



The Washington Post

2009 Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management

Information & Application

15TH ANNIVERSARY

About the Award

The Washington Post Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management is an annual award presented to a Washington, D.C. metropolitan area nonprofit organization for outstanding achievement in organization management. The award rewards management competence, recognizes innovation and promotes sustainable best practices that lead to excellence in nonprofit management. The award program is administered by The Center for Nonprofit Advancement. The 2009 Award marks the fifteenth year of competition.

The Award

One organization will receive The Washington Post Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management. A \$10,000 cash grant will be presented to the winning organization. The winning organization will also receive a full scholarship to the Georgetown University's Center for Public and Nonprofit Leadership Certificate Program (a nearly \$5,000 value). Up to four honorable mentions will also each be presented with a \$1,000 cash grant award.

All winners and honorable mention recipients are required to participate in the award presentation and workshop featuring management practices highlighted in the award selection process. If an organization is unable to participate in the workshop and presentation, it will sacrifice award program eligibility for the following year's competition.

The Co-Sponsors

The award is owned and administered by The Center for Nonprofit Advancement. The Washington Post serves as the main sponsor of this award. Additional financial and in-kind support is from Raffa, a Washington-based accounting and business management firm (www.raffa.com), as well as from the Center for Nonprofit Advancement Benefit's Trust (www.nonprofitadvancement.org). The scholarship to the Nonprofit Management Executive Certificate Program is provided by Georgetown University's Center for Public and Nonprofit Leadership. (<http://cpnl.georgetown.edu/>)

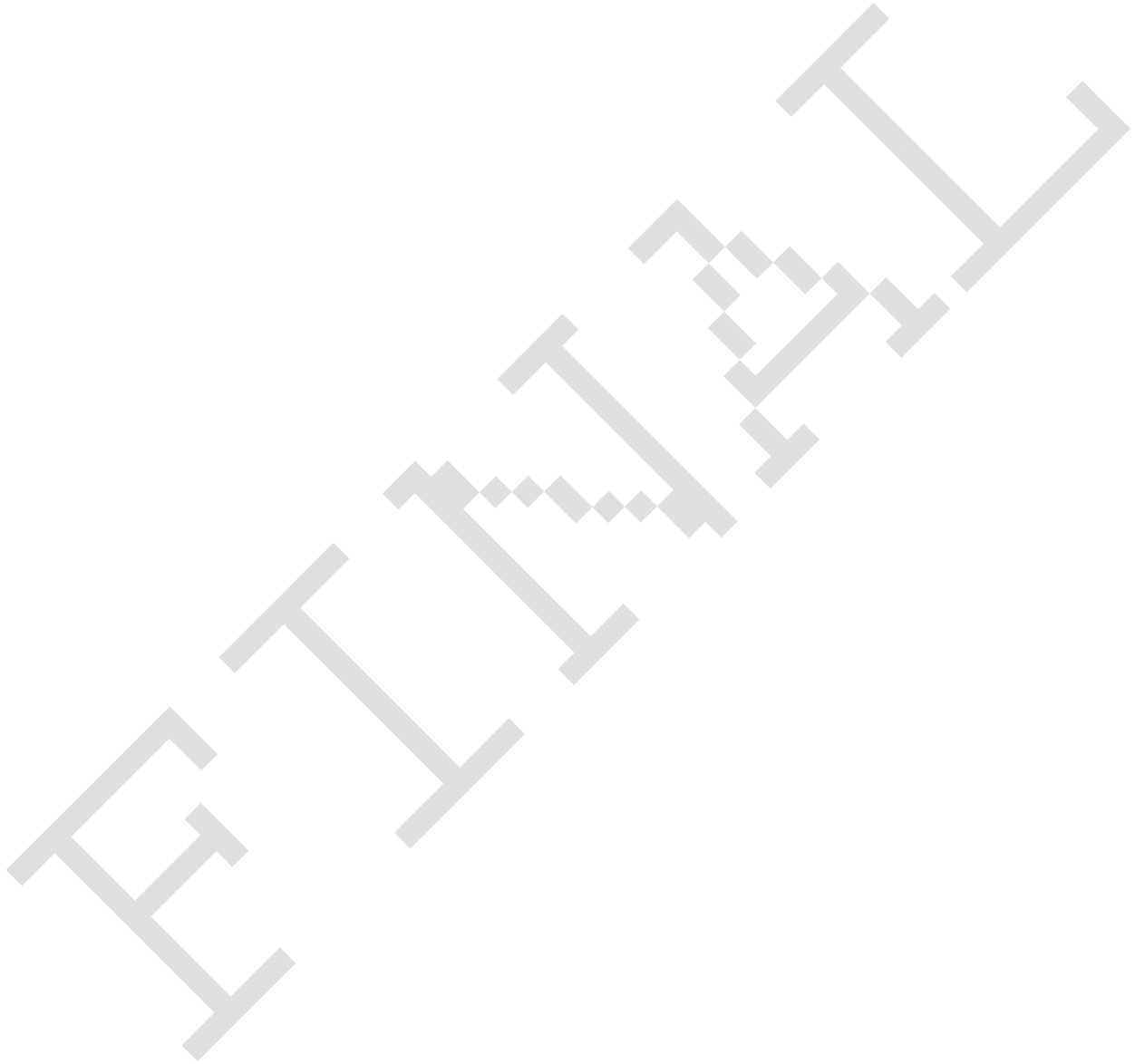
The Selection Process

The Award will be given after a three-step judging process including a two-part written application, and a site visit. The Award Selection Committee is an all-volunteer committee selected by the Center for Nonprofit Advancement. Although no member of the Center staff serves on the Selection Committee, the Center facilitates the award selection process. Representatives from The Washington Post and from Raffa may serve as non-voting observers on the Selection Committee. All information submitted for consideration will remain confidential to the Selection Committee.

Feedback

All applicants will receive brief written comments from the Selection Committee. Comments will be shared with the organization's key contact via e-mail within 60 days of notification that the organization is no longer in consideration for the Award. Finalists will receive comments after the naming of the 2009 winner.

The purpose of the feedback is to provide observations on management strengths and weaknesses and to encourage organizational growth to improve management. It is hoped that the feedback can assist with improving management practices for the organization as well as encourage greater success in future award competitions.



What Matters in this Award?



The Washington Post Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management rewards management competence, recognizes innovation and promotes sustainable best practices that lead to excellence in nonprofit management.

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Competence

Competence is the foundation for nonprofit management excellence. The Selection Committee assess organizational competence in two ways. Competent organizations meet standards for carrying out management activities. For example, competent financial management requires meeting financial accounting standards. In almost every management activity commonly accepted, and in many activities required, standards have been established. Competent organizations make clear, well thought out and deliberate decisions about how their management activities will be accomplished. For example, a competent organization is able to articulate how its financial management procedures are structured to continually meet required standards.

As you peel back the layers of an organization, you may discover that some new organizations get through the “competent” phase in a minimum of time; other seasoned organizations, though they have successful programs, struggle with management competency years later.

Innovation

“Innovation” is approaching the management of a competent organization in a whole new way in order to bring stronger, faster or more effective results. Sometimes it is taking a practice and recognizing new ways to better use data, information and/or resources for greater impact. This may mean that instead of passively accepting the status quo, intentional decisions are made so that specific actions or results can be achieved. The Selection Committee looks for innovative management practices that have been in place for an extended period of time, demonstrating sustainability and impact. Innovative management can challenge conventional thinking about a “best practice.”

The Award recognizes that “innovative” ideas can change over time. As more organizations adopt an innovative practice, the practice becomes an expected competency or best practice for most organizations. This ever-changing shift is taken into consideration in the application. A good example is “strategic planning.” Perhaps a decade ago the strategic planning and review process was viewed as innovative, now it is expected of all nonprofits. Is there still an opportunity for an innovative strategic planning practice? Of course!

Best Practices

Nonprofit “best practices” are techniques, methods, activities or processes in the nonprofit sector that have been proven to achieve a desired result or performance level within nonprofit organizations. For example, activities to acknowledge volunteer contributions are a best practice for organizations that use volunteers because the acknowledgment will increase volunteer commitment. Best practices typically help organizations address issues related to management competency.

This Award honors those organizations that are able to identify the best practices that guide their management activities and decision-making.

Examples of “best practices” come in many forms; we consider the following points to be good indicators:

- Organization structure that supports the organization’s mission.
- A governance structure that moves the organization forward.
- Organizational leadership that creates and sustains organizational change.
- A solid grasp of major management challenges confronting the organization and evidence of concerted action to deal with the challenges.
- Systematic, regularly conducted organization-wide strategic planning process with input from all levels of the organization.
- Fiscal responsibility in day-to-day activities, as well as broader vision for sustainability and moving the organization forward.
- Effective use of board members and volunteers, including recognition of the changing expectations and availability of volunteers.
- Leadership, partnership and cooperation with other nonprofits, governments, businesses and/or private organizations.
- Creative or entrepreneurial manner in approaching management challenges.
- Inclusiveness and diversity integrated into the organizational structure, leadership and governance.
- Systematic ways of evaluating how well the organization is serving its various constituencies, responding to changes in client need, and addressing environmental/external changes in which the organization operates; this covers not only outcomes and achievements of the organization’s programs and services, but its reflection on management achievements.
- Overall management improvement and achievement over a sustained period. In cases where principal achievements are over a period of years, the Selection Committee will look for more recent developments that substantiate ongoing progress. In cases where progress is recent, the committee will look for the achieved results; the potential for achieving and sustaining success is not as strong as actual results.

