



Strategic Advocacy for Human Rights, Inc. (SAHR)

Board of Directors (BoD) Roles and Functions

ABOUT SAHR

Strategic Advocacy for Human Rights ([SAHR](#)) is a US-registered [501\(c\)\(3\)](#) non-profit legal action organization founded in 2008.

The Problem

Violence against women and girls is the most pressing human rights issue of our time. Deemed “devastatingly pervasive” by the [World Health Organization](#), it affects [1 in 3 women](#) and people from the LGBTQIA+¹ communities globally.

Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs²) fight to end sexual violence at the frontlines, in their communities around the world and at their own risk and peril, advocating on behalf of victims and survivors, who too often have no access to justice and crimes and violations remain unremedied. These Change Catalysts play a pivotal role in helping create new pathways to justice, fighting inside and outside courts, while bravely engaging key actors, forming coalitions of support and speaking as equals with government leaders.

WHRDs are charged with the responsibility of solving this devastating pandemic of sexual violence, but in order to do so, they need expert knowledge and skills, which traditional legal education has failed to provide.

SAHR's Solution

SAHR has been set up to amplify them. Our mission is to bring together and fuel a network of courageous WHRDs who collectively strengthen laws, policies and practices to end sexual violence through capacity building, outreach and advocacy. SAHR advocates span multiple geographies, religions, cultures, and ethnical backgrounds working in different languages and across many time zones. Together, we demonstrate the grit, perseverance, tenacity and courage needed to propel forward human rights movements and take actions, which are truly transformative. Together, we shift the existing narratives on sexual violence, while skillfully harnessing evidence and drafting winning legal and policy arguments from a feminist intersectional lens.

¹ The acronym LGBTQIA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and the countless affirmative ways in which people choose to self-identify.

² *WHRDs stands for Women Human Rights Defenders; the term WHRDs is understood as encompassing many different identities and therefore inclusive of LGBTIA*; this term may refer to an individual defender, a group of defenders, an organization, or a community.



Board functions

The Board of Directors supports the work of SAHR and provides mission-based leadership, oversight, strategic governance and guidance to the executive director and the nonprofit's other staff members.

While day-to-day operations are led by SAHR's team, the Board/Executive Director (ED) relationship is a partnership, and the appropriate involvement of the Board is both critical and expected.

The board ensures that the organization stays aligned with its mission and values in addition to complying with all federal and state laws.

The board of directors has three primary legal duties known as the “duty of care,” “duty of loyalty,” and “duty of obedience.”

Duty of Care: Take care of the nonprofit by ensuring prudent use of all assets, including facility, people, and good will;

Duty of Loyalty: Ensure that the nonprofit's activities and transactions are, first and foremost, advancing its mission; Recognize and disclose conflicts of interest; Make decisions that are in the best interest of the nonprofit corporation; not in the best interest of the individual board member (or any other individual or for-profit entity).

Duty of Obedience: Ensure that the nonprofit obeys applicable laws and regulations; follows its own bylaws; and that the nonprofit adheres to its stated corporate purposes/mission.

However, a board of directors does not exist solely to fulfill legal duties and serve as a fiduciary of the organization's assets. Board members also play very significant roles providing guidance to nonprofits by contributing to the organization's culture, strategic focus, effectiveness, and financial sustainability, as well as serving as ambassadors and advocates. Beyond fulfilling legal duties, board members can be important resources for the organization in multiple ways

Legal oversight

- The board ensures that SAHR is operating in accordance with its mission and the purpose for which it was granted tax-exempt status
- As safeguards of the public trust, board members are responsible for protecting SAHR's assets.
- The board ensures legal and ethical integrity and maintains accountability.
- The board serves as a trusted advisor to the ED as they, together with the Executive Leadership Team, develops and implements SAHR's 2022-2026 Global Strategy.
- The board assists with the drafting of SAHR's policies according to US non profit laws and approves them.
- The board partners with the ED and other board members to ensure that board resolutions are carried out.
- The board serves on committees or task forces and takes on special assignments.



Management oversight

- The board is responsible for ensuring that SAHR is being run ethically and in accordance with our mission, meeting legal, fiduciary and moral standards.
- The board selects the ED and decides their role.
- The board supports the ED and assesses their performance.
- The board has the power to hire and remove the ED.
- The board will ensure SAHR's commitment to a diverse board and staff that reflects the communities SAHR serves.
- The board contributes to an annual performance evaluation of the Legal director and the Operations director together with the ED.

Financial oversight

- The board provides proper financial oversight, including setting and approving an annual budget, approving audit reports, being informed of, and meeting all legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
- The board ensures there are financial resources, ensuring SAHR has the money it needs. In order for SAHR to credibly solicit contributions from foundations, organizations, and individuals, Board Members are asked to make an agreed-upon annual contribution of \$2,000 to secure SAHR's financial stability. This may include a personal donation, organizing fundraising events, or other fundraising activities.

Program oversight

- The board ensures that programs are in place to further the mission and goals of the organization.
- The board reviews outcomes and metrics created by SAHR for evaluating its programs, impact, and regularly makes sure that the organization measures its performance and effectiveness using those metrics.

Board terms/participation

SAHR's Board Members will serve a two-year term, after which they are eligible for re-appointment. Board meetings will be held virtually and quarterly, most likely at the end of January, April, July and October.

Board members responsibilities

SAHR's board member will be expected to:

- Know the organization's mission, Bylaws, any policies affecting decision makers (e.g. Conflict of Interest Policy), financial picture (budget and financials), where the organization is conducting activities, management structure and key employees.
- Attend, and conscientiously participate in board meetings.
- Review agenda and supporting materials prior to board meetings.



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- Prepare for, Participate fully in one or more board committees as/when they are established.
- Faithfully read and understand the organization's financial statements.
- Serve as active advocates and ambassadors for the organization and fully engage in identifying and securing the financial resources and partnerships necessary for the organization to advance its mission.
- Leverage connections, networks, and resources to develop collective action to fully achieve the organization's mission.
- Carry out an annual financial contribution of \$2,000, which may include a personal donation, organizing fundraising events, or other fundraising activities that reflect that priority.
- Reach out to existing contacts at family and other foundations to establish a first relationship.
- Help identify personal connections that can benefit the organization's fundraising and reputational standing, and can influence public policy.
- Represent SAHR to stakeholders, acting as an ambassador for the organization.
- Share SAHR's willingness to construct sustainable partnerships, develop a result-oriented strategy, always comply with integrity and continuously learn.

Furthermore, the board member is expected to :

- Follow the organization's bylaws, policies, and board resolutions.
- Sign an annual conflict-of-interest disclosure and update it during the year if necessary, as well as disclose potential conflicts before meetings and actual conflicts during meetings.
- Maintain confidentiality about all matters relating to the organization.

Service on SAHR's Board of Directors is without remuneration, except for administrative support, travel, and accommodation costs in relation to Board Members' duties.