

Foster an Intentional and Principle-Driven Governance Culture

Envision the culture you want to shape your board decisions, practices, and relationships.

Governance culture in a nonprofit organization is very powerful but hard to see. It's shaped by the board and staff leadership's values and life experiences, as well as by assumptions, norms and habits.

This collection of tools enables your leadership to foster a culture that:

- Strengthens governance performance and board recruitment
- Improves decision-making in a complex environment
- Addresses board dynamics, and the staff partnership
- Advances equity commitments
- Better engages communities.



What is governance culture?

Learn more in our resource: [Governance culture in a nonprofit organization](#)

This tool is part of the Reimagining Governance Lab, a virtual hub for governance innovation full of resources, tools, and stories. [Visit the Lab.](#)

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Governance culture activity menu

A quick reflection: Explore your governance culture

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Using the *Governance culture impact wheel* and a conversation guide explore how your governance culture manifests in practices, decisions, and relationships – from power dynamics to board recruitment, from equity work to decision-making.

A conversation guide: Align your governance with your declared organizational values

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Embed your governance in the organization's declared values so they impact strategic choices; who makes decisions and how; interpersonal relationships; protocols; and other ways that your governance works.

Develop a snapshot of your governance culture

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Through an online survey and sensemaking conversation, generate a picture of your current governance culture and then explore how to shape a desired culture moving forward.

Create and activate your *Governance Principles*

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This two-step process envisions the principles your board and staff leadership want to drive governance; captures them in a living document; and embeds them in practices, relationships and decisions. The goal is a more intentional governance that's not just shaped by unspoken assumptions, old habits, and strong personalities.

Take a deeper dive into your governance culture

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Whether a new organization shaping its culture or a mature one ready for renewal, this more intensive journey starts with a snapshot of your current governance culture; envisions compelling *Governance Principles*; and puts them in action moving forward.