

New York Non-Profit Revitalization Act Reforms Governance Rules for Nonprofits

Signed into law in 2013, the New York Non-Profit Revitalization Act is designed to reform the statutory requirements for governance of nonprofit organizations (both not-for-profit corporations and wholly charitable trusts), expand the Attorney General's enforcement powers, and modernize and clarify some of the more mechanical and procedural New York rules applicable to not-for-profit corporations. Most provisions took effect on July 1, 2014. Amendments took effect on December 11, 2015 and are reflected in this summary.

Click [here](#) for an Overview of Applicability. Click [here](#) for a Summary of the Act's Governance Requirements.

Click [here](#) for a Summary of the Act's Financial Reporting Rules for Organizations Required to Register to Conduct Charitable Solicitations.

Click [here](#) for Highlights of the Act's Update of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and Expansion of the Attorney General's Enforcement Powers.

The Attorney General press release and summary can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

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Non-Profit Revitalization Act: Overview of Applicability

Applicability is a threshold issue for any organization trying to understand the Non-Profit Revitalization Act. This chart shows the architecture of the new law, so that you can identify the portions that apply to your organization.

<p>All Not-for-Profit Corporations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Compensation: Deliberations and Voting</u> → <u>Chair of the Board</u>
<p>All Not-for-Profit Corporations and Wholly Charitable Trusts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Related Party Transaction Rules (Basic)</u> → <u>Mandatory Conflict of Interest Policy</u> → <u>Policy Oversight</u> → <u>Defined Terms</u>
<p>Not-for-Profit Corporations and Wholly Charitable Trusts with 20 or More Employees and Annual Revenue in Excess of \$1,000,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Mandatory Whistleblower Policy</u>
<p>Charitable Corporations and Wholly Charitable Trusts (“Charities”)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Related Party Transaction Rules (Augmented)</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Mandatory Audit Oversight Function (Basic Duties)</u>
<p>Charities Required to Register to Conduct Charitable Solicitations in New York with Annual Revenue in Excess of \$1,000,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <u>Mandatory Audit Oversight Function (Augmented Duties)</u>

Non-Profit Revitalization Act: Summary of the Act's Governance Requirements

Covered Organizations	Topic	Summary
All Not-for-Profit Corporations	Compensation: Deliberations and Voting	No person who may benefit from a compensation arrangement may be present at or otherwise participate in any Board or committee deliberation or vote concerning that person's compensation, except that the Board or committee may request that the person present information as background or answer questions at a committee or Board meeting prior to the commencement of deliberations or voting thereon. Directors, however, may deliberate or vote concerning compensation for service on the Board if the compensation is to be made available or provided to all directors on the same or substantially similar terms.
	Chair of the Board	No employee may serve as chair or hold any other title with similar responsibilities. This provision is not applicable until January 1, 2017.
All Not-for-Profit Corporations and Wholly Charitable Trusts*	<p>Related Party Transaction Rules (Basic)</p> <p><i>(See augmented rules below applicable only to Charitable Corporations and Wholly Charitable Trusts.)</i></p>	<p>A covered organization may not enter into a related party transaction unless the Board determines that the transaction is fair, reasonable and in the organization's best interest at the time of determination.</p> <p>A director, officer or key employee who has an interest in a related party transaction must disclose in good faith to the Board or an authorized Board committee the material facts concerning such interest.</p> <p>Additional restrictions and procedures may be set forth in the organization's governing documents or a policy adopted by the Board.</p> <p>No related party with an interest in a related party transaction may participate in deliberations or vote on the related party transaction, except that the Board or an authorized committee may request that such related party present information concerning the transaction at a meeting of the Board or such committee prior to commencement of deliberations or voting thereon.</p> <p>Directors who attend a meeting but are not present at the time of a vote due to their interest in a related party transaction will be determined to be present at the time of the vote for purposes of establishing a quorum.</p>

New defined terms under the Non-Profit Revitalization Act appear in this summary in bold. A glossary of defined terms appears at the end of the summary.

References to "directors" include trustees of wholly charitable trusts. References to the "Board" refer to a Board of Directors or other governing body of a corporation and to the collective trustees of a wholly charitable trust.