Implementation & Sustainability

Organizations know that effective implementation of management practices is difficult to accomplish and sustain. Many times there are no “one size fits all” methods for successful implementation and sustainability because organizations, especially nonprofit organizations, are different. But, then sometimes there is “only one way” and organizations must figure how they are going to make this “one way” work.

The Selection Committee is interested in learning how your organization has sustained a successful management practice over time, not your plan to implement a practice.

Putting it All Together: Achieving Excellence in Nonprofit Management

In the review process, the Selection Committee looks for:

- Competency in management areas
- Documented management accomplishments, not plans.
- Innovative practices that can be shared with other organizations
- Intentional integration of best practices
- Evidence of sustainability

But this guidance does not tell the whole story. There is no one example of nonprofit management excellence. As the Selection Committee reads through each application, expectations for competency, best practice and innovation are always challenged. What excellence looks like is always changing because the knowledge of effective nonprofit management practice continues to develop and change.

In reviewing the application materials for this Award, the Selection Committee considers competency, best practices, and innovation in the management areas listed below. Each area is defined and the accompanying examples are management practices from previous Award finalists.

PART ONE QUESTIONS



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1. Please provide your organization’s mission statement.

Mission Statement:

Doorways for Women and Families strives to end homelessness and family and intimate partner violence by offering safe shelter and housing, life changing support services and community advocacy.

Vision Statement:

We envision a community where all people live free of violence and have safe and stable housing.

2. Please describe the geographic region you serve:

Doorways serves a local Washington, DC area constituency, with 80% of our clients coming from Arlington

County and most of the remaining 20% from other Northern Virginia localities. Arlington has an estimated population of 208,000 people and a very high population density of 8,062 people per square mile. It is a very diverse community, containing the highest percentage of Latinos in the region (at nearly one-fifth of the total population) and more than one-third of residents speaking a language other than English at home. The county's median household income of \$87,350 in 2006 makes it the 9th wealthiest county in the nation.

Despite such wealth, affordable housing in Arlington has been shrinking at an alarming rate, particularly in the last five years. Furthermore, available rental housing is well out of reach for many working class families, much less those struggling to recover from years of domestic violence, financial abuse, unmet educational needs, and mental health and substance abuse challenges. The average 2-bedroom rent in Arlington soared to \$1,874/month in 2007, with average starter home prices over \$600,000. A single-parent family earning minimum wage for full time work (gross monthly income of \$1,416) cannot afford such rents.

The women and families served by Doorways are in crisis and need services in family violence, employment, housing, immigration, literacy, legal, and financial issues. Many have mental health issues and are facing financial disaster. They earn annual incomes of \$6,000-\$24,000 and in the past year, only 23% were employed part-time or full-time at program entry. Typical risks present in our families include: 69% domestic violence; 28% mental health issues; 15% substance abuse history; 95% poor credit/finances; 75% low parenting skills; 35% non-English speaking; 80% low education/training; 45% poor health; and 75% single parent and socially isolated.

<p>3. What types of planning does your organization undertake? Who is involved and what are the processes? How is planning used to advance the management and mission of your organization?</p>
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Organized and aggressive planning is the management cornerstone of all Doorways action. It is the method of systematic change at both the micro and macro level of agency functioning. Over the past six years, Doorways has undertaken **deliberate and careful planning that has fundamentally transformed and evolved the management, practices and mission** of the organization. By way of its tactical and business-minded planning model, Doorways has achieved dramatic growth in its budget, assets, donor base, and service capacity while securing an outstanding reputation in the community. The agency **conducts routine planning at every level, from Board to management to direct service staff across all functional areas**. The types of planning range from four-year agency-wide strategic plans to one-time project plans.

Doorways planning approach generally includes these five phases depending on the nature of the planning effort:

1. **Strategic Plan/Mission Evaluation:** The first phase often is to assemble a core group of staff and board members to evaluate the management issue or opportunity at hand in relation to the strategic plan and the mission and ask: "How does the issue or opportunity relate or enhance Doorways mission?" SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis is an example of an evaluation tool used at this phase of review.
2. **Identify Key Players:** Secondly, we identify and bring in key players, interested parties and experts as part of the working team. The team may determine who, what, when, where and how to proceed and assign a project "owner." The number, breadth and depth of those involved in planning correlate to the type of plan, the plan content and the anticipated level of impact. Board committees work on plans as they align with Board priorities or benefit from Board involvement. Plans also may involve soliciting external feedback from stakeholders or contracting with specialists, such as in the cases of the agency

name change and of the architect involved with the Family Home rebuild. Direct service level staff are engaged within the teams and individually where appropriate for program plans.

3. **Develop Doorways Workplan:** For most types of plans, a detailed Workplan is crafted in a collaborative manner and expressed in a GANTT chart that details the milestones, action steps, persons responsible and timelines for deliverables.
4. **Work the Workplan:** This implement phase involves not only working the plan, but also updating and revising it as the project evolves. The Executive Director and staff use the Workplan in supervision meetings, in working meetings with the team, and in Board committee meetings, as appropriate. The Workplan is accessible to all staff on the agency shared drive of the computer network.
5. **Evaluation/Follow-up:** Lastly, the Workplan becomes the accountability mechanism for all of those who are involved. This fifth phase enhances our capacity to reflect and evaluate our efforts, particularly when they don't go as planned. It also provides points in time to celebrate completion of plans with markers for accomplishments.

Below are examples of the wide variety of Doorways plans that have been developed and implemented over the years:

Development/Fundraising Plans:

- Establishing a Development Program
- “High Performance Plans”
- Campaign Feasibility Study
- \$7.2 Million Campaign
- Cultivation/Retention for Foundations
- Launch of Major Donor Program
- In-kind Donor Solicitation
- Community Awareness and Advocacy
- Agency Name Change and Rebranding
- Restructuring Special Events Plan (See discussion below)

Infrastructure Plans:

- State of the Agency White Paper
- Residential Facilities Development
- Facilities Maintenance and Capital Improvements
- Family Home Rebuild
- Policies and Procedures Development
- Quality Assurance
- Information Technology Growth
- Development of Client Database
- Risk Management, Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity
- High Performance Management
- Document Retention

Human Resources Plans:

- Redesign of Shelter Staff Position
- Executive Director Succession
- Staff Retention

- Personnel Staff Evaluations

Service Delivery Program Plans:

- Program Design
- Specific Program Implementation and Start-up
- Rental Subsidies Projection Safehouse Pet Kennel Feasibility
- Expansion into New Geographic Areas

Financial Management Plans:

- Cash Flow
- Multi-year Budgets
- Investing and Growing Financial Reserves
- Program Resource Need/Funding Projections, such as for use of transitional housing grants and anticipating government funding

Community Engagement Plans:

- Neighborhood Communication
- Community Education
- Volunteer Program

Our plan for restructuring special events illustrates the Doorways approach to planning. In 2003, we noted that precious staff time was being spent on numerous special events, the largest of which netted only \$8K. **We systematically evaluated each special event in relation to criteria that were developed collaboratively between the Board and staff. Using that information, we streamlined our special events** to only two Doorways-led events, shifted the focus to events that promoted the mission rather than an activity (bowling, fashion or golf); bundled our corporate sponsorships; established meaningful volunteer leadership roles for key events, and supplemented this with a **framework for encouraging volunteers to host their own smaller events to benefit Doorways with minimal staff involvement.** As a result of the special event restructure plan, event attendance and profitability soared and agency re-branding and donor cultivation opportunities were achieved.

4. **What systems or practices has your organization put in place to ensure effective financial stewardship?** Please address practices in the areas of internal controls, budgeting, financial planning and reporting. If you had a deficit during the most recent year, please explain why and address your plan to bring expenses and revenues into balance?

Doorways' financial practices are governed by a **comprehensive set of Board-approved policies and procedures** that cover investment allocations and reserve levels, internal controls, purchasing, unrestricted current net assets and cost allocation. This past year the agency earned the highest **Charity Navigator rating of "4 Stars"** for sound fiscal management.

The Board has consistently maintained **members who possess accounting, investment and financial expertise.** The Board Finance Committee meets monthly. On a quarterly basis, this **Committee and then the full Board review internal financial statements** that show any material variation between actual and budgeted expenses and revenues. Annually, the Board approves the annual operating budget and reviews its status

quarterly. Other reports and projections reviewed by the Board include statements of activities and financial position, cash flow analysis, reserves report and the annual audited financial statements. A separate **Board Audit Committee** engages the independent auditors and oversees the annual financial statement audit.

An accompanying **Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A)** was included with the past two audited financial statements to explain the fluctuations in net assets and cash resulting from the recently completed rebuild of the family shelter. **An MD&A is more typically included with public company financial statements, and we adapted this technique to better explain our financial position.**

Since 2006, a **Certified Public Accountant has worked as an independent contractor with Doorways as our Controller one day a week, to provide expertise not realistically achievable through a full-time salaried position.** The Controller brings a level of objectivity and analytical expertise necessary to properly evaluate existing financial management and controls, and to coordinate the implementation of new financial policies, procedures and reporting systems. The Controller works closely with the Finance Director on day-to-day accounting matters and collaborates weekly with the Executive Director to review the full spectrum of finance activities. **The outsourced, part-time Controller position allows us to better segregate incompatible duties** such as a supervisory review of bank account reconciliations. In addition to these changes to internal controls and procedures, we have instituted a **fairer cost allocation method of expense** distribution within the agency, particularly distinguishing **“community education” vs. “fundraising” components.**

As a matter of standard practice, we use **detailed cash flow projections for budget comparisons** and as a useful tool for the fundraising team. We also have a full spectrum of **insurance (general liability, directors' and officers' liability, workers' compensation, etc.), which the Board regularly reviews.**

In the wake of the passage of the **Sarbanes-Oxley Act, Doorways quickly adopted the few provisions that apply to nonprofits, including policies for Whistleblower Protection, Document Retention and Conflicts of Interest.** This has **positioned us well for the expanded governance reporting requirements of the new IRS Form 990.**

This past year Doorways persevered to find a **bank that would accommodate fee-free escrow accounts** for our financial literacy clients.

