26-27, 2026.

Cliff Hudson

Board President, OKC Rep; Former Chairman and CEO, Sonic Corp.; Managing Director, DIA Equity Partners

Cliff Hudson spent 35 years at Oklahoma City-based Sonic Corp., serving as Chairman of the Board and CEO of a publicly held company with more than 3,500 locations in 45 states. He currently serves as Board President of OKC Rep and is a Managing Director of DIA Equity Partners. Hudson's civic leadership has included service as Chairman of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (a Clinton presidential appointment), trustee of the Ford Foundation, past Chairman of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Chairman of the Oklahoma City Public Schools Board from 2001 to 2008, where he led a \$530 million turnaround of a 40,000-student urban school system. He is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma and Georgetown University Law Center, and is the author of the memoir *Master of None* (HarperCollins), which challenges conventional thinking about mastery, leadership, and success.

Speaking at the University of Oklahoma, June 26-27, 2026.

Trent Riley

Executive Director, Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center

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Trent Riley is an arts and culture leader, author, and advocate for expanding access to arts and arts education. As Executive Director of Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center, he leads one of the region’s most dynamic cultural institutions, overseeing exhibitions, education initiatives, fundraising, and long-term strategic growth. Under his direction, the organization has deepened partnerships with major cultural institutions, expanded statewide educational access, and reinforced its commitment to free admission. Prior to Oklahoma Contemporary, Trent spent nearly a decade at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, contributing to more than \$30 million in revenue for the institution. A 2019 Oklahoma Book Award finalist, he has received recognition from Publishers Weekly and The Wall Street Journal, and was named a 40 Under 40 honoree by The Journal Record in 2023.

Speaking at the University of Oklahoma, June 26-27, 2026.

University of the Bahamas — July 14-15, 2026 – Local Panel

Speakers for the Bahamas convening will be announced as the series develops.

Seattle University / Cornish School of the Arts — July 25-26, 2026 – Local Panels

Randy Engstrom

Director, Seattle Center; former Director, City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture; Co-Founder, Third Way Creative

Randy Engstrom has been a passionate advocate and organizer of cultural and community development for more than two decades. He currently serves as Director of Seattle Center, appointed in March 2026, following eight years as Director of the City of Seattle’s Office of Arts & Culture, where he expanded investments in granting and public art while establishing new programs in arts education, cultural space affordability, and racial equity. Before city service, he founded and directed the Youngstown Cultural Arts Center in West Seattle, converting a vacant school building into a multidisciplinary community hub. He has also been Co-Founder and Principal of Third Way Creative, a collaborative consulting studio focused on cultural policy and racial equity, and has served as Adjunct Faculty at the Seattle University Arts Leadership Program. He is a graduate of the Evergreen State College and holds an Executive Master’s in Public Administration from the University of Washington’s Evans School. Americans for the Arts named him an Emerging Leader; City Arts Magazine called him “The Advocate.”

Speaking at Seattle University / Cornish School of the Arts, July 25-26, 2026.

Brian J. Carter

Executive Director, 4Culture (King County’s cultural funding agency)

Brian J. Carter is the Executive Director of 4Culture, King County’s cultural funding and services agency, where he provides vision and leadership for a grant-making organization that supports arts, heritage, preservation, and public art across the region. Before joining 4Culture, Carter

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served as Director of Interpretation at the Burke Museum of Natural History & Culture, Museum Director at the Oregon Historical Society, and was a founding staff member and Deputy Director/Head Curator of the Northwest African American Museum in Seattle. He is a graduate of Stanford University (American history, with honors) and holds a Master of Arts in Museology from the University of Washington. He is the Immediate Past President of the Board of the Association of African American Museums and serves on the advisory board of the UW Museum Studies Certificate Program.

Speaking at Seattle University / Cornish School of the Arts, July 25-26, 2026.

Chrissy Shimizu

Executive Director, Wing Luke Museum

Chrissy Shimizu is the Executive Director of the Wing Luke Museum, the only pan-Asian Pacific American community-based museum in the United States, located in Seattle's Chinatown-International District. Born and raised in Seattle with deep roots in the neighborhood, she previously served as Executive Director of Puget Sound Sage and, earlier, as the museum's Director of Individual Giving. She holds a B.A. in Political Economy from the Evergreen State College.

Speaking at Seattle University / Cornish School of the Arts, July 25-26, 2026.

Arts Prescribing Panel

James Miles

Moderator — Assistant Professor, Arts Leadership, Seattle University; Chief Growth Officer, Path with Art

James Miles teaches Arts Leadership at Seattle University and serves as Chief Growth Officer at Path with Art. He moderates the Arts Prescribing Panel.

