



AMERICANS FOR DECENCY IN GOVERNMENT, INC.

A 501(c)(4) Nonpartisan Nonprofit

Board of Directors

Role Specification & Invitation to Serve

Championing basic human decency in public service

Honor • Respect • Dignity

www.decencygov.org

An Invitation to Serve

Many people who care about the state of our country and the current political environment feel some mix of exhaustion, frustration and helplessness about it. Americans for Decency in Government (ADG) exists to help people channel those feelings into positive, meaningful action.

We are building a permanent, nonpartisan institution dedicated to a simple idea: that the people we entrust with public power should treat others with basic human decency, and that citizens deserve a fair, consistent way to tell who does and who doesn't act with basic human decency.

We are inviting a select group of thoughtful, credible people from across the political spectrum to help govern that institution as it scales and ultimately moves the needle on its core goals:

- Making basic human decency a core expectation for public officials.
- Reducing the deep partisan divisions that ultimately threaten our democracy.
- Increasing the trust in and effectiveness of government at the local, state, and federal levels.

*This is a **rare opportunity** to apply your distinctive talents to **create real, measurable change** in the lives of people across the country, and to **join a mission-driven team committed to that impact.***

If you believe that respect, honesty, and accountability still matter in public life; that the corrosive division in our politics is not inevitable; and that someone needs to be willing to stand in the middle and do the patient work of rebuilding trust, then **becoming a director for ADG could be meaningful in a way few board seats are.**

About Americans for Decency in Government

ADG is a nonpartisan, volunteer-led 501(c)(4) nonprofit, incorporated in North Carolina, with a mission to improve government at all levels by making basic human decency a core expectation for public officials. We pursue that mission through four commitments:

- Highlighting basic human decency as important for those who hold public power (whether elected, appointed, or hired).
- Encouraging civic engagement that rewards decent conduct and holds indecency accountable.
- Providing education, tools, and programs that help citizens evaluate public officials, and those who wish to be public officials, more fairly.
- Helping restore public trust in government and reduce partisan division with standards that apply equally across party lines.

Crucially, ADG defines decency by observable behavior (i.e., words, actions, and affiliations) not by ideology, party, or religious belief.

- We do not ask whether an official is liberal or conservative.
- We ask whether they treat people with respect, tell the truth, honor commitments, own their mistakes, and support due process and the fair application of the law.
- Those expectations apply identically to everyone we evaluate.

What We Are Building

ADG translates its standards into practical tools that citizens and officials can actually use:

- **The Patriot's Pledge of Basic Human Decency:** a voluntary commitment for candidates and officials to strive to uphold decency in public service. The pledge transforms abstract fluid ideas about decency into defined observable conduct (i.e. language, actions, and affiliations) that is consistent across party lines and government roles.
- **The Decency Scorecard:** a behavior-based evaluation framework that assesses officials against pre-established, published criteria rather than party or ideology, with a transparent appeals process and public corrections log.
- **Citizen Guides & Public Education:** plain-language tools that help people apply decency in town halls, online, in difficult conversations, and in their communities.
- **Case Studies:** documented evidence that decency is not weakness, but effective leadership that produces real results.

Why This, Why Now

Public trust in government sits near the lowest levels ever measured. Large majorities of Americans say they feel exhausted and angry about politics, and that the parties can no longer agree on basic facts. Conduct once considered disqualifying has become routine, and the line for acceptable behavior keeps moving. Meanwhile, social media platforms and traditional media outlets reward outrage while AI helps scale misinformation, making the cost of indecency lower than ever.

At the same time, across that divided landscape, bipartisan majorities still say they desperately want civility, honesty, and respect from their leaders. But how can they judge who is and isn't decent, or fight the belief that everyone in politics is the same? It's challenging to do so since no organization currently evaluates officials on those qualities using consistent, identical, behavior-based criteria.

ADG fills that gap. Its strategy and programs are built to last, not just for this election cycle or the next, but for the steady, step-by-step repair of our toxic political environment. ADG will work day after day and year after year to reduce the unhealthy partisan divisions that are harming our democracy.

By joining the ADG Board, you can play a critical role in this urgent mission. Few volunteer commitments offer that kind of leverage over something that genuinely matters.

