



Mission
Guardian

Healthy Nonprofit Homework

Your Articles & Bylaws

Don't forget, I'll walk you through each of these questions. [Listen along here.](#)

Let's have a quick refresher...

The **Articles of Incorporation** are the nonprofit's declaration of independence. They say who you are and what you do.

While the **Bylaws** are the nonprofit's playbook or rule book. They tell you how to run the organization and what to do and when to do it.

1. What year was the nonprofit incorporated? _____

2. Have you updated your articles and bylaws within the last 5 years?

Yes → Woot woot! 😊

No ↘

You might want to think about getting your documents reviewed. Laws and best practices change over time. Plus, the IRS significantly changed some key requirements in 2009 so if you haven't updated in a while it may be time!

3. Take a look at the 'purpose statement' in your Articles of Incorporation. Does it really capture what your organization does today?

If you say:	Then:
Yes, it's dead on!	Great!
It's pretty accurate?	Ok you might want us to review it
Nope we do things differently now.	Definitely time to get that updated so you don't run afoul of the IRS
Huh? Our Articles just say "organized for exempt purposes" or something generic about not for profit.	Uh Oh! Definitely time for an update.

4. **Read your org's bylaws. Do you think you're actually following the steps in the bylaws (ie: what about how directors are elected, meetings etc.)**

Yes → 

No → Don't worry, this happens a lot. People get bylaws in place and then real life takes over. The way we really do things sometimes doesn't match with what sounded good on paper. Time to consider an update to this document.

5. **Ok keep looking at the bylaws. Is the process for membership termination clear? What about board member removal. Could you do it if you needed to tomorrow?**

Yes →   

No → Ok, think about doing an update, this is where things get messy when there's a problem.

6. **Do the bylaws allow a process for written action (ie: board votes by email) and electronic or remote participation (ie: attending meetings by conference call or video conference)?**

☐ Yes → Perfect!

☐ No → Seeing as it's the 21st century you're going to want to get this process in place so busy board members can participate and help as much as possible even when they can't all be in the same room.

[Visit the member portal to download resources or to schedule a consult!](#)