**Unless otherwise specified, references to "not-for-profit corporations" include both charitable and non-charitable not-for-profit corporations (such as those formed for social, fraternal or political purposes). The Act clearly applies to New York not-for-profit corporations and New York wholly charitable trusts. Non-New York charities that conduct solicitations in New York and have revenue over certain thresholds may be subject to some provisions of the Act, depending on how the Act is interpreted.*

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Covered Organizations	Topic	Summary
<p>All Not-for-Profit Corporations and Wholly Charitable Trusts* (cont'd)</p>	<p>Mandatory Conflict of Interest Policy</p> <p><i>Note that an organization that has adopted a Conflict of Interest Policy pursuant to federal, state or local laws that is substantially consistent with these new requirements will be deemed in compliance, as will a corporation that is a state or local authority that has complied substantially with Public Authorities Law Sections 2824 and 2825(3).</i></p>	<p>Each covered organization must adopt a Conflict of Interest Policy to ensure that its directors, officers and key employees act in the organization's best interest and comply with applicable laws.</p> <p><u>Contents of the Conflict of Interest Policy</u></p> <p>The Conflict of Interest Policy, at a minimum, must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a definition of the circumstances that constitute a conflict of interest; (b) procedures for disclosing a conflict of interest to the Audit Committee, or if no Audit Committee exists, to the Board; (c) a requirement that the conflicted person not be present at or participate in Board or committee deliberations or vote on the matter (though the Board or committee may request that the conflicted person present information as background or answer questions at a Board or committee meeting prior to commencement of deliberations or voting relating to the matter); (d) a prohibition of any attempt by the conflicted person to influence improperly the deliberations or voting on the matter; (e) a requirement that the existence and resolution of the conflict be documented in organization records, including minutes of any meeting where the conflict is discussed or voted on; and (f) procedures for disclosing, addressing and documenting related party transactions. <p>Conflicted directors may be counted for purposes of establishing a quorum at a meeting at which the conflict of interest is discussed and voted on, even though they may not be present at or participate in deliberations or votes on the matter.</p> <p>The Policy must also require that, prior to initial election and annually thereafter, each director submit to the secretary or a designated compliance officer a signed written statement identifying, to the best of the director's knowledge, (1) any entity of which the director is an officer, director, trustee, member, owner or employee, with which the organization has a relationship and</p>

Covered Organizations	Topic	Summary
		<p>(2) any transaction in which the organization is a participant and in which the director might have a conflicting interest. The secretary or designated compliance officer must provide copies of all such statements to the chair of the Audit Committee or, if none, to the chair of the Board.</p>
	<p>Policy Oversight</p>	<p>The Board or designated Audit Committee of the Board shall oversee the adoption and implementation of, and compliance with, any Conflict of Interest or Whistleblower Policy adopted by the organization, unless this function is performed by a committee of the Board consisting solely of independent directors.</p>
<p>Not-for-Profit Corporations and Wholly Charitable Trusts with 20 or More Employees and Annual Revenue in Excess of \$1,000,000</p>	<p>Mandatory Whistleblower Policy</p> <p><i>Note that an organization that has adopted a Whistleblower Policy pursuant to federal, state or local laws that is substantially consistent with these new requirements will be deemed in compliance, as will a corporation that is a state or local authority that has complied substantially with Public Authorities Law Section 2824 and is subject to Public Authorities Law Section 2857.</i></p>	<p>Each covered organization must adopt a Whistleblower Policy to protect from retaliation persons who report suspected improper conduct.</p> <p><u>Contents of the Whistleblower Policy</u></p> <p>The Whistleblower Policy must provide that no director, officer, employee or volunteer who in good faith reports any action or suspected action taken by or within the organization that is illegal, fraudulent or in violation of any policy of the organization shall suffer intimidation, harassment, discrimination or other retaliation or, in the case of employees, adverse employment consequences.</p> <p>The Whistleblower Policy must include:</p> <p>(a) procedures (including confidentiality provisions) for reporting violations or suspected violations of laws or organization policies;</p>