Speaking at Seattle University / Cornish School of the Arts, July 26, 2026.

Jonnae Tillman

Assistant Clinical Professor; Director, Psychiatric Mental Health Program, Seattle University

Jonnae Tillman is an Assistant Clinical Professor at Seattle University, where she directs the Psychiatric Mental Health Program.

Speaking at Seattle University / Cornish School of the Arts, July 26, 2026.

Candace Jackson

Chief of Community Engagement & Foundation Executive Director, Neighborcare

Candace Jackson serves as Chief of Community Engagement and as Foundation Executive Director at Neighborcare.

Speaking at Seattle University / Cornish School of the Arts, July 26, 2026.

Ayan Muhammad

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Program Engagement Specialist, Path with Art

Ayan Muhammad is a Program Engagement Specialist at Path with Art.

Speaking at Seattle University / Cornish School of the Arts, July 26, 2026.

Minneapolis College of Art and Design — August 5-6, 2026 – Local Panel

Anne Halvorson

Brand Strategist and Advertising Executive; Adjunct Faculty, Creative Entrepreneurship, MCAD

Anne Halvorson is a seasoned Brand Strategist and Advertising Executive with over 20 years working for leading independent creative agencies including Wieden + Kennedy, Fallon, PMH, and Someplace. She also teaches as Adjunct Faculty in the Creative Entrepreneurship department at MCAD. Six years living and working in China shaped her emphasis on human-centric approaches to solving today's biggest challenges, and the conviction that it always starts with empathy and stepping into the shoes of the people you serve.

Speaking at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, August 5, 2026.

Carolina Ortiz

Associate Executive Director, COPAL

Hailing from Zacatecas, Mexico, Carolina Ortiz embodies the spirit of resilience and determination. Her passion for social justice is deeply rooted in her personal journey as a DREAMer. As Associate Executive Director at COPAL, her work spans environmental advocacy, coalition management, and steering key legislative initiatives. She is recognized for her expertise in legislative matters, media advocacy, and navigating Minnesota's Legislative process, having served as a key player in passing significant pieces of legislation into law. Her ability to cultivate relationships locally and nationally marks her as a distinctive voice representing both COPAL and the aspirations of marginalized communities.

Speaking at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, August 5, 2026.

Zelia Gonzalez (they/them)

School redesign coach; community organizer; Master's candidate, Creative Leadership, MCAD

Zelia Gonzalez recently moved to Minneapolis from NYC and is already deeply rooted in Minnesota. By day they coach school leaders in redesigning systems to move from conventional teaching toward student-interest-led learning. By night they perform clown and improv, organize their neighborhood block party, and build community through local organizing. Over the past year, Zelia has joined neighbors in resisting Operation Metro Surge through patrols, art, and collective action. They are currently pursuing a Master's in Creative Leadership at MCAD in Whittier, Minneapolis.

Speaking at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, August 5, 2026.

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Section 9: Collaborators, Sponsors, and Contributors

Collaborators and Sponsors for MOMENTUM include:

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[Theatre Communications Group](#) | *National Co-Presenter*



[The University of Oklahoma](#) | *June 26–27, 2026 Host*

[University of the Bahamas](#) | *July 14–15, 2026 Host*

[Seattle University / Cornish School of the Arts](#) | *July 25–26, 2026 Host*

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Additional materials will be added here after the MOMENTUM 2026 launch
and in an ongoing way through the end of 2026.

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Participants and Collaborators

The following individuals contributed to MOMENTUM 2026.

Grace Archer — *A Red Orchid Theatre*
Carlos Armesto — *Pitch Black Experience / Theatre C*
Kate Bass — *Global Music Collective*
Susan Bowman
Rob Bradshaw — *Play Co*
Kate Busselle — *University of Oklahoma*
Wynne Chan — *Golden Thread*
Doug Clayton — *Creative Evolutions*
Alex Cogburn — *VORTEX Repertory Co.*
Emily Comisar — *Oklahoma City Repertory Theater*
Bonnie Cullum — *VORTEX Repertory Co.*
Alexis Davis
Carlos Diaz Stoop — *CDS Creative Productions*
Estefanía Fadul — *Ensemble Studio Theatre*
Fahimeh Foudazi — *University of Oklahoma*
Patrick Gallardo
Miranda Gilbert — *Oklahoma Arts Council*
Seth Gordon — *University of Oklahoma*
Kyle Haden — *Carnegie Mellon University*
Andrew Hazer — *SDC (Stage Directors and Choreographers Society)*
Tad Janes — *Maryland Ensemble Theatre*
Kevin Johnson-Sather — *East West Players*
Calida Jones — *Creative Evolutions*
Kelsey Karper — *Factory Obscura*
Rebecca Kinslow — *Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition (OVAC)*
Claudia Nolan — *Artist Communities Alliance*
Kyle Nudo
Deliana Olmo — *BYDOT PR*
Asia Palmer — *Creative Evolutions*
Kristin Patton — *Ensemble Consulting*
Brian Isaac Phillips — *Cincinnati Shakespeare Co.*
Marta Rainer — *Wellesley College*
Desiree Ruiloba — *Ghost Light Theatre Company*
Jeff Ryder — *Virginia Stage Co.*
Jaynie Saunders Tiller — *New Georges*