Since 2003, each year the agency achieved a slight surplus. **Financial planning is at the heart of the agency's steady and dynamic growth.** In mid 2005 the agency determined a cash flow crisis was looming. We were in the process of building the infrastructure necessary to monitor cash flow on a longer-term basis. Several critical decisions were pending regarding investments in programs and physical infrastructure. While these decisions were based on sound assumptions, the timing of inflows and outflows was not playing out as originally expected. Doorways needed to decide whether to take a leap of faith in undertaking a campaign and committing to a \$2.4 million rebuilding project, while consciously and strategically relying on the possibility of tapping into agency reserves. **This led to Doorways developing a more robust cash flow model to inform short and mid-term decisions. Since this time, we have used financial analyses to project revenue and expense scenarios that have supported strategic decisions around new construction, new partnerships, increased development capabilities and staff, and setting and achieving a \$7.3 million joint operating and capital fundraising campaign.** Staff now develops **fiscal projections for three year periods, allowing for advanced planning and investment in any needed course changes.**

Doorways has applied this clear analytical approach not just to financial management, but also to tracking

progress of our programmatic goals and initiatives over time. We have compiled information in a way that allows staff, Board, and others to plan, execute, and monitor critical actions and outcomes. As Doorways has made a number of complicated directional decisions over the past few years, our **financial management infrastructure has provided the supporting details to enable solid decision making throughout the organization and has enabled a dual-faceted approach to engendering change—vision coupled with data.**

5. **How does your organization approach fundraising/resource development?** Address your fundraising strategy as well as the roles of your board, staff and others in resource development activities.

In 2003, Doorways witnessed declining revenues and a cash flow crisis. The agency had only a basic and limited resource development strategy and no dedicated fundraising staff. The then-new **Executive Director led the Board and staff to engage in a thorough review and analysis of current and planned fundraising activities to discern what resources would be necessary to stabilize, diversify and increase revenues.** Over the next five years, a series of deliberate, bold and evolving fundraising/resource development plans have been executed collaboratively by staff, board, volunteers and consultants, resulting in robust and impressive results and allowing the agency to expand its scope and breadth of program services and strengthen its infrastructure. **The agency is guided by a philosophy of abundance** which recognizes the inherent wealth and resources within our clients, our staff, our supporters and our community. Doorways cultivates resources by building on the natural inspiration and generosity within our community.

A key component of revamping our development program was clarifying the Board's roles and responsibilities for fundraising and obtaining buy-in. We formed a Development Committee led by a Board member and consisting of Board, staff, and volunteers. This committee drove the creation of **individual Board member development plans**, established a goal for Board giving, and ensured that the Board members, for the first time, were directly solicited. Over the last five years, to engage the community in supporting Doorways, we have successfully conducted a Campaign Feasibility Study, and convened (and since sunsetted) a 25th Anniversary Visioning Committee and Campaign Committee, each **involving a combination of community stakeholders and current and prospective donors.**

A five-tiered approach governs the strategies:

Development Program Design and Staffing: Over the past five years, Doorways has added five new development staff members to enable and keep pace with the success of donor and funder interest in supporting our programs. Beginning from a FTE **task allocation planning approach, we carefully crafted roles** to build and sustain revenue streams. Typically, we subdivided roles to foster and attract expertise such as proposal writing, special events or donor relations. Board members and non-development staff—particularly those delivering services—are routinely involved in soliciting and advocating for funding. Outsourcing fills any gaps caused by staff vacancies or to add expertise not found in-house.

Funding Strategy and Outcomes: Doorways evolved successful tactical growth plans for a diverse pool of revenue from government, foundations, businesses, civic and faith groups and individuals. An annual revenue strategy is developed in concert with the Board's Development and Special Events committees. Throughout the year these committees and the full Board review progress delineated in the Development High Performance Plans. Using a dashboard approach. **Detailed strategies and benchmarks accompany each funding pool and serve as staff work plans. A development calendar**

guides planning, management and workloads. Additionally, we set and monitor our fundraising efficiency ratios to **ensure our fundraising costs remain reasonable in relation to the benefit that increased resources bring to our client base and program service delivery capabilities.**

New Donor Acquisition: Given the probability of losing 10% of a donor base each year, donor acquisition strategies are a vital component. Efforts to acquire new donors include:

- Treating **special events primarily as “point of entry” events and setting benchmarks to convert 20% to donors;**
- **Cultivating prospects including large base of in-kind donors and volunteers with a series of touch-points throughout year (e.g., volunteer information nights);** Working with board and staff to identify and cultivate personal contacts.

Retaining and Upgrading Donor Strategy: Just after successfully completing a \$7.3 million capacity building campaign, including a \$400,000 Kresge Foundation challenge grant, we launched a **major donor “Leadership Circle” initiative to continue cultivating, retaining and upgrading major donors.** An extensive “touch point” strategy was implemented to maximize appreciation and cultivation of donors and to deepen their personal investment and commitment.

Post-campaign, we also **implemented a more formal “Annual Fund” program** to: 1) increase retention and average giving of donors, 2) strengthen donor commitment to Doorways’ mission and 3) to raise additional unrestricted revenue for programs from general donations as well as monthly contributions through participation in the “Good Neighbor” monthly giving club.

Grants Management: The largest growth of Doorways’ revenue has been in private foundation giving. With strong proposal writing skills and mindfulness to pitching the most strategic programs to funders, foundation giving increased 83% in five years. **Doorways’ robust grants management system effectively tracks prospective, pending and awarded grants and reporting deadlines.** Recently, we designed a “Foundation Stewardship Touch Point” strategy to cultivate foundation and corporate donors through **regular, targeted communications focused on client impact, program outcomes and financial accountability.**

In-Kind Resource Development Strategy was shaped and re-tooled to reduce monetary costs as well as to serve as a **likely cash donor acquisition avenue.**

Communications: Deliberate and tactical emphasis was given to overall messaging and communication tools throughout the rebuilding of development to foster successful **agency branding, donor relationship and confidence in the agency’s impact.**

<p>6. How does your organization benefit from and incorporate the activities and contributions of <u>diverse</u> populations and perspectives in the individuals you engage as staff, board and volunteers? How do these practices contribute to the management practices of your organizations?</p>

Doorways has several management approaches to soliciting and incorporating ideas, input and full participation

from staff, Board, the community, the families we serve and volunteers. Through **comprehensive surveys, planning and data collection, analysis of program trends, and Board and staff committees, Doorways is continually evolving and benefitting from a diversity of viewpoints to shape its management and program practices.**

Doorways' deliberate approach to retaining its human capital investment focuses on both staff and the families that we serve. **Doorways seeks perspectives from staff and clients using comprehensive satisfaction surveys. Both surveys have questions specifically designed to determine our efficacy at serving diverse populations and diverse staff.**

Examples of how results from the client satisfaction survey are used to shape service delivery and management practices include the establishment of a bilingual court advocacy program, bilingual financial education and children's program services, as well as several partnerships with ethnic/language diverse service agencies. **The staff satisfaction survey results are compiled into a report card format, providing a transparent method for staff to see our strengths, our weaknesses and our action plan to address the identified challenges.**

The diverse population served by Doorways drives our service delivery system. Through **analysis of demographic data combined with clinical knowledge and gathering of anecdotal information from staff, Doorways has developed programs that meet the needs of our clients who come from varied backgrounds.** Our approach is to move beyond identifying the needs to aggressively securing funding and developing programs, crafting policies and partnerships that move families forward.

Doorways inventories the skills and needs of community members, then recruits and matches these volunteers to meet the diverse needs of our clients. **The Doorways' Volunteer Manager strategically attends many community events and venues throughout the year to reach a wide range of potential volunteers.** Volunteers are involved in all levels of agency programming, from landscaping, to grocery shopping for our homes, to answering the Domestic Violence Hotline, to public speaking and education.

Structured staff and Board committees involve people with varying perspectives to make vital decisions, collaborate to solve problems and provide contributions and perspectives that help to shape Doorways. At Doorways, staff and Board members are expected to participate fully in various formal groups and have assigned projects outside of their committees that contribute to the Doorways mission. Board committees meet with Doorways staff monthly on areas like the strategic plan, the budget, the dashboard, special events, completion of the Washington Post award application, challenges in the community and critical incidents with clients. Board members provide expertise to staff on areas such as database development, human resources and policy development.

In regards to diversity objectives for our board, **our board profile grid tracks a range of diversity elements like race, ethnicity, gender, expertise, and geography.** This guides the Nominating and Governance Committee to focus attention on how to improve the inclusiveness of our Board with **specific recruitment goals and regular communication with full Board and staff around recruitment priorities.** Several years ago, Board membership was expanded to **set-aside two positions for individuals with direct connections with our client base** (i.e., people who have been victims of domestic violence or have experienced homelessness).