Covered Organizations	Topic	Summary
		<p>(b) a requirement that an employee, officer or director be designated to administer the Policy and report to the Audit Committee, another committee of independent directors or the Board; and</p> <p>(c) a requirement that a copy of the Policy be distributed to all directors, officers, employees, and volunteers who provide substantial services to the organization. Posting the Policy on the organization’s website or at its offices in a conspicuous location accessible to employees and volunteers will satisfy the distribution requirement.</p>
<p>Charitable Corporations and Wholly Charitable Trusts (“Charities”)</p>	<p>Related Party Transaction Rules (Augmented)</p>	<p>If a related party of a covered organization has a substantial financial interest in a related party transaction, the Board or authorized Board committee must:</p> <p>(a) prior to entering into the transaction, consider alternative transactions to the extent available;</p> <p>(b) approve the transaction by not less than a majority vote of the directors or committee members present at the meeting; and</p> <p>(c) contemporaneously document in writing the basis for its approval of the transaction, including consideration of any alternative transactions.</p>
<p>Charities Required to Register to Conduct Charitable Solicitations in New York with Annual Revenue in Excess of \$500,000</p> <p><i>Note that this provision is not applicable until January 1, 2015 for any organization that had annual revenue of less than \$10,000,000 in the last fiscal year ending prior to January 1, 2014.</i></p>	<p>Mandatory Audit Oversight Function (Basic Duties)</p> <p><i>(See augmented duties below if annual revenue in excess of \$1,000,000.)</i></p> <p><i>Note that a corporation that is a state or local authority and has complied substantially with Public Authorities Law Sections 2802 and 2824 will be deemed in compliance with the audit oversight function requirements.</i></p>	<p>Either each covered organization must have an Audit Committee consisting of independent directors, or the independent directors on its Board must perform the duties of an Audit Committee.</p> <p><u>Duties of the Audit Oversight Function</u></p> <p>The Audit Committee or the independent directors on the Board must:</p> <p>(a) oversee the accounting and financial reporting processes of the organization and the audit of its financial statements;</p> <p>(b) annually retain or renew the retention of an independent auditor; and</p> <p>(c) review with the independent auditor the results of the audit (including the management letter).</p>

Covered Organizations	Topic	Summary
<p>Charities Required to Register to Conduct Charitable Solicitations in New York with Annual Revenue in Excess of \$1,000,000</p> <p><i>Note that this provision is not applicable until January 1, 2015 for any organization that had annual revenue of less than \$10,000,000 in the last fiscal year ending prior to January 1, 2014.</i></p>	<p>Mandatory Audit Oversight Function (Augmented Duties)</p>	<p><u>Augmented Duties of the Audit Oversight Function</u></p> <p>In addition to the basic duties listed above, the Audit Committee or the independent directors on the Board of a covered organization must:</p> <p>(a) review with the independent auditor the scope and planning of the audit prior to its commencement;</p> <p>(b) review and discuss with the independent auditor any material risks and weaknesses in internal controls identified by the auditor, any restrictions on the scope of the auditor’s activities or access to requested information, any significant disagreements between the auditor and management and the adequacy of the organization’s accounting and financial reporting processes;</p> <p>(c) annually consider the performance and independence of the auditor; and</p> <p>(d) if the duties are performed by an Audit Committee, report its activities to the Board.</p>

DEFINED TERMS

affiliate	An entity controlled by an organization or in control of the organization.
independent auditor	A certified public accountant performing the audit of the financial statements of the organization required by Executive Law Section 172-b(1).
independent director	<p>A director who:</p> <p>(a) is not, and in the last three years has not been, an employee of the organization or any affiliate and does not have a relative who is, or in the last three years has been, a key employee of the organization or any affiliate;</p> <p>(b) in each of the last three fiscal years, has not received (and does not have a relative who has received during this period) more than \$10,000 in direct compensation from the organization or any affiliate (other than reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred as a director or reasonable compensation for services as a director);</p> <p>(c) is not a current employee of or does not have a substantial financial interest in (and does not have a relative who is a current officer of or has a substantial financial interest in) any entity that made payments to (or received payments from) the organization or any affiliate for property or services in an amount which, in any of the last three fiscal years, exceeded the lesser of \$25,000 or 2% of the entity's consolidated gross revenue; and*</p> <p>(d) is not (and does not have a relative who is) a current owner, whether wholly or partially, director, officer or employee of the organization's outside auditor. The definition also appears to exclude any director who has (or has a relative who has) worked on the organization's audit at any time during the past three years.</p> <p>For purposes of this definition, "payment" does not include charitable contributions, dues or fees paid to the organization for services which the organization performs as part of its nonprofit purposes, provided that (in the case of not-for-profit corporations) such services are available to individual members of the public on the same terms.</p>
key employee	Any person who is in a position to exercise substantial influence over the affairs of the organization, as referenced in the U.S. Internal Revenue Code and regulatory provisions governing "excess benefit transactions," to the extent such provisions are applicable.
related party transaction	Any transaction, agreement or other arrangement in which a related party has a financial interest and in which the organization or an affiliate , is a participant.

**The 2015 amendments changed "and" to "or." This summary assumes a director is intended to be "independent" only if the director meets all four of these tests and therefore uses the word "and."*

DEFINED TERMS

related party

Any director, officer or **key employee** of an organization or an **affiliate**, or any person who exercises the powers of directors, officers or key employees over the affairs of the organization or any affiliate; any **relative** of any such individual; and any entity in which any such individual or **relative** has a 35% or greater ownership or beneficial interest or, in the case of a partnership or professional corporation, a direct or indirect ownership interest in excess of 5%.

relative

An individual's spouse or domestic partner, child (whether natural or adopted), grandchild, great-grandchild, sibling, half-sibling, ancestor, or the spouse or domestic partner of the individual's child, grandchild, great-grandchild, sibling or half-sibling.

