

ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR NONPROFITS

ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR NONPROFITS: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION:

AN EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR NONPROFITS IS THE BEDROCK OF SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT. THIS MANUAL SERVES AS A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE, ENSURING TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE. THIS GUIDE EXPLORES THE CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF A ROBUST ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR NONPROFITS, OFFERING INSIGHTS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR ORGANIZATIONS OF ALL SIZES. DEVELOPING A CLEAR AND CONCISE ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR NONPROFITS IS CRUCIAL FOR ATTRACTING DONORS, MAINTAINING STAKEHOLDER TRUST, AND ULTIMATELY, ACHIEVING THE NONPROFIT'S MISSION. THIS DOCUMENT WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE CREATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH A MANUAL.

I. WHY AN ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL IS ESSENTIAL FOR NONPROFITS

NONPROFITS, UNLIKE FOR-PROFIT BUSINESSES, RELY HEAVILY ON DONATIONS AND GRANTS. MAINTAINING ACCURATE AND TRANSPARENT FINANCIAL RECORDS IS NOT JUST A BEST PRACTICE; IT'S A LEGAL AND ETHICAL IMPERATIVE. AN ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR NONPROFITS PROVIDES:

CONSISTENCY: ENSURES CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES ACROSS ALL FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS.

ACCURACY: MINIMIZES ERRORS AND STRENGTHENS THE RELIABILITY OF FINANCIAL REPORTING.

COMPLIANCE: HELPS ORGANIZATIONS ADHERE TO RELEVANT ACCOUNTING STANDARDS (E.G., GAAP, GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES) AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.

EFFICIENCY: STREAMLINES FINANCIAL PROCESSES, SAVING TIME AND RESOURCES.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: PROVIDES CLEAR GUIDELINES, ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO DONORS, FUNDERS, AND STAKEHOLDERS.

RISK MITIGATION: REDUCES THE RISK OF FRAUD AND FINANCIAL MISMANAGEMENT.

STAFF TRAINING: SERVES AS A VALUABLE TRAINING TOOL FOR NEW AND EXISTING STAFF.

II. KEY COMPONENTS OF AN ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR NONPROFITS

A COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR NONPROFITS SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

- A. **CHART OF ACCOUNTS:** A DETAILED LISTING OF ALL ACCOUNTS USED BY THE NONPROFIT, INCLUDING REVENUE, EXPENSE, ASSET, LIABILITY, AND EQUITY ACCOUNTS. THIS SECTION SHOULD CLEARLY DEFINE THE PURPOSE OF EACH ACCOUNT.
- B. **REVENUE RECOGNITION:** THIS SECTION OUTLINES THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR RECOGNIZING REVENUE FROM VARIOUS SOURCES, SUCH AS DONATIONS, GRANTS, PROGRAM FEES, AND INVESTMENTS. IT SHOULD SPECIFY THE CRITERIA FOR RECOGNIZING REVENUE AND THE TIMING OF RECOGNITION.
- C. **EXPENSE RECOGNITION:** THIS SECTION DETAILS THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR RECOGNIZING EXPENSES. IT COVERS AREAS SUCH AS ACCRUAL ACCOUNTING, MATCHING PRINCIPLES, AND EXPENSE CLASSIFICATIONS.
- D. **CASH MANAGEMENT:** THIS SECTION ADDRESSES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING CASH RECEIPTS, DISBURSEMENTS, BANK RECONCILIATIONS, AND INTERNAL CONTROLS TO SAFEGUARD CASH ASSETS.
- E. **ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE AND PAYABLE:** THIS SECTION OUTLINES PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE (MONEY OWED TO THE NONPROFIT) AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (MONEY OWED BY THE NONPROFIT). IT SHOULD INCLUDE POLICIES FOR INVOICING, PAYMENT PROCESSING, AND FOLLOW-UP ON OUTSTANDING BALANCES.
- F. **FIXED ASSETS:** THIS SECTION DETAILS POLICIES FOR ACQUIRING, DEPRECIATING, AND DISPOSING OF FIXED ASSETS (E.G., EQUIPMENT, BUILDINGS).
- G. **INVENTORY MANAGEMENT:** IF APPLICABLE, THIS SECTION OUTLINES PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING INVENTORY, INCLUDING RECEIVING, STORING, AND ISSUING INVENTORY ITEMS.
- H. **PAYROLL:** THIS SECTION DETAILS PAYROLL PROCESSES, INCLUDING TAX WITHHOLDING, BENEFIT ADMINISTRATION, AND COMPLIANCE WITH RELEVANT LABOR LAWS.
- I. **BUDGETING AND FORECASTING:** THIS SECTION OUTLINES THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING AND MONITORING THE ORGANIZATION'S BUDGET AND FINANCIAL FORECASTS.
- J. **INTERNAL CONTROLS:** THIS SECTION IS CRUCIAL AND DETAILS THE INTERNAL CONTROLS DESIGNED TO PREVENT AND DETECT ERRORS AND FRAUD. IT SHOULD COVER SEGREGATION OF DUTIES, AUTHORIZATION PROCEDURES, AND REGULAR AUDITS.
- K. **FINANCIAL REPORTING:** THIS SECTION DESCRIBES THE PROCEDURES FOR PREPARING AND DISTRIBUTING FINANCIAL REPORTS, INCLUDING THE BALANCE SHEET, INCOME STATEMENT, STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS, AND OTHER RELEVANT FINANCIAL STATEMENTS. IT SHOULD ALSO OUTLINE THE REPORTING FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION LISTS.
- L. **AUDIT PROCEDURES:** THIS SECTION DETAILS THE ANNUAL AUDIT PROCESS, INCLUDING THE SELECTION OF AN AUDITOR, THE SCOPE OF THE AUDIT, AND THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

III. IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR NONPROFITS

THE MANUAL SHOULD BE READILY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL RELEVANT STAFF. REGULAR REVIEWS AND UPDATES ARE ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE THAT THE MANUAL REMAINS CURRENT AND RELEVANT. TRAINING SHOULD BE PROVIDED TO ALL STAFF ON THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OUTLINED IN THE MANUAL.

IV. CONCLUSION

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR NONPROFITS IS A CRITICAL STEP TOWARD ENSURING FINANCIAL STABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY. BY FOLLOWING THE GUIDELINES PRESENTED IN THIS GUIDE, NONPROFITS CAN ESTABLISH A ROBUST FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM THAT SUPPORTS THEIR MISSION AND BUILDS TRUST WITH STAKEHOLDERS. THE INVESTMENT IN CREATING A HIGH-QUALITY ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR NONPROFITS PAYS DIVIDENDS IN TERMS OF EFFICIENCY, ACCURACY, AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE.

FAQs

1. WHAT ARE THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NONPROFIT ACCOUNTING? NONPROFIT ACCOUNTING IS SUBJECT TO VARIOUS LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS, DEPENDING ON THE JURISDICTION AND THE SPECIFIC TYPE OF NONPROFIT. THESE MAY INCLUDE ADHERENCE TO GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES (GAAP), COMPLIANCE WITH STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS RELATED TO TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS, AND ADHERENCE TO DONOR RESTRICTIONS.
1. HOW OFTEN SHOULD THE ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL BE REVIEWED AND UPDATED? THE MANUAL SHOULD BE REVIEWED AND UPDATED AT LEAST ANNUALLY, OR MORE FREQUENTLY IF THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATION'S OPERATIONS, ACCOUNTING STANDARDS, OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.
1. WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING THE ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL? KEY STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, FINANCE STAFF, MANAGEMENT, AND POTENTIALLY EXTERNAL ACCOUNTANTS OR CONSULTANTS, SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MANUAL.
1. WHAT SOFTWARE CAN BE USED TO MANAGE NONPROFIT ACCOUNTING? MANY ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR NONPROFITS AND OFFER FEATURES SUCH AS GRANT MANAGEMENT, FUND ACCOUNTING, AND REPORTING CAPABILITIES.
1. HOW CAN I ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS? STRICT ADHERENCE TO DONOR-IMPOSED RESTRICTIONS IS PARAMOUNT. THE MANUAL SHOULD EXPLICITLY OUTLINE PROCEDURES FOR TRACKING RESTRICTED FUNDS AND ENSURING THAT FUNDS ARE USED ONLY FOR THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE.
1. WHAT ARE THE BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERNAL CONTROL OVER CASH? STRONG INTERNAL CONTROLS OVER CASH INCLUDE SEGREGATION OF DUTIES, REGULAR BANK RECONCILIATIONS, AND THE USE OF PETTY CASH PROCEDURES.
1. HOW CAN I IMPROVE THE ACCURACY OF MY FINANCIAL REPORTING? ACCURACY IN FINANCIAL REPORTING IS ENHANCED BY CONSISTENT APPLICATION OF ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES, THOROUGH DOCUMENTATION, AND REGULAR INTERNAL REVIEWS.
1. WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF A STRONG AUDIT TRAIL? A STRONG AUDIT TRAIL INCLUDES DETAILED DOCUMENTATION OF ALL FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS, SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR ALL ENTRIES, AND CLEAR LINKS BETWEEN SOURCE DOCUMENTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.
1. WHERE CAN I FIND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON NONPROFIT ACCOUNTING? THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NONPROFITS, THE IRS WEBSITE, AND VARIOUS PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTING ORGANIZATIONS OFFER VALUABLE RESOURCES ON NONPROFIT ACCOUNTING.