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Joanna Sheehan Bell — *SETC (Southeastern Theatre Conference)*

Sheri Tarren — *A Red Orchid Theatre*

Owen Thompson

Alisha Tonsic — *Theatre Communications Group (TCG)*

Yuanting Zhao — *OU Helmerich School of Drama*

...along with additional contributors who chose to remain anonymous.

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Section 10: Other Topic Areas for Future Exploration

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Section 11: Glossary

Across the MOMENTUM convenings, participants discovered that they often did not share a common understanding of what everyday terms actually meant. This glossary is not intended as a robust, field-wide reference. It is a working record of the common agreements — and disagreements — about what frequently used terms mean in the context of the MOMENTUM work.

Certified vs. certification — Participants separated the act (“certification,” “licensing”) from the status (“certified,” “licensed”). The Licensing/Certification model was read either as a board that does the certifying or as a board that has itself been certified; the group leaned toward the latter.

Collective board — Used two ways: a single board serving several organizations (each contributing staff), or one person holding seats on several organizations’ boards. Similar in spirit, structurally different.

Community — Rarely defined the same way twice — the arts community, a city, a neighborhood, an organization’s audience, or a specific demographic. Who counts as “the community,” and who decides, changes what a model actually does.

Complementary (to what?) — In Complementary Internal Boards, participants repeatedly asked what the board is complementary to — a reference point that was never fully pinned down.

Conflict of interest — Flagged as running “all over” the funding discussion and needing a definition. Read variously as a donor controlling their own money, a staff member on the board, or an artist on the board (“complicated but possible”), with no shared line for when it applies.

Consent vs. consensus — In Sociocracy, held apart: consent (no principled objection) rather than consensus (everyone agrees). It was also noted that consent-based decision-making assumes no hard legal obligations sit with the body.

Consistency — In Network Boards (Central Oversight), heard both as healthy shared standards and as a risk that implies “one right way” across independent organizations with very different circumstances. Left under-specified.

Constituency — In Community Boards, contested on who defines the constituencies, whether seats mirror demographics or weight groups equally, and whether the group is even askable (ten funders can be polled; “the Black community” cannot).

Fiduciary (fiduciary duty) — Treated as under-defined. Used loosely for general responsibility for the organization, and precisely for the specific legal duty that “holds the bag.” The open question was what it actually requires in each model.

Independent / independence — In Network Boards, unclear whether it means fiduciary/liability independence or simply operating separately from the other organizations.

Oversight — Read as under-defined alongside fiduciary duty. Debated as “oversight of what?” — the organization, its staff, or peer organizations — and whether a body doing the work can credibly oversee it.

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Related / relatedness — In Network Boards (Mutual Support), “how are the member institutions related?” drew questions: by discipline, mission, or structure (e.g., spaceless/nomadic organizations)? — and whether organizations that compete can meaningfully oversee one another.

Self-contained — In the Partner Boards description, read as unclear: participants asked what it means and how a “self-contained” board stays connected to the mission.

Semi-autonomous circle — In Sociocracy, left undefined: who lives in a circle (staff, board, community?), and what “semi-” autonomy means — which decisions are only partly yours.

Sponsorship (vs. control) — Distinguished from governance: sponsorship earns perks or recognition but not control, whereas control is “the shareholder thing.” Offered as the line between Funder Boards and ordinary sponsorship.

Structural vs. psychological change — Several models (especially Holistic Organizations) can be adopted as a full structural restructure or as a mindset/decision-making shift without changing the structure; the same model name was used to mean either.

Working board — Used as if its meaning were shared, but participants asked for it to be pinned down, especially around Active Leadership Boards and the Minimally Viable Board. The request was for a definition tying it to the conventional term.