



The Importance of Good Governance



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National Governance Committee

To be an Effective and Responsible Servant Leader: The Importance of Good Governance



To be an Effective and Responsible Servant Leader: Good Governance



Our Five Virtues Prayer

St. Vincent de Paul,
Pray for us, that in our **simplicity** we may
always find honest words of love and comfort.

Pray for us, that our **humility** leads us to
seek God's glory, not our own.

Pray for us, that with **gentleness** we offer
food to the hungry and shelter to the homeless.

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Our Five Virtues Prayer (continued)

Pray for us, that with **selflessness** we give
of our time, our possessions and ourselves.

Pray for us, that our **zeal** to share Christ's
charity may light fires in the hearts of all we serve.

Amen

Why is Good Governance Important?





**What are the twelve scariest words in the
Society of St. Vincent de Paul?**



**I am from the Governance Committee, and
I am here to help!**

What is Governance?



Governance refers to the **structures** that oversee the Society's activities to ensure it fulfills its mission effectively and responsibly.



Why do we need good governance?



Builds Trust and Credibility



Good governance practices help the Society build trust with donors, funders, and the communities they serve.

This trust is essential for:

- Attracting and retaining talented staff and volunteers
- Securing funding and donations
- Maintaining a positive reputation
- Recruitment



Good governance makes the Society's functioning transparent and allows us to hold each other accountable:

- Hold the organization accountable to its stakeholders: Pastors
Donors
Our Families



Good governance makes the Society's functioning transparent and allows us to hold each other accountable:



- Hold the organization accountable to its stakeholders: Those we serve
Potential Vincentians
- Minimize risks of financial mismanagement and legal troubles
- Helps us become more effective in our mission



Who is responsible for good governance?



Good governance is the responsibility of the leadership of Conferences and Councils.





Good governance needs to be written down

The fundamental governance document is your Bylaws

Also: Tax Exempt status requirements

990

Annual Reports

Proper election procedures

Communication

Training for Officers and Board/Council Members



Good Governance and Bylaws

Bylaws are internal governing rules for an organization, such as a corporation or non-profit, that define its structure, operations, and decision-making processes, covering aspects like meetings, officer duties, voting, and amendments.



**Governance documents are useless
if they simply sit on a shelf.**



Ask yourself:



*When was the last time your Conference or Council collectively read and/or reviewed your bylaws?

*When was the last time your Council collectively reviewed your Conferences' annual reports or, at least, summaries?

*When was the last time someone in your Council was tasked with reviewing, in detail, the Bylaws and other governance documents of your Conferences?



Ask yourself:

*If you have special works, are their Bylaws current and in compliance with the National Council's recommendations?

*Are your Conferences aggregated or on the path to aggregation? Do you have a process to encourage and monitor aggregation?

*Is your Council instituted? If not, do you have a process that you are working towards institution?



Ask yourself:

Is someone within your council tasked with making sure your conferences are up-to-date with their tax-exempt status requirements?

- FEINS
- 990's
- Requirements with Secretaries of State





Ask yourself:

- *Are good financial controls in place and utilized both at the Council and Conference levels?
- *Is someone at the Council level tasked with making sure Conferences have a spiritual advisor, and if not, helping them recruit and train a spiritual advisor?

Financial controls

[fai-'næn-fəl kən-'trəʊlz] • *noun*

The processes and procedures put in place by an organization to ensure the accuracy, integrity, and proper management of its financial resources, minimizing risks of fraud or mismanagement.



Who is responsible for good governance?

Ultimately we all are!

If you see something, say something.



But do Vincentians know who to contact if they perceive issues with governance?

If you feel you have issues with governance, please do not ignore it or kick the can down the road – **it will only get worse.**

Please face your governance issues head on:

- Reach out early to your Council President or Regional Vice President – he or she is there to help.





Role of the Standards of Excellence (SOE)

Resolution 119 (2015)

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The Standards of Excellence provide

- CRITERIA – what do you really need to do
- URGENCY – which of these should be addressed first and why

The criteria came from:

- our Rule
- requirements of federal, state, and local governments
- requirements of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops
- well accepted practices in nonprofit governance

Standards of Excellence is a tool to achieve good governance

The Standards of Excellence should be a regular annual practice, just like the Annual Report.