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1. "DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE NONPROFIT FUNDRAISING PLAN": THIS ARTICLE DELVES INTO THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SOUND FUNDRAISING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCURATE ACCOUNTING.
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accounting policies and procedures manual for nonprofits: Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations John Zietlow, Jo Ann Hankin, Alan Seidner, Tim O'Brien, 2018-04-10

Essential tools and guidance for effective nonprofit financial management Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations provides students, professionals, and board members with a comprehensive reference for the field. Identifying key objectives and exploring current practices, this book offers practical guidance on all major aspects of nonprofit financial management. As nonprofit organizations fall under ever-increasing scrutiny and accountability, this book provides the essential knowledge and tools professional need to maintain a strong financial management system while serving the organization's stated mission. Financial management, cash flow, and financial sustainability are perennial issues, and this book highlights the concepts, skills, and tools that help organizations address those issues. Clear guidance on analytics, reporting, investing, risk management, and more comprise a singular reference that nonprofit finance and accounting professionals and board members should keep within arm's reach. Updated to reflect the post-recession reality and outlook for nonprofits, this new edition includes new examples, expanded tax-exempt financing material, and recession analysis that informs strategy going forward. Articulate the proper primary financial objective, target liquidity, and how it ensures financial health and sustainability Understand nonprofit financial practices, processes, and objectives Manage your organization's resources in the context of its mission Delve into smart investing and risk management best practices Manage liquidity, reporting, cash and operating budgets, debt and other liabilities, IP, legal risk, internal controls and more Craft appropriate financial policies Although the U.S. economy has recovered, recovery has not addressed the systemic and perpetual funding challenges nonprofits face year after year. Despite positive indicators, many organizations remain hampered by pursuit of the wrong primary financial objective, insufficient funding and a lack of investment in long-term sustainability; in this climate, financial managers must stay up-to-date with the latest tools, practices, and regulations in order to serve their organization's interests. Financial Management for Nonprofit Organizations provides clear, in-depth reference and strategy for navigating the expanding financial management function.

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A completely revised and expanded edition of the nonprofit industry finance and accounting standard Filled with authoritative advice on the financial reporting, accounting, and

control situations unique to not-for-profit organizations, *Financial and Accounting Guide for Not-for-Profit Organizations*, Eighth Edition is recognized by professionals as the industry standard reference on not-for-profit finance and accounting. Prepared by the PricewaterhouseCoopers Not-for-Profit Industry Services Group, the book includes accounting, tax, and reporting guidelines for different types of organizations, step-by-step procedures and forms, and more. A new chapter on public debt has also been added. Presents the latest updates to regulatory reporting and disclosure changes in recent years Reflects the totally revamped and revised AICPA accounting and audit guide for not-for-profit organizations Addresses concerns of all nonprofit organizations, including health and welfare organizations, colleges and universities, churches and other religious organizations, libraries, museums, and other smaller groups Includes step-by-step procedures and forms, detailed explanations of financial statements, and a how-to section on setting up and keeping the books *Financial and Accounting Guide for Not-for-Profit Organizations*, Eighth Edition is the completely revised and expanded new edition of the bestselling not-for-profit accounting guide.