Lastly, a significant approach to addressing diversity in our core program area of domestic violence was Doorways' spearheading and co-leading an effort to establish a best practice domestic violence **Coordinated**

Community Response system for addressing family and intimate partner violence. This involved formally **organizing a 40+ member public-private leadership entity** chaired by an Arlington County Board member to integrate service providers around common strategies and results. Implementation of the 10-year plan "Project Peace" is now **helping disparate community providers to work together more cohesively on domestic violence issues**. Project Peace's Blueprint for Action includes several objectives for addressing diversity. The entire nature of the coalition speaks to embracing diversity. The successful governance model of Project Peace was then used to infuse the County's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

7. **What does your board of directors do to contribute to the management of your organization?** What is special about the governance of your organization that merits consideration for the award? What steps have you taken to ensure that your board is representative of your constituency?

Mission, strategy and policy: The Board experienced a **renaissance several years ago** and began to improve its overall effectiveness and evolve in concert with the agency by amending its bylaws, assessing and diversifying its composition, establishing term limits and succession planning, and implementing a strong committee and meeting structure. It has overseen the development and approval of core personnel policies, employee benefits, and grievance procedures, and has critiqued key outcomes of programs.

Doorways' 21 member Board of Directors has **high performance results** and **committed participation**. Each member participates on one of seven standing committees and ad hoc committees as needed. This structure provides a way for Directors to contribute their ideas, expertise and oversight, in collaboration with Doorways' staff leadership, to ensure that the organization carries out its responsibilities.

The Board functions in core best practice areas of oversight of mission, strategy, performance and policy; financial and risk management; income strategy and fundraising policy; Executive Director selection, compensation and evaluation; board composition and self-assessment; external relations; and annual agenda planning.

A **key accomplishment** was the development and adherence to **core Board policies**:

- Board Officer Election Process
- Board Recruitment, Selection and Maintenance
- Board Conflict of Interest
- Board Governance Guidelines
- Board Member Agreements
- Board Member and Officer Job Descriptions and Responsibilities
- Annual Budget Development and Approval Process
- Investment Management and Reserves
- Executive Succession Planning
- Whistleblower Protection Policies
- Record Retention
- Merger Consideration/Strategic Partnership Exploration Process

A **standardized Board manual** inclusive of these policies along with an orientation plan is provided to each new Board member.

Annual agenda planning: The board meets six times a year as a full Board and monthly for committee meetings. A structured agenda governs each full Board meeting and focus is toward a decision-making (versus

report-heavy) agenda. This is enhanced by the use of a consent agenda for routine matters. Minutes are kept for every board meeting, including committee meetings.

Board composition: Board recruitment priorities are derived from a Board profile grid that helps determine gaps across many different domains (expertise, geography, gender, ethnicity, etc.) combined with examining the agency's specific needs reflected by the Strategic Plan.

Examples of how we targeted our recruitment include:

- With the **rebuilding of the Family Home** (a 3-year, \$2.4 million project) the Board needed members with abilities to oversee this significant project and we subsequently recruited a **professional construction project manager** as well as a **real estate development attorney** to serve on the Board and take an active role in helping the Board to monitor the project.
- Another example of a strategic priority that guided Board recruitment was carrying out a three year, **\$7.2 million campaign** and an **agency name change**. Doorways needed several board members with expertise in these areas. Securing these skill sets resulted in strong dividends for these projects.
- Financial expertise in the area of accounting and investments** ensured sound fiscal stewardship from cash crisis to robust and repeatable financial management processes, resulting in oversight of the auditing process, the awarding of a **4-Star Charity Navigator** rating and selection of a new auditor.
- With **government funding** needing to be increased, board members with **government-relations expertise** served on the Advocacy Committee to work on these goals.

In order to cover the areas of expertise, strategic priorities and diversity, the board amended its bylaws to **expand from 17 to 21 members** and implement **board term limits**.

Doorways also designated **two board slots** for individuals who were personally impacted by **homelessness or domestic violence** to advance the **Board's constituency representation**.

Management vs. Governance: A healthy respect for the distinction between the Board role and the Executive Director has been skillfully achieved. Doorways' Board and staff leadership **adeptly navigate management and governance duties**. For several years the Board has used the *Washington Post Award* and the *Maryland Nonprofit Certification* as **performance benchmarking tools** (and made these Strategic Plan items since 2004). The Board follows its policies for effective and appropriate Board domain management. Key Board functions include evaluating the **Executive Director and setting and approving salary** changes; approving agency budget and **overall salary structure**; guiding the development of and approving **the agency's Strategic Plan**; reviewing high level **dashboard reports on key areas, such as finances, development and programs**; updating and upholding the **agency mission**; and conducting periodic **Board self-assessment surveys**. Each year the board holds an **annual retreat** for either strategic planning or to address a specific topic (e.g., campaign planning, new program planning, etc.). **Financial Giving** among board members is expected and achieved at **100%, which is a 50% increase over 3 years ago**; and the Board is actively engaged in strategic ways in **representing the agency** in various community settings and with key stakeholders.

8. **Describe three significant management challenges currently facing your organization.** How is your organization addressing these issues?

1. **Retaining excellent staff**, in particular front-line staff for our 24-7 shelters, is a significant management challenge. From 2003-2007, Doorways management forthrightly tackled staff retention with a series of actions:

- We realigned and redefined shelter staff positions, qualifications and salaries to better correspond with responsibilities. This involved a **detailed analysis with multiple layers of input from staff to Board, including surveying our partner agencies, benchmarking salaries in similar positions with regional salary survey data and hiring several new staff while continuing to operate 24-7**. This achieved greater cost savings, program efficiencies, service outcomes and overall retention.
- For the lowest paid service staff (**greatest challenge with turnover**), we offered **incremental salary increases at six and 12 months** which improved retention.
- As an incentive to attract and retain good masters level clinical social workers, we **engaged contractors to provide clinical supervision** to advance their **clinical** licensure goals.
- Fringe benefits were overhauled to add long term disability coverage; align health benefits so family plans were more affordable; and shifted to a Health Savings Account plan that affords most staff with more cash savings.

Our Phase II of advancing our “Human Capital Investment” strategy kicked off in June 2008 with these highlights:

- Using an *Annual Staff Satisfaction Survey* and developing action plans in response to survey results;
- Developing a *New Employee Orientation Program*;
- *Creating a staff retention and departure review*, completing a staff retention analysis and developing an exit interview for departing staff to identify patterns and trends;
- Updating policies and forms for *Staff Performance Evaluation* and improving staff skills for conducting evaluations;
- Improving policy, procedure and training approaches to *recruiting, interviewing and hiring staff*;
- *Integrating innovative approaches* to enhance staff’s experience at work (e.g., offering a money management class; a monetary incentive for use of public transportation; and a Holiday Leave Bank to offer flexibility in holiday leave usage (as we operate 365 days a year);
- *Contracting with Temporary Employment agencies* for dedicated “Doorways” trained staff to cover our most challenging shelter shifts (holidays and vacancies).

2. Although Doorways has several key ingredients in place for risk management and emergency preparedness, we lack a comprehensive business continuity plan. The objective is specified in the 2007-2011 Agency Strategic Plan. To accomplish it will necessitate securing affordable and in-kind resources of expertise to design and implement over the next two years. To identify what expertise is needed, we drafted an **“Emergency Preparedness and Continuity”** workplan by leveraging the **resources of The American Red Cross toolkit, the Federal “Getready” website, and the Nonprofit Risk Management Center’s Business Continuity Guide**. We are using the latter group’s **“My Risk Manager”** software to develop the foundation for our Business Continuity Plan. We are now positioned to more readily attract in-kind expertise to carry out the workplan on schedule.

3. Over the years, Doorways successfully tackled **designing an effective and cost efficient in-kind solicitation program** to serve 30 families at any one time in residential care. It was a constant challenge of responding to what people “wanted” to give us (by way of receiving and then trying to store it, deploy it, discard it or re-donate it) as opposed to the essentials we needed. The lack of a methodical approach resulted in mismanaging staff time and left us paying cash for non-donated items. Also, the in-kind program presented opportunities to tactically cultivate cash donor prospects and provide community education.

Deliberate strategic steps shaped the old in-kind program into a **highly impactful, robust and diverse resource and cash donor acquisition program. In-kind revenue grew from \$20,000 to over \$100,000 annually. A series of in-kind policies moved us to a proactive solicitation effort that strategically considered storage space, use frequency and saving on cash outlays**, as well as nutritional and environmental factors. Key ingredients:

- a. Designed a monthly calendar of items and partnered with donors to sign up for specific months and items.
- b. Prioritized solicitation for most costly and frequently used items, limited donation acceptance to requested items and balanced pace of solicitations with storage capacity.
- c. Maximized holiday giving season to secure year round needs.
- d. Emphasized preference for gift cards, as well as preferred stores.
- e. Broadly aimed solicitation requests and prioritized **sustaining partnerships with faith, civic and business groups.**
- f. Set up a gift registry at Target and Amazon to solicit and manage household inventory needs; designed direct website link to registries.
- g. Evolved solicitation of used cell phones into agency branding opportunity (Doorways cell phone reciprocals) and easy first step donor option.
- h. Designed a reusable grocery bag with Doorways “shopping list” as cultivation tool for in-kind and branding opportunity.
- i. Developed “one click” shopping link on Home Page.
- j. Created a donation receipt which more accurately and efficiently captured the value and doubled for inventory management.
- k. Crafted in-kind budgets reflecting the non-essential vs. essential components, specific linking solicitation goals to serve as an accountability tool.

Finally, in-kind solicitation goes beyond direct needs for the families for food, personal care items or household items. Doorways has a track record of securing professional services such as legal, website, human resources, and construction and maintenance. In 2008 audit, in-kind amounted to \$511,043.