Non-Profit Revitalization Act: **Summary of the Act’s Financial Reporting Rules for Organizations Required to Register to Conduct Charitable Solicitations**

Every charitable organization required to register to conduct charitable solicitations in New York State must file with the Attorney General an annual report and statement. The requirements for these reports and statements are based on gross revenue and support thresholds. In each case where a report is required, the Non-Profit Revitalization Act requires the organization to:

- Include a statement of any changes in the information required to be contained in the organization’s registration form.
- Have the report signed by the president or other authorized officer and the chief fiscal officer.
- Pay a filing fee of \$25.

The table below describes the revenue and support thresholds and the additional requirements applicable in each case.

Effective Dates	If the organization’s fiscal year gross revenue and support is...	Then the organization must...
July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017	Less than \$250,000	Prepare and file an annual unaudited financial report on forms prescribed by the Attorney General.
	At least \$250,000 but not more than \$500,000	Prepare and file an annual GAAP-compliant financial report, accompanied by an annual financial statement that includes an independent CPA’s review report.
	More than \$500,000	Prepare and file an annual GAAP-compliant financial report on forms prescribed by the Attorney general, accompanied by an annual financial statement that includes an independent CPA’s review report containing a signed opinion that the financial statements are presented fairly in all material respects and in conformity with GAAP.
July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2021	The \$500,000 threshold increases to \$750,000; the \$250,000 threshold remains constant.	See above for applicable requirements.
July 1, 2021 and continuing	The \$750,000 threshold increases to \$1,000,000; the \$250,000 threshold remains constant.	See above for applicable requirements.

Non-Profit Revitalization Act: **Highlights of the Act's Update of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and Expansion of the Attorney General's Enforcement Powers**

The Non-Profit Revitalization Act brings about a number of provisions designed to update certain features of the current New York Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and expand the enforcement tools available to the New York Attorney General. These provisions:

- Establish rules for ***conducting certain corporate activities electronically***, including:
 - Email and fax notice and email waiver of notice of member meetings;
 - Email waiver of notice of board meetings;
 - Notice of member meetings by website posting, in addition to publication in a newspaper, if a corporation has more than 500 members;
 - Email proxy voting for members and unanimous written consent via email for member, board and committee actions; and
 - Videoconferencing for board and committee meetings.
- Redefine the phrase "***entire board***" so that, if the bylaws provide for a range between a minimum and maximum number of directors, and the number within that range has not been fixed, the "entire board" consists of the number of directors elected or appointed as of the most recently held election of directors, as well as any directors whose terms have not yet expired.
 - *This amendment eliminates the cumbersome process requiring that members or boards "fix" the number of directors constituting the entire board and the inadvertent existence of "vacancies" or unauthorized seats simply because the number of directors was not "re-fixed" to reflect the election of a lesser or greater number of directors than the number "fixed" under or pursuant to the bylaws.*
- End the requirement for board approval for ***leasing real property from a third party***.
- Permit ***committee authorization of the purchase or disposition of real property***, unless the transaction involves all or substantially all of the corporation's assets, in which case the board's approval would be necessary.

- *This amendment also imposes an affirmative duty on the committee to report promptly to the board concerning any approved purchase or disposition of real property, and in no event after the next regularly scheduled board meeting.*
- State that **"committees of the corporation" (i.e., committees that may include non-directors) may not "have the authority to bind the board."**
- Confer **discretion on the Attorney General to grant certain approvals that now require a court proceeding**, namely, approvals of "assets" dissolutions; the change, elimination or addition of a purpose or power of a charitable corporation; and the sale, lease, exchange or other disposition of all or substantially all of a corporation's assets.
- Simplify the categories of not-for-profit corporation into **"charitable corporations"** and **"non-charitable corporations."**
 - *Existing types of corporations – known as Types A, B, C and D – will be assigned to one category or the other. Although there will be some nuances for Type D corporations, all existing Type B and C corporations will become charitable corporations under the legislation and all Type A corporations would become non-charitable corporations.*
- Empower the Attorney General to commence proceedings to **enjoin, void or rescind a related party transaction or proposed related party transaction**, including a compensation arrangement with an officer, director, trustee or key employee, if the transaction violates the NPCL or is otherwise not reasonable or in the best interests of the corporation.
- Grant the Attorney General specific authority to seek other relief with regard to related party transactions, such as **damages, restitution, removal and/or an accounting**, including **double damages** in cases of "willful and intentional conduct."

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