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accounting policies and procedures manual for nonprofits: *Bookkeeping for Nonprofits* Murray Dropkin, James Halpin, 2012-06-27 *BOOKKEEPING FOR NONPROFITS* Bookkeeping for Nonprofits is a hands-on guide that offers nonprofit leaders, managers, and staff the tools they need to create and maintain a complete and accurate set of accounting records. This much-needed resource provides those with little or no bookkeeping experience with practical advice in a highly accessible format. Written by Murray Dropkin and Jim Halpin, *Bookkeeping for Nonprofits* is a step-by-step introduction to keeping accounting records, which form the foundation for a nonprofit organization's financial reports, tax returns, budgets, cash forecasts, and grant proposals. Using this volume as a guide, nonprofit leaders and staff will be able to set up books with or without accounting software and ensure that the records meet the needs of their organization. *Bookkeeping for Nonprofits* is a comprehensive resource that Discusses how transactions provide day-to-day information for tracking cash balances and cash requirements Shows how transactions provide information to management and the board of directors for budgeting and other essential tasks Explains basic bookkeeping concepts, such as the accounting equation, the chart of accounts, and income and expense tracking Guides readers through the nuts and bolts of recording a transaction Provides an overview of alternative recordkeeping methodologies and how to choose among them Designed to be easy to use, the book is filled with illustrations and checklists. *Bookkeeping for Nonprofits* is the remarkable new guide for a new generation of accounting challenges bookkeepers face every day. —Frances Hesselbein, chairman and founding president, Leader to Leader Institute *Bookkeeping for Nonprofits* provides a rare combination of consummate professionalism and clear, accessible writing. Underlying the wealth of technical information lies a great deal of wisdom. The authors have found a way to translate their enormous, on-the-ground experience into usable, actionable policies, procedures, and practices. It is a book that gives all you need to create a fiscally responsible agency with the bonus of helping you become a better manager and a wiser person. —Peter Block, business consultant and author of *Flawless Consulting* and *The Empowered Manager* *Bookkeeping for Nonprofits* provides an excellent understanding of the practical application of bookkeeping in the real work environment. —Ron Werthman, vice president, finance/treasurer and CFO, Johns Hopkins Health System, The Johns Hopkins Hospital This is a wonderful book that every bookkeeper in a nonprofit organization should have. —Eusebio David, fiscal director, Federation of Multicultural Programs, Inc.

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Nonprofit Boards Andrew S. Lang, 2009 Designed to help nonprofit board members and senior staff, The six books address all of the fundamental elements of service common to most boards, including board member responsibilities, how to structure the board in the most efficient manner, and how to accomplish governance work in the spirit of the mission of the organization.--Pg. 2 of Book 1

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accounting policies and procedures manual for nonprofits: Nonprofit Bookkeeping and Accounting For Dummies Sharon Farris, 2009-04-13 Your hands-on guide to keeping great records and keeping your nonprofit running smoothly Need to get your nonprofit books in order? This practical guide has everything you need to know to operate your nonprofit according to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) — from documenting transactions and budgeting to filing taxes, preparing financial statements, and much more. You'll see how to stay organized, keep records, and be prepared for an audit. Begin with the basics — understand common financial terms, choose your accounting methods, and work with financial statements Balance your nonprofit books — set up a chart of accounts, record transactions, plan your budget, and balance your cash flow Get

the 4-1-1 on federal grants — find grants and apply for them, track and account for federal dollars, and prepare for a grant audit Stay in good standing with Uncle Sam — set up payroll accounts for employees, calculate taxes and deductions, and complete tax forms Close out your books — prepare the necessary financial statements, know which accounts to close, and prepare for the next accounting cycle Know what to do if you get audited — form an internal audit committee, follow IRS rules of engagement, and keep an immaculate paper trail Open the book and find: The difference between bookkeeping and accounting How to maintain a manual or computer record-keeping system Ten vital things to know when keeping the books Do's and don'ts of managing federal grant money How to prepare for an audit of your financial statements IRS Form 990 good practices The most common errors found during nonprofit audits How to figure out employee payroll deductions and taxes