9. **Provide an example of a mistake or a poor decision your organization has made in the past? What did you learn from this experience and what management practices/lessons learned have you put in place of as a result of this error. What advice would you give other nonprofits if faced with a similar situation?**

In 2005, Doorways management staff determined that the time was ripe to move to a client database. As Doorways planned to double the capacity of each core program and its components, the use of elaborate and cumbersome Excel spreadsheets to collect monthly and report demographic and performance report data had become inadequate and costly in staff time. Doorways assigned an existing part-time staff with

information technology project management qualifications to lead the project. A small group defined a scope of work, established a timeline and selected a partner organization to develop a very affordable homegrown platform database.

As the project proceeded, it meandered away from its original scope for a variety of reasons. The project started with a poor foundation when staff identified specifications for the database, but internal and external reporting requirements continually changed over time. In addition, there was inadequate oversight and accountability of the database system. As the original project goals and timelines veered increasingly off track, management staff did not revise the original work plan to reassess feasibility or undertake course adjustments at critical junctures. The project fell into a reactionary mode and an endless series of system “bugs” continued to require attention, often without resolution. In a nutshell, the project scope crept upward and outward, and cost Doorways far more staff time than anticipated.

A critical point was reached after the first full year of database implementation when we determined that key year-end reports could not be accurately or reliably generated by the database. **Doorways then engaged an independent consultant to conduct a project analysis and make recommendations for next steps. The extensive pro-bono review by a Board member with relevant expertise** determined that the database had a poor user interface and was plagued with flaws, rendering it unsuitable for expanding to the next phase of integrating collection and tracking of performance objectives and reporting. At this point we developed a plan to transition from the database back to paper systems in the interim, while a new solution is being sought.

The main lessons learned by Doorways were that it is critically important to: **1. adequately invest in expertise and management relative to project scope; 2. insist on regular status reports linked to original work plans; 3. thoroughly define all data collection specifications and system requirements/capabilities in the first phase of the work; and 4. be thorough in the search for the right database platform.**

Uncharacteristically, Doorways strayed from its successful planning approaches and allowed the project to digress outside of a detailed plan. In retrospect, too much responsibility was placed on the lead staff member who possessed neither the level of technical knowledge necessary nor adequate human services experience. For other agencies planning to develop a data collection and management system (or any type of information technology solution, for that matter), **we recommend that they not only *develop* a clear plan, but also ensure that they have capable staff and adequate resources to carry out the plan. We also advise other agencies to *continuously revisit the plan and evaluate the performance of the lead staff member in relation to project progress and outcomes to ensure project accountability.*** Doorways has since outlined a comprehensive work plan for a new database project, drafted database development success and accountability measures, and commenced a thorough requirements analysis/evaluation of our agency-wide data collection needs.

10. **Please highlight up to three of your specific management “best practices”** that serve as examples of **excellence in nonprofit management** in your organization over the past three years. How are these practices supported and sustained in your organization? What can others learn from these practices? Each example can cover one or more of the management areas identified above.

1. Reflective, strength-based supervision for staff is a practice that leads to excellence at

Doorways. Doorways not only ensures staff receive direct supervision, but invests in the quality and design of supervision. Providing **reflective, strength-based supervision** for staff fully taps and utilizes the staff's collective strengths by **routinely seeking and valuing staff contributions toward the mission**. This model requires management to slow down, *stop, look and listen* on a deeper level to partner with staff and make decisions. We found the extra supervision time pays off in higher productivity and staff morale and stronger client outcomes and staff retention.

This mindful attention to staff development has created a team in which staff are confident, and more competent and grounded in their contribution to the agency's mission. In a recent staff satisfaction survey, 100% of staff responded they believed they were contributing to the agency mission.

Doorways implements this best practice through the **use of mutual competency reflective supervision strategies** as developed by *Zero to Three* and the *Ounce of Prevention Fund*, which is based on three dynamic principles:

- i. Supervision is collaborative – Staff, like clients, performs best when given positive, constructive feedback and are **approached from a strength-based perspective. Supervisors are trained and expected to create an environment in which staff feel competent and able to build upon their strengths and voice their ideas.**
- ii. Supervision is reflective – Staff are engaged and seen as experts in their work. **Through reflection they are encouraged to use critical thinking skills and solve problems for themselves**, reducing the need for micromanagement.
- iii. Supervision is regular – Ensuring regular, individual, supportive supervision is a priority for all supervisory staff.

2. Merger and Strategic Partnership Exploration:

The agency Strategic Plan in 2004 included the **strategic priority to “explore opportunities for organizational mergers.”** The reasons were potential for economies of scale, strengthening of organization, and exploring all reasonable opportunities to fulfill mission as cost effectively as possible. This business priority carried forward to the 2007-11 Strategic Plan for its merits.

To carry out this priority, the Board **tactically took a step back from directly confronting a specific merger possibility and instead first developed a “process” for exploring a merger**, focusing on process first, outcome second. A task force of Board and staff leveraged the *Nonprofit Merger Handbook*, outlined risks and criteria, engaged other Board members along way, then brought it to the full Board. Activities included discussing needs; identifying potential merger agencies; notifying of interest; and discussing with those interested. **Even Board members who were first adverse embraced this process.**

Earnest discussions occurred with one potential organization for a year and resulted in a decision not to merge. This process helped us to **focus first on elements of strategic and cultural fit that can derail a merger**. Instead of going straight to financial and personnel “due diligence,” Doorways first discussed with the potential partner the high level points, such as “What would it look like as a joint mission and board?”, “What would it look like culturally and strategically?”, “Where are both organizations developmentally?”; and “Was this the right time and was this the right fit?” Now we have a process and we can apply it at a moment's notice.

These guidelines were used in the past two years to enter a strategic partnership by way of an LLC subsidiary with Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing to jointly own property.

3. Agency Name Change and Rebranding

The **most far reaching decision** over the past few years was to **change the agency name** from *The Arlington Community Temporary Shelter*, better known as *TACTS*, to *Doorways for Women and Families*. The management approach to undertaking this decision and then steering its successful roll out is a noteworthy practice, particularly given how it occurred during a **period of monumental agency change**.

First Phase: The process began with Board approval for exploring a new agency name given the obvious limitations and undesirables about the current name; establishing a “Name Change Work Group”; and conducting expert led **focus groups comprised of constituents from various audiences**. Consideration was given to all aspects and implications for types of new names, from concrete to conceptual, proneness to acronym, including geographic reference, conveying mission, easy to remember, etc. The new name selection spanned a year which included rejecting the first rounds of recommendations, and concluded with the legal incorporation of the new name leveraging our pro-bono legal counsel.

Second Phase: The vital phase of “Rebranding” encompassed a **new graphic identity, persuasive communication materials and a tactical communications plan** which balanced branding the new name with the overall agency message to new and existing audiences. We needed to leveraged expertise to guide planning and execution. With feedback from other agencies that changed their name, such as the Center for Nonprofit Advancement, we issued an RFP for a communication plan. We **aimed to position the agency with effective messaging, strong branding, marketing and positioning in the context of limited resources and making the message ubiquitous**.

Our **rebranding approach moved beyond just announcing a name change to positioning Doorways in the community** as well as coupling the effort with other dominant undertakings like the 25th Anniversary celebration and a three year *Campaign to Do More*. Ultimately, the overall endeavor was a success and a testament to the Doorways managerial approach.

WASHINGTON POST AWARD PART TWO QUESTIONS WITH DOORWAYS RESPONSES

After an initial review of our Part One application, the Washington Post Award Selection Committee invited 10 top candidates to submit Part Two questions by the February 20, 2009 deadline. These are our answers. We will be notified by COS March 25, 2009.

1. **Has anything significant happened in your organization since your Part One application**

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submission that the Selection Committee needs to consider? (i.e., staff change, funding change, board leadership change, legislative impact, etc.) If no changes, state “none” on the application.

Since our submission, several significant things have transpired at Doorways.

First, Doorways was proactively engaged during November and December 2008 in advocating for the preservation of the charitable giving of the Freddie Mac Foundation and Fannie Mae grant making while their fates hung in the balance. Doorways staff and Board members partnered with entities like the Center for Nonprofit Advancement and the Nonprofit Roundtable to educate regional leaders and Congress of the importance of these funding sources for human services. Accompanying this effort were several news media opportunities that materialized into four articles in The Washington Post and stories on NPR Morning Edition Saturday, NPR/WAMU Morning Edition, MSNBC Online, the Arlington Connection, and in the Washington Business Journal.

In addition:

- Freddie Mac Foundation giving resumed and Doorways’ promised \$300,000 grant was approved on December 23, 2008.
- Doorways was selected as one of the 64 “great charities” in the December edition of Washingtonian Magazine.
- Our Board Presidency transitioned from Mark Riley to Nicholas Evans.
- Doorways ended the calendar year with a successful fundraising appeal, exceeding our \$56,000 goal for the newly launched Leadership Circle membership.

2. How do you communicate with your stakeholders? Include the roles of internal communications in managing your staff, board, volunteers, clients and others. Include the role of external communication in serving the community and others.

Doorways management practices and systems prioritize the vital **role of transparent communication** with all stakeholders. Communication includes not only the **delivery of information**, but a **feedback loop** that ensures feedback from stakeholders is received, reflected upon and utilized to inform agency practice.

