

Resolve to be a Risk-Aware Nonprofit

Resource Type: Articles

Topic: General

Hold your head high and be proud of where you have taken your organization. Whether you know it or not, your organization is an inspiration. The mission matters, and when mission fulfillment happens every day, that's inspiring. At the Nonprofit Risk Management Center, we are grateful to hear your stories about missions that inspire us. Our gift to you this New Year is a free online tool that we hope will inspire you to strengthen risk management in your nonprofit.

With generous funding from the Travelers Foundation, the Center is pleased to introduce [Hallmarks of a Risk-Aware Nonprofit](#).

The Hallmarks is an online tool designed to:

- Inspire thoughtful risk-taking by nonprofit leaders,
- Illuminate the “hallmarks” that are shared by risk-aware nonprofits, and
- Provide a forum for nonprofit leaders to share specific tools and practical guidance to strengthen the risk management practices in their organizations.

Each of the 12 Hallmarks is described, along with suggestions for how organizations can embody the Hallmarks in their operations and activities. For each Hallmark, the Center has identified numerous tools, including sample policies and tips to help you achieve some of the star power demonstrated by risk-savvy nonprofits. These tools are there for you to customize for your own organization, and also to serve as suggestions for practices and policies to share with others through a simple “Submit a Tool” button on the site. By sharing your inspiring practices you will be partnering with other risk-savvy nonprofits in taking risk management to the next level in your organization.

Each of the [Hallmarks](#) is followed by practical suggestions and links to specific resources. For example, Hallmark #2 suggests that it is essential to have a leader in your organization who both believes in the importance of risk management and is effective in motivating others. What if you like that idea, but your organization isn't ‘there yet?’ Click on the Tools for Hallmark #2 for suggestions on cultivating a risk management champion.

Hallmark #4, “Is Bold But Smart,” reflects the Center's view that effective nonprofits take bold risks and that risk-taking should be an informed and thoughtful process. Tools for Hallmark #4 include a sample charter for a risk management committee, a checklist for possible risks to consider when programs are expanding or growing, and links to free resources such as articles that support the Hallmark's goal of making informed choices and being aware of the risks involved.

Hallmark #8, “Tells It Like It Is” focuses on transparency and candor. The tools for Hallmark #8 include a sample media spokesperson policy, resources and suggestions for drafting press releases and a link to a sample crisis communication plan.

Many of the Hallmarks offer sample risk management policies, as well as resources for developing or revising specific policies, including:

- [Sample Gift Acceptance Policy](#) (Hallmark #1)
- [Sample Whistleblower Policy](#) (Hallmark #5)
- [Sample Open Door Policy](#) (Hallmarks #2 and #5)
- [Sample Record Retention and Destruction Schedule](#) (Hallmark #7)
- [Sample Media Spokesperson Policy](#) (Hallmark #8)
- [Sample Executive Compensation Review Policy](#) (Hallmark #11)
- [Sample Joint Venture/Partnership Agreement Review Policy](#) (Hallmark #11)
- [Sample Conflict of Interest Policy](#) (Hallmark #11)

Be inspired! We invite you to take a look at the Hallmarks—especially the tools—whenever you need inspiration, and to share ideas and practices that have been successful for your organization. Keep in mind that you will never be alone in your journey to become a risk-aware organization. We look forward to your feedback on the Hallmarks and will be eager to post the tools and resources you are willing to share with others. As always, do not hesitate to reach out to the Center’s staff for assistance in your journey to more effective risk management and mission fulfillment. Submit your technical question via the [“Contact Us” page](#) on our website, or contact us by telephone at (703) 777-3504.