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accounting policies and procedures manual for nonprofits: Audit and Accounting Guide AICPA, 2020-08-11 From financial reporting to revenue recognition to grants and contracts to auditor report changes, you have a lot going on in the not-for-profit financial arena right now. Whether you're already an expert in NFP audit and accounting standards or just getting started, this is the practical guidance you need. This must-have resource for nonprofits accounting and auditing professionals is an essential reference that will assist you with the unique aspects of accounting and financial statement preparation and auditing for not-for-profit entities. It will help you with the following Understand and implement recent updates and changes, including those related to financial reporting, revenue recognition, and grants and contracts Gain a full understanding of the accounting issues unique to not-for-profit entities Assist in the implementation of auditor report changes.

accounting policies and procedures manual for nonprofits: *Nonprofit Management All-in-One For Dummies* Beverly A. Browning, Sharon Farris, Maire Loughran, Alyson Connolly, Shiv Singh, Stephanie Diamond, 2023-04-13 Learn the ins-and-outs of managing, funding, and handling the accounting for a nonprofit Nonprofits are not like other businesses. They're special. It doesn't matter if you're launching a career as part of a multi-million dollar organization or a volunteer running your local little league, you'll need special know-how to navigate the accounting practices and funding needs of a not-for-profit. Nonprofit Management All-in-One For Dummies is your guide for know-how on making a nonprofit organization operate properly. This beginner-friendly reference helps replace your shelf of nonprofit how-to books with a single reference to answer your questions on how to manage a mission-focused organization, build budgets, and raise funds while staying

within the confines of the laws governing nonprofits. You'll also find advice on valuable skills like marketing that benefit your organization. Learn how to run a nonprofit organization Find funding for your organization and stay tax compliant Get a grasp on nonprofit accounting principles Market your organization and fulfill your mission This 5-books-in-1 Dummies guide is excellent for volunteers who step up to run a nonprofit that's near and dear to their hearts or would-be professional non-profit managers who need advice on how to manage and grow an organization.

accounting policies and procedures manual for nonprofits: *The Budget-Building Book for Nonprofits* Murray Dropkin, Jim Halpin, Bill La Touche, 2011-01-11 This best-selling nuts-and-bolts workbook, now in its second edition, has become the gold standard for nonprofit managers and boards who must work through the budget cycle. The book offers practical tools and guidance for completing each step of the budgeting process. Designed to be comprehensive and easy to use, The Budget-Building Book for Nonprofits provides everything budgeters and nonfinancial managers need to prepare, approve, and implement their own budgets. Includes new chapters on Zero-Based and Capital Budgeting as well as an accompanying website with spreadsheets, worksheets and a new budget-building software, the CMS Nonprofit Budget Builder, designed to help you implement the concepts in the book. The software includes an expandable standard chart of accounts (COA) and will aid in building, organizing, tracking and planning budgets.

accounting policies and procedures manual for nonprofits: *Organizational Policy Development* M. Scott Norton, 2023-01-30 This book focuses on the paramount importance of policies and regulations for successful governance operations in any organization.

accounting policies and procedures manual for nonprofits: *Financial Leadership for Nonprofit Executives* Jeanne Bell, Elizabeth Schaffer, 2005-03-31 Making sure that your nonprofit is going to be around long-term requires financial leadership. This means creating a financial vision for your organization and planning how you'll get there. Financial Leadership for Nonprofit Executives gives you the framework, specific language, and processes to lead with confidence. With it, you'll learn how to protect and grow the assets of your organization and accomplish as much mission as possible with those resources. The good news is you don't have to be a trained accountant, earn an MBA, or have run a for-profit business in another lifetime. You already have many of the skills it takes to be a financial leader. This useful guide makes the process understandable and doable. You'll find clear, logical steps to learn how to get accurate financial data—in a format you can understand; use financial data to evaluate your organization's health; plan around a set of meaningful financial goals; and communicate progress on these goals to your staff, board, and external stakeholders. You'll also find five foundational financial leadership principles; three overarching questions every financial leader needs to be able to answer (and where to find those answers); two fundamental budgeting principles; and five steps to building a strong annual budget. At the end of each chapter is an evaluation tool. You can rate how your organization is doing relative to the component of financial leadership covered in each chapter. Each attribute is scored as being red, yellow, or green. "Red" items are below standard and require immediate attention; "yellow" items are widely practiced though not generally ideal; and "green" items are considered best practice. Over time, as you and your partners on the board and staff move the organization toward "green" in each of these areas, you will create an environment in which financial leadership can flourish.

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