Internal Communication:

Staff:

- The **management team structure** is designed to ensure that internal communications **with all levels of staff occur in a systematic manner**. The Executive Team meets bi-monthly to review the Strategic Plan and agency issues on a macro level. The Executive Team then communicates essential information with the Leadership Team, made up of staffs who supervise personnel, which meets monthly. The Leadership Team communicates information from these meetings to staff at individual Program Staff Team meetings. Each meeting allows for feedback that is carried back to Leadership and the Executive Team.
- **Quarterly All Agency Gatherings (QAAG)** are attended by all staff. Agency happenings are shared

with opportunity for input from all staff. Team building and mission cultivation activities are included with an emphasis on fun and humor.

- To foster a broader range of input for personnel evaluation, the Board uses a web-based **360 Degree Performance Evaluation** to anonymously evaluate the Executive Director and as an optional tool for Executive team evaluations.
- For broader agency perspective, a web-based anonymous **Staff Satisfaction Survey** solicits feedback on seven key management areas and the results are summarized for each team and the agency.
- The use of **electronic communication** is a primary tool for internal communication. Monthly emails update staff on policies and personnel. A **Virtual Private Network (VPN)** allows staff to work and communicate from home.

Clients:

- **Individual client meetings** with program staff occur weekly.
- Within the residential programs, **weekly house meetings** allow clients to share with staff and each other their experiences with communal living.
- The monthly **Dinner with Friends program** provides an opportunity for staff and clients to communicate and enjoy a communal meal and special program organized by staff.
- Clients are also encouraged to give feedback using **Client Satisfaction Surveys**.

Board of Directors:

Routine communication between the Executive Director and Board of Director occurs via email, personal communication and by way of Board committees. The **Board committee structure** requires that committees communicate with the entire Board via minutes and dashboard quarterly updates on key agency-wide objectives. The **Board Self-Assessment Survey** solicits confidential feedback from Board members.

Volunteers:

Communication with volunteers occurs several ways: through the **training evaluation** process; the Doorways' monthly **Volunteer Newsletter**; monthly "**Volunteer Minglers**"; **volunteer dinners**; and bi-annual **volunteer performance evaluations** conducted by the Volunteer Coordinator.

External Communication:

Transparency in sharing our successes and challenges with stakeholders breeds confidence and trust in Doorways. The following communication tools foster successful **agency branding, donor relationship and confidence in the agency's impact**.

Donors, supporters, clients, donors, and community members/partners:

- The **annual report** communicates program outcomes, strategic plan priorities, financials, and donor appreciation. It's widely promoted and accessible via our website, as well by mail, to key donors and constituents. Key sections are uploaded to sites like Charity Navigator and Guidestar.

- Doorways' **newsletter** is sent three times a year to 4,000 supporters to share client's stories, program impact, calls to action, and acknowledgment of donors and volunteers.
- Doorways' **Website, hosted pro-bono by a private company**, serves as the primary source of communication for the comprehensive agency information with emphasis on community education, donation opportunities, current happenings, and volunteering. Deliberate tactics are used to direct newcomers and supporters to visit the website.
- Electronic "**e-updates**" go out monthly with content corresponding and linking to website updates.
- **Annual donor solicitations** target specific segments of the donor list, such as major donors, lapsed donors, volunteers, in-kind only donors, and special event attendees with tailored messages.
- **Social marketing strategies** are currently in the planning stages and include Facebook and Twitter accounts, and creating a blog.
- **The Board Communication Committee** engages experts in public relations to guide and assist our external communications efforts. Over the past three years Doorways has been the pro-bono client of Washington Women in Public Relations. This has resulted in an extensive array of public relations accomplishments particularly with our press and branding.

Funders:

Recently, two "touch-point strategies" were designed for foundations and major donors to plan and monitor communication, gather feedback, and increase our knowledge of the donors, their concerns and their interests.

- The "**Foundation Stewardship Touch Point**" strategy cultivates foundations and other institutional donors through **regular, targeted communications focused on client impact, program outcomes and financial accountability**.
- **The Moves Management system** for the Leadership Circle major donor program aims to build relationships and move individual and prospective donors to deeper levels of involvement, investment and identification with Doorways' mission. The system monitors and tracks communication with 100 individual major donors. With this donor-centeredness, our understanding of donor interest and charitable inclination increases and influences future communication messages.

3. How do you use <u>technology</u> in the management of your organization? How do you use technology to play a role in the management of your organization?

Doorways leadership sets the tone and example for **Doorways' use of technology**.

Technology is used in our **Administrative offices** to streamline communication, transfer knowledge, and eliminate duplicative data gathering efforts and waste. All staff has access to a computer, or has a desktop or laptop computer.

- All staff has **e-mail** and uses it to communicate with one another. Board members are kept informed with regular e-mail contact from the Executive Director and key staff.

- Our **computer use culture is disciplined**, and all of our employees are made aware during orientation of our procedure of using the **centralized server's shared drive** as the default drive for saving documents.
- We have successfully **outsourced the server configuration and maintenance** at a cost savings.
- The **Policy and Procedures manual** is available on the shared drive, which helps ensure they are well-supported, current, and accessible. Policy documents are checked in and out to ensure staff members have access to the most recent information.
- The office has a **Virtual Private Network (VPN)** that allows different access levels by role and technical ability. The VPN, the centralized server, and e-mail make telecommuting possible, which allows options for employees and flexibility for meeting the space needs of the organization.
- **Separate drives are used for confidential employee information and client information.** Documents are routinely password protected; "archive" folders hold older documents and drafts to eliminate clutter in the folders.
- **"Survey Monkey" web-based surveying tools** are used for board and staff surveys.
- Efficiency is part of the organizational culture and Doorways provides training during orientation in the use of **Microsoft calendars** and the practice of sharing them to increase efficiency in scheduling and making staff aware of meetings.
- Over the past two years, we developed a **client database** to assist in documenting client's goals, progress, and outcomes; providing important program indicators and statistics; and meeting the reporting requirements of our various funders, internal management, and Board of Directors. While this effort had not given us the data base we need, it has allowed us to examine the data we gather; assess why it is gathered; and figure out what it tells us about client progress and our methods. We have used this experience to fully define and document our requirements, to map each data field to the outcome measurement we desire, and to the reports we want to produce. We have developed a Request for Information (RFI) and will be putting out to vendors to find a solution that better fits our needs for an automated, secure client management system.

Technology is used to **communicate with clients and community stakeholders** about the services provided by Doorways and provide for the safety of our clients.

- A **private company designed and maintains our website** on a pro bono basis, saving Doorways close to \$100,000 over the years. The website serves as the primary public place for agency information, including community education and services, how to donate, upcoming events, and volunteering information.
- Doorways has been proactive in adapting and using technology as a tool for **informing media-savvy college students**. For example the "Red Flag Campaign" on teen dating violence, for which we have implemented a **text-messaging option** for students, and developing a **Facebook** presence.
- Doorways has used **technology to enhance client safety** through its distribution of refurbished, donated **cell phones for clients** to carry in case of emergencies. At our 21-bed Family Home, **security cameras and monitors** are used to survey all common areas inside and outside of the home, and to record entry into and out of the Home.
- Client and program **data is shared** with two different state and local public agencies using separate mandated database systems.

Technology **facilitates fundraising efforts and eases accounting for donations.**

- The **website** serves as both a point of entry and as a vehicle for ongoing communication with donors, clients, and community members.
- A **current in-kind wish list is maintained on the website** and links directly to our accounts with **Amazon.com** and **Target.com**, allowing donors to immediately respond by purchasing items individually

or in bulk on our behalf. Items are then shipped directly to Doorways, omitting the need to schedule a drop-off.

- **“Donate Now”** buttons appear throughout the website, as well as more detailed donation pages, allowing website visitors to make on-line donations (using Auctionpay) for one-time and monthly donations in our **“Good Neighbor” program**, as well as to purchase tickets to special events.
- We send **monthly e-updates** to constituents. Each e-update contains brief teasers that link back to the month’s website updates.
- Periodic **e-blasts** are sent to highlight specific time-sensitive issues such as **“Save the Date”** announcements, as well as e-appeals following traditional solicitations.
- Acknowledgement **letters are scanned and saved on the server**, instead of being copied and filed, saving resources and space.
- **Targeted, personal email contacts** are incorporated into strategic touch point and moves management plans for cultivating and stewarding major donors, foundations, and members in the new **Corporate Ambassadors program**.

4. How do you face significant risks and legal issues of concern to your organization? What have you done to manage these risks and what makes them significant to the management of your organization?

Doorways for Women and Families has embraced a **collaborative, open-ended strategic approach to facing risk and legal issues**. The views and participation of personnel at all levels, including volunteers, is sought as Doorways responds to and identifies risk management priorities and implements strategies for modifying, retaining or financing risk. Establishing a **full-time Director of Quality Assurance and Human Resources** in May 2008 was an essential step in managing risk for the agency. Currently, a comprehensive work plan is in the development stages for **Risk Management and Emergency Preparedness and Continuity of Business priorities**.

Over the past several years, Doorways **adopted numerous policies and standards** in matters related to the health, safety, and well-being of the overall agency; including clients, staff, and volunteers. These are the significant factors for risk:

- Responsibility of operating two 24-7 residential facilities owned by Doorways and housing 32 residents of whom most are children, creates very high risk potential.
- Primary service domain of domestic violence poses serious life threatening risks.
- 24 client families residing throughout the community, some in housing units under a Doorways lease.
- The demographics of our client population present with acute and complex issues that can lead to risk. For example, there are threats to staff and client safety (i.e. threats from abusers and proclivities for use of violence among some clients).
- Given the factors noted above, there is a need for greater degrees of oversight and concern for volunteer and staffing selection.
- There is a high degree of confidentiality needed for client services documentation.