They are broken down into three sections:

You can think of them as

red light, yellow light, green light

Situations





Required Practices

Red Light

- All Home Visits and other interviews are made by two Vincentians
- The Conference maintains a bank account separate from the parish, under the control of the Conference Treasurer
- The Conference has 501(c)(3) tax exemption, either on its own or through its Council; filing a 990 annually or providing the input required for the Council's 990



Red Light

- The Conference President has served no more than two consecutive 3-year terms
- No donations are used to fund other charities no matter how worthy



SOE consists of 3 documents



Questionnaire:
the review questions



Notes:
explanations and examples



Report Sheet:
What you learned
and what you will do.

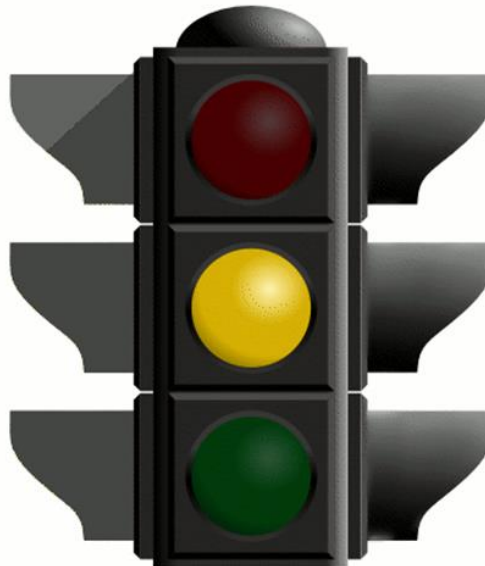
- NOTE: at the Conference level there is a set of minimum requirements together.



Standard Operating Procedures

Yellow Light

- The Conference meets regularly and frequently, and not less often than twice a month.
- The Conference attends District meetings and takes part in programs and events sponsored by their District/Diocesan Councils.
- What percent of Conference members have attended Ozanam Orientation? What is the plan for those who have not?





Green Light

- Does the Council have a Governance training program? (for Councils)
- Does the Conference have a file/list of local resources for the members to share with friends in need?
- Do you have a Voice for the Poor representative?
- How many members have attended a National/Regional meeting?

The SOE is not a report card where there are penalties

They are a prioritization tool

to identify items that need to get done this year and items that should get done in the next year.





SOE Process



Questionnaire:
the review questions



Notes:
explanations and examples



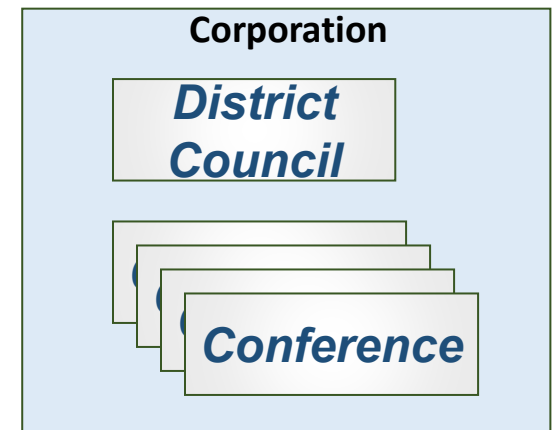
Report Sheet:
What you learned and
what you will do.

- Start by reading the **Questionnaire** together.
- If the answer isn't obviously yes, consult the **Notes** file.
- Decide what you're going to do *this year* and add to your own annual plan.
- Provide results and plan to your parent Council in the **Report Sheet**.



Terminology: What is a SALE?

- **SALE = Stand-alone legal entity.**
- For example, all District Councils in the Archdiocese of Seattle are SALEs.
- Four of the District Councils have **combined** their Conferences and the Council into a single corporation.
 - All Conferences use Council's EIN.
 - Council files one 990 for the whole group.
 - Council directs administration/bookkeeping.





See Survival Kit Webinar for:

- A tutorial on incorporation status and what it means. (useful if some Conferences are separately incorporated).
- A template to keep track of your key governance information.
- A practical tutorial on how to lay out your plan for the year without getting overwhelmed.
- Template for an annual plan: track what needs to be done and when.
- <https://members.ssvpusa.org/leadership-training/> under “Conference Presidents”



To Contact the National Governance Committee:

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Thank You for attending!



Questions?



You can also email
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