

# Governance Matters

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## Seminar - Policy Governance® Creating Organizational Clarity and Board Accountability

Tuesday, January 22, 2013

5:00-8:00 pm



*A resource for nonprofits. A partner for philanthropy.*

Policy Governance® uses policies laid out in advance to help the board clarify its role and to define the relationship between the board and the administrative leader (executive director, superintendent, head of school or CEO). This seminar will provide you with a solid understanding of the principles and practices of this fast growing approach to nonprofit governance.

These are some of the issues addressed in this seminar:

- How should a board provide direction to and evaluate the executive director?
- How can the board evaluate if the organization is achieving its intended end results?
- What is constructive oversight of the organization?

Policy Governance is being used by many churches, nonprofit organizations, and school boards in our region, including Puget Consumers Coop, Page Ahead, Food Lifeline, Northwest Environmental Education Council, Campus Partnerships for Health, Social Venture Partners, 501 Commons, and the Lake Washington, Mercer Island, University Place, and Issaquah school districts.

### Who should attend?

- Board members and executive directors who want to better understand how to more clearly define the authority of the executive and the role of board members.
- Executive Directors and board members considering whether Policy Governance would be a good fit for their organization.
- New members of Policy Governance® boards who need an introduction to the theory and practices of a PG board.

The cost for this seminar is \$100 per person. Partial service grants are available for organizations with budgets under \$100,000. And group discounts are available.

### Seminar Leader

This seminar is sponsored by 501 Commons and will be led by 501 Commons Executive Director **Nancy Long**. Nancy has participated in a Policy Governance board for over 10 years and has facilitated many Policy Governance trainings.

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**Location:** Wallingford Community Senior Center  
4649 Sunnyside Avenue N. Suite 140  
Seattle, WA 98103

**RSVP:** by January 15  
206-682-6704 x103 or  
[emily@501commons.org](mailto:emily@501commons.org)



## What is Policy Governance?

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There are many articles and resources describing the responsibilities of a nonprofit board. Yet most boards struggle to define their role and ensure their effectiveness. Policy Governance® is a systematic approach whereby a board establishes policies that clearly define the role of the board, how the board will do its work and the relationship between the board and the Executive Director. In addition, the board defines the specific results the organization has been developed to provide. The work of the board is focused on ensuring that these benefits are being realized.

Policy Governance was developed by John Carver and has been applied to boards of hospitals, churches, nonprofit organizations, for profit companies and school boards.

The approach differs from other ideas about governance in that the board retains the authority, except that which it specifically delegates to the executive director. This delegation defines not what the executive director can do (a list too long to create) but what the limitations are on his or her actions. The board routinely monitors the activities of the organization and makes connections with the people the organization is designed to impact (customers) in order to assure that the organization is, in fact, doing what it set out to do.

Policy Governance frees up the board to act as the group that represents the interests of the community and those who care about the outcome of the organization's work. The board focuses on the long-term accomplishment of the organization's purpose, rather than granting permission to the staff to carry out the administrative activities of the organization.

A Policy Governance board operates with a sense of group responsibility. The board, not the staff, is responsible for the operations of the board and for ensuring that the board initiates and establishes policies that help the organization achieve its purpose. Board members are obligated not to let individual board members impede the board from accomplishing its work and the board is responsible for enforcing its own standards of behavior and accountable for the results of the organization.

Studies have found that board members and CEO/ED's have a high satisfaction with Policy Governance. The system avoids both meddling and rubber stamping by the board. Board-staff interactions are enriched. The approach supports true servant leadership and strategic governance.

### About 501 Commons

We help nonprofits succeed in building a better world. Affordable coaching and consulting services are available thanks to 300 professionals in our service corps. Our bookkeeping service can help you manage your money while you manage your mission. We also create programs to help our philanthropic partners meet their goals. Visit [501commons.org](http://501commons.org) - a first stop for resources and referrals to service providers.

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