Doorways safety and risk management activities are multi-faceted and include:

1. Thoughtful **screening, selection and training of operational volunteers and staff.**
2. Creation and enforcement of **policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures** as guides for planning. Including:
 - a. Financial management
 - b. Critical incidents
 - c. Personnel performance concerns
 - d. Background checks for criminal and child abuse and neglect
 - e. Facilities management
 - f. Whistleblower protection
 - g. Code of Conduct policies for staff and volunteers
 - h. Conflict of interest policies
 - i. Program policies that minimize staff harm
 - j. "On Call" policies creating seamless access to supervisory consultation
 - k. Neighborhood Communication policy
3. Maintaining **safe and secure facilities**, including employment of a **part time Facilities Manager** who systematically reviews status of all properties; using **security surveillance and alarm systems** exist at shelters; **partnering with local law enforcement and fire departments.**
4. Maintaining **clear communications channels** between staff, board, volunteers and the Arlington community. Using established chain of commands for reviewing and responding to risk.
5. Doorways purchases **insurance coverage** as a means of transferring certain risks.

Responsibility for Risk Management

1. Board of Directors

- Adopts annual budget with risk management in mind, including contingency planning for unanticipated economic, fundraising or expenditure impacts.
- Considers contingency budget scenarios during times of economic uncertainties.
- Reviews operational and budget reports to determine compliance.
- Oversees compliance with policies and standards imposed by national or accrediting organizations.
- Adopts and establishes select policies and standards.
- Reviews the organization's comprehensive insurance program annually.
- Utilizes the Executive Committee and special board meetings as needed.
- Utilizes SWOT analysis for substantial new initiatives (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats).

2. Legal Counsel for the Organization

- Maintains pro bono legal assistance from prominent multi-specialized law firm to reduce risk; gives legal advice to the board of directors, makes legal references on an as needed basis and advises senior staff on the personnel transactions, vendor contracts, etc.
- Several slots on Board include lawyers in specialized areas needed for agency.

3. Executive Director

- Reviews all critical incidents that occur in the agency.
- Assigns staff to design and carry out safety and risk management activities.
- Keeps the board apprised of emerging threats and opportunities facing the organization.
- Ensures annual independent financial audit occurs.
- Ensures financial policies and practices are in place that mitigates risk.

4. Director of Quality Assurance and Human Resources

- Reviews all critical incidents and provides written feedback and follow-up.
- Develops and manages risk management and emergency preparedness and continuity plan.
- Ensures facilities are operating in compliance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Doorways utilizes a service that sends updated state and federal employment posters as laws change.
- Ensures policies and procedures are followed, are up to date and are adequate to protect the agency, personnel, clients, volunteers and community from risk.
- Presents Hiring in the Nonprofit Workplace Training to staff who interview job applicants.
- Ensures each new employee is oriented both orally and in writing to the agency's policies regarding employee code of conduct.

5. Director of Client Services

- Develops memoranda of understanding with community partners.
- Reviews all critical incidents relating to clients and facilities.
- Leads Client Services Team reviews of critical incidents and anticipates future incidents.
- Ensures privacy rights and confidentiality of clients.

5. **What part does evaluation play in the management of your organization?** Describe the types of evaluation performed; who does it; what areas are covered; how often it happens; and how the results are used.

Doorways' success is built upon a strong, consistent evaluation approach evident throughout the agency that provides a continual feedback process allowing for assessment and course correction. Regardless of one's role (Board member, volunteer, funder, staff) the emphasis on accountability and describing outcomes, has been a key factor in our established trust and success.

Types of Evaluation Performed:

Program Performance Measures:

- The main evaluation effort centers on each of Doorways' programs (client, development, volunteers, and strategic plan). They are defined and evaluated by an extensive array of performance measures. The performance plans define specific activities and link these activities to short and long term outcomes.

The plans make the connection for staff to see how their role contributes to the larger goals of the agency. Performance measures are used with staff upon hire to train, ground and focus staff energy.

- Routine supervision is used for staff to evaluate their assigned targets and goals.
- The program evaluation results are reported internally to staff and board at various intervals, and externally to 40 + private and public funders (many of whom are funding specific aspects of programming) and to the community at large. These reports are generated throughout the year, with highlights captured in Doorways' annual report, newsletter and website.

Client service delivery:

- Client service delivery is evaluated through client goal plans that are reviewed routinely to address barriers that could derail client outcomes and celebrate successes. These goals ultimately feed into the measures for the program performance measures.
- Client Satisfaction Surveys provide evaluative feedback for program improvements.

“Dashboard” tools:

- Doorways utilizes Dashboard tools to manage various levels of targeted performance. Tabulated at various intervals according to management needs, these tools allow leadership to continuously assess progress toward established goals for the year.
- The Board receives an agency wide dashboard of the highest level performance targets to monitor agency performance. Each Board committee works from dashboards that take into account Strategic Plan items as well.

Staff Performance Evaluation:

- A formalized performance evaluation system includes a 90-day evaluation for new hires, an annual evaluation for all employees and ad hoc evaluations when performance necessitates.
- Supervisors are trained to ensure performance review is *an on-going dialogue* between staff and supervisors.

Board of Directors:

- The Board completes a self-evaluation (discussed in Question 2).

Agency Strategic Plan:

- Doorways' Strategic Plan is established every four years and addresses five key areas: 1. program development; 2. advocacy; 3. infrastructure and human capital investment; 4. financial and 5. organizational excellence.
- It is evaluated at semi-annual intervals with the Board and staff using the dashboard approach. The development and updating of the plan garners input from all staff. The Board Committees monitor and guide staff on the plan.

Critical Incidents:

- Doorways' critical incident response system ensures immediate attention and evaluation of all critical incidents. Policy requires the immediate completion of a *Critical Incident Report* and review and feedback by four levels of management to ensure thorough response, reduction of risk, documentation of lessons learned, and corrective steps.
- Depending on severity, debriefings occur for reflection on corrective steps and possible policy changes.

Development Program:

- Doorways' robust Development program is a result of deliberate analysis, reviews, and high levels of assessment. Detailed strategies and benchmarks (high performing plans) accompany each funding pool and serve as staff work plans and govern accountability.
- A development calendar guides planning, management and workloads. Additionally, we set and monitor our fundraising efficiency ratios within the agency budget to ensure our fundraising costs remain reasonable in relation to the benefit that increased resources bring to our client base and program service delivery capabilities.
- The Board Development Committee exercises oversight, guidance and involvement with staff and volunteers to ensure optimal success.

Finance Program:

- A finance dashboard tracks set targets and metrics and is evaluated monthly by the Board Finance Committee and Executive Director and bi-monthly by the full board.
- Evaluation metrics are used across several domains including investments.

Volunteer Evaluation:

- Doorways has developed and utilizes multiple volunteer evaluation tools and methods. (see question 7 for more detail)

External Evaluation: Doorways utilizes the following external evaluation tools to ensure quality services and set management benchmarks.

- *Virginia Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Action Alliance Accreditation* – Doorways' Domestic Violence Program is bi-annually accredited and is held to high standards in compliance with annual audits of operations and best management practices.
- *Maryland Standards for Excellence in Nonprofits* and *Washington Post Nonprofit Management Award* – are used as guide in structuring strategic planning, gap analysis, and a benchmark for agency stability and strength.
- *Charity Navigator* – is used for benchmarking standards for fundraising efficiency and sound fiscal management.

6. How does your organization recruit, train and use its <u>employees</u>? Describe specific aspects of your organization's people management that you believe merit consideration for the award.
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Doorways' Employee Management Philosophy

Doorways employee management holds two core philosophies: (1) *How you are* is as important as what you do, and; (2) *How staff are managed* impacts the way staff works with clients, donors, community members and volunteers. This approach ensures that compassion and a consistent set of values are upheld by Doorways as an agency.

Hiring

Doorways strives to hire highly-talented and well-matched staff and relies upon standardized recruitment and

hiring practices to meet this goal. **Doorways' Recruitment and Hiring Policy and Procedures** specify timelines and specific expectations for staff to follow. An internal **Hiring in the Non-profit Workplace training** is provided to all staff involved in this process to ensure understanding of Doorways' policy and the laws regarding hiring and interviewing.

Doorways' recruitment process begins with a **standardized procedure** for review and advertising of the available position. Prior to posting a job opening, a review is conducted to assess the need to replace or alter the position, and re-evaluate the salary. Doorways first posts position announcements internally to maximize promotion and develop opportunities for existing employees. To foster workplace diversity, Doorways utilizes heterogeneous recruitment practices, such as advertising positions in multi-cultural media publications, multi-cultural organizations, and list serves.

Doorways' standardized hiring process includes criteria-based screening of all candidates, conducting multiple reference checks, and consistently structuring employment offers. Each position has a **detailed job description** that is updated regularly to reflect changes in the position. **Detailed guidelines for scheduling interviews and conducting first and second interviews** are followed that include a specified outline and format that helps promote equal and fair hiring practices.

To ensure that staff share and uphold the agency mission and philosophy, **standardized interview questions and situational scenarios are used**. These tools provide not only insight into the candidates' technical abilities, but also their values and ethics.

Orientation

Strategies in place that foster retention begin with the first day of employment where we support, orient, and train staff as a means to solidify the new employee's relationship with Doorways. **Doorways' New Employee Orientation Policy** is designed to help new employees to feel welcome, prepare them for instant productivity, and give them a thorough foundation to the organization and their work. Orientation is a key element to the recruitment and retention process; it reduces employee anxiety, reduces employee turnover, helps develop realistic job expectations, and increases job satisfaction.

Doorways' New Employee Orientation provides in-depth guidelines about the agency, the strategic plan, policies and procedures, work expectations, the work environment, and employee benefits. On the first day, the hiring supervisor provides the new employee with the "**New Employee Orientation Checklist**" and explains how the checklist works. The checklist requires the new employee meet with multiple staff in our three facilities and must be completed within the first month of hire as evidence of the orientation being completed.

Initial Training

To ensure core understanding of the mission and Doorways' intentions for service delivery, essential staff, volunteers, and interns receive initial training. The intensity and duration of this training is adjusted to the level of client interaction the position entails. Materials from Doorways' comprehensive **Training Manual** are adapted according to each training level. Through **Doorways' Volunteer and Staff Program Training** that is offered at least three times each year, persons new to Doorways who will be working directly with clients receive either a 40 hour or 20 hour classroom training. Those with incidental interactions with clients complete a 4 hour training course. Board members complete a subset of the training requirements within one year of Board membership. All training is a combination of classroom/presentation training as well as experiential on-the-job training, as determined appropriate for the level of client interaction.

Ongoing Training

All direct program staff participate in additional training every year. The hours required for the annual supplementary training are equivalent to the hours worked during each week. For example, a fulltime employee is expected to complete 40 hours of additional training in each year of employment.

Utilizing Staff

Building upon a strong new employee orientation effort that energizes new staff on mission, expectations, and skills, Doorways staff begins their role immediately. To ensure ongoing training and orientation beyond the initial training, various team meetings are held to maintain cohesion and provide opportunities to learn from other staff. These meetings occur across levels and programs (Leadership, Program/Direct Client Services, and agency-wide).

Annual Performance Reviews include goals and objectives for the coming year so staff has a road map of where they are going with their skills. Managers and Supervisors use a strength-based approach to identifying staff strengths and interests and involve them in special projects while still maintaining their core duties/responsibilities. Staff are engaged in leading training, writing policy, coordinating advocacy events, and sharing feedback across agency programs to continually build their leadership skills.

Doorways provides opportunities for professional growth within the agency through **management-level workshops, opportunities for promotion, and clinical supervision** for staff interested in becoming licensed.

7. **How does your organization manage its volunteers?** What volunteer management strategies is your organization using to adjust to the changing expectations of volunteers?

Thirty years ago, Doorways for Women and Families was created by volunteers. Today Doorways continues to rely on volunteers to fulfill its mission. The Volunteer Program helps offset costs by offering volunteer hours to support both clients and staff. Volunteers are needed in all programs and assist in staffing the homes, answering a hotline, working with youth and adult clients, and providing administrative and special event assistance. Many of the volunteer opportunities at Doorways are unique due to the level of client interaction so that program volunteers have similar supervision and training requirements as staff.

Because of the importance of volunteers to Doorways' mission in June of 2008 the Volunteer Coordinator role was made a full-time position. Doorways volunteer management practices emphasize structure, policy development, and retention. In these difficult economic times as we expect more of our volunteers and our volunteers hold us more accountable than ever. The Volunteer Program aims to cultivate every volunteer as a potential financial donor.

Recruitment: Due to the sensitive nature of what volunteers may deal with, there is a very specific recruitment and application process. The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for implementing and facilitating the recruitment strategy and application procedure. Volunteers are recruited via free print and electronic publications, community outreach and volunteer fairs, and volunteer offices. The Coordinator works with staff to assess volunteer needs and to advertise for both general and specific volunteer opportunities. The Coordinator tracks all individuals expressing interest in becoming a volunteer. Doorways offers both group and individual volunteer opportunities.

Eligibility: Volunteers must meet all eligibility criteria based on the requirements outlined in the specific volunteer position descriptions, of which there are 13 specific positions.

Orientation and Information Night: After each monthly **Volunteer Orientation and Information session**, the Coordinator follows-up via email or phone with each individual interested in volunteering to discuss the best fit for him or her. All new volunteers are added to the volunteer database as well as the donor database and tracked accordingly.

All volunteers sign a **Volunteer Agreement Form** outlining his or her commitment of service based on the intended role. The **Agreement** indicates the length of service, program of commitment, assigned shift, and supervising staff person. All volunteer personnel information is kept confidential and is housed at the Administrative Office in a locked cabinet.

Volunteer Training Program: All volunteers wishing to have indirect and direct contact with clients must complete one or all parts of the **Doorways Volunteer Training Program**. Training is conducted a minimum of three times per year and consists of in-classroom training and on-the-job training and orientation. All attendees receive a comprehensive **Doorways Training Manual**. All participants sign the **Confidentiality Policy** and provide information to complete background checks for child protective services and for both FBI national and state criminal investigations.

Ongoing Support:

Reflective Supervision by Volunteer Coordinator:

- Monday Calls to all Volunteers who worked the previous week for check-in.

Communication:

- “Monthly Mingle”; volunteers gather once a month to socialize and share their volunteer experiences.
- Monthly Volunteer Newsletter highlights what is happening in the programs and with the volunteers: includes new volunteer needs, volunteer birthdays, and volunteer of the month.

Evaluations by Volunteers and Volunteer Coordinator:

- 6-month Volunteer Self-Reflection process: volunteers share positives and negatives of experience.
- Yearly Evaluation of Volunteers: ensuring current volunteers are engaged, excited, and supported in their roles.
- Yearly Evaluation of Program: annual Internet survey completed by volunteers to assess program.

Consistent Scheduling:

- Monthly calendars are emailed to volunteers on a staggered schedule for shift sign-up on the 20th, 25th, and 1st of each month.
- Volunteers are asked to sign 6-month commitment agreements and agree to set schedules.

Thanking Volunteers:

- Annual April Doorways’ volunteer appreciation event.
- Send handwritten thank you notes and \$10 gift cards.
- Sending E-cards.
- Volunteer newsletter and Doorways’ website are used to thank specific volunteers.
- Nominate at least three volunteers annually for local service awards.

Volunteer Program Evaluation:

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The Washington Post 2009 Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management,

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The volunteer program has established performance goals and objectives with specific strategies and regular measurement.

- To recruit diverse and quality volunteers into the volunteer program. In FY 08 Doorways held 11 Volunteer Information Nights with 92 people in attendance. Forty-five percent of those then went on to attend Doorways' training program. Of those who attended the training program, 83% became active volunteers with Doorways (our benchmark is 75%).
- To maintain a comprehensive volunteer training program that educates volunteers about Doorways and the complex needs of our clients. To train volunteers to provide quality service to Doorways' clients and meet all accreditation requirements set forth by the Virginia Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (VSDVAA).
- To fulfill volunteer needs and retain direct and in-direct service volunteers who provide quality service to Doorways. In FY 08 a total of 4,344 volunteer hours, 83 volunteers and a retention rate of 78 %.

8. **What is your organization doing to uphold the public trust?** Address how you concretely demonstrate transparency and accountability to your stakeholders.

As reflected in many of the answers throughout this award application, upholding the public trust is practiced and highly regarded. As described in the communication question, a wide range of methods are used to demonstrate transparency and "openness" in sharing Doorways successes and challenges with stakeholders, breeding stakeholder confidence and trust in Doorways efforts.

Here are key ways in which we demonstrate transparency, openness, and accountability:

- Issue public **annual reports** and **widely distribute the key performance outcome measurements** to a broad spectrum of stakeholders; evaluate an extensive array of outcome measures and promote results. (See Evaluation and Communication questions for more detail.)
- Maintain ample **opportunities for members of the public to communicate** with organization representatives (website, newsletter, telephone, written requests, participation in public forums).
- Have a dedicated staff position, **Director of Quality Assurance**, responsible for agency compliance with state and federal disclosure laws and requirements.
- Conduct **strong and proactive nonpartisan local, state, and federal public policy advocacy**, including providing public testimony using our board, clients, and staff.
- Produce **annual financial statements** and receive **annual financial statement audits** (which recently have included a the publishing of a Management's Discussion and Analysis section to provide more background about the impact of our recently completed campaign and construction project on our financial statements) and **make audit results accessible to the public**.
- Ensure that **publicly distributed educational information is factually accurate and provides sufficient context**. Multi-department staff review of mass distributed materials is routinely conducted to ensure accuracy.

- Strive for strong standing with **national and regional charity and program evaluators** including *Charity Navigator*, *Guidestar*, and the *Virginia Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Action Alliance*.
- Cultivate **proactive and successful relationships with media** resulting in numerous media spots each year. In 2008 alone, more than 30 media hits were achieved. Our 3 year pro-bono relationship with Washington Women in Public Relations is testimony to our commitment to communicating Doorways' mission to the public, including the reasons for caring about the cause.
- Established **policies and procedures** for *Client Grievances* and *Whistleblower Protection* several years ago.
- Developed a *Neighborhood Communication Policy* governs our communication strategies for critical incidents occurring at our residential homes.
- Committed to robust **community education program** initiatives (e.g., Domestic Violence Awareness Month activities, The Red Flag Campaign).

Donor Relationships and Privacy

Policies are in place reflecting Doorways' practices for:

- Respecting the privacy of donors and safeguarding the confidentiality of donor information.
- Pledging accurate and truthful solicitation and promotional materials.
- Honoring the statements made in fundraising appeals.
- Honoring the restrictions placed on contributions by donors.

We provide donors (especially top level donors via the Leadership Circle program) with special opportunities for learning about agency's current matters and strategic priorities in a personal setting.