The Role of the Board

The Board of Directors holds the governance authority and fiduciary responsibility for ADG. They ensure the organization is well-led, financially sound, legally compliant, and faithful to its mission. Core responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the corporate officers — hiring, evaluating, supporting, setting compensation, and, when necessary, replacing them.
- Approving the annual budget and monitoring the organization's finances and financial controls.
- Guiding what direction programs take and ensuring ADG's activities remain compliant with 501(c)(4) requirements.
- Safeguarding ADG's nonpartisan integrity and the consistency of its published standards and methodology.

- Selecting and supporting members of the Advisory Council.

As ADG matures and scales, the Board's role will grow from hands-on stewardship of a startup toward the governance of an established institution, including the planned transition to a majority independent board with a robust committee-based structure. Today's directors help lay the groundwork for that evolution.

Who We Are Looking For

Before any particular skill, every director must exhibit the qualities that make ADG credible. These are not preferences; they are qualities that make everything else meaningful.

Foundational Qualities (Required of Every Director)

- **Genuine belief in the mission.** You are personally convinced that decency in public life matters to the health of the country, and you can say why in your own words.
- **Alignment with our values.** Honor, respect, and dignity are values you already try to live by, not slogans.
- **Commitment to nonpartisanship.** You can support a fair, well-documented finding even when it reflects poorly on your own political side, and you will defend ADG's fairness and findings in those moments.
- **Personal conduct that reflects our standard.** Your own public conduct could stand up to the kind of decency standard ADG asks of others (more on this below).

Experience & Perspective We Value

No single director is expected to bring everything. We are assembling a Board whose members, together, cover the range of expertise ADG needs. Backgrounds that strengthen the Board include:

- Nonprofit governance and 501(c)(4) or other tax-exempt board experience.
- Law — particularly nonprofit, election, or tax-exempt law.
- Finance, audit, and internal controls (nonprofit or commercial).
- Executive or organizational leadership, especially in early-stage or mission-driven organizations.
- Research, measurement, and evaluation methodology.
- Journalism, editorial standards, and public-record investigation.
- Marketing, communications, brand-building, and crisis response.
- Technology, AI fluency, data, and digital risk.
- Behavioral science and narrative psychology — the craft of messaging that reaches both head and heart.
- Civic engagement, voter education, and community organizing.
- Prior public service or government experience (former, not current — see eligibility below).
- Fundraising, and connection to communities in your city, county, state, and nationally.

Above all, we value people who think independently, disagree constructively, and can be relied upon to show up prepared.

A Board That Reflects the Country

ADG's credibility depends on a Board that visibly spans the political spectrum and reflects a genuine range of backgrounds, geographies, and life experiences. We actively seek directors who are conservative, progressive, libertarian, and independent; who come from different regions, faiths, and communities; and who can help ADG be (and be seen as) the nonpartisan organization it claims to be.

What the Role Asks of You

Time Commitment

This is a volunteer role designed to respect your time:

- Quarterly or semi-annual board meetings (virtual), each between 1 and 2 hours long.
- Occasional responses to questions or decisions between meetings, typically by email.
- Reasonable availability for an annual planning discussion and committee work as the Board matures.

Directors serve without compensation. ADG maintains Directors & Officers (D&O) liability insurance as part of its commitment to responsible governance.

Public Association & Reputational Reality

Candidates should opt into this role with clear eyes. ADG will publish evaluations of named public officials. That work invites scrutiny, and while ADG will not use our scorecard to evaluate directors, you should expect scrutiny from citizens, political parties, the press, and others.

- Directors' political and professional backgrounds are publicly disclosed. This transparency is a deliberate part of how ADG proves its nonpartisan balance.
- When ADG publishes findings that someone finds unwelcome, the organization, and at times its directors, may be criticized or attacked. Reputational resilience matters.
- Although director terms are one year in length (with the possibility of renewal) directors should be comfortable being publicly associated with ADG over a multi-year horizon, through both favorable and unfavorable moments.

Living the Standard

ADG cannot credibly ask public officials to meet a standard of decency that its own directors would not meet. This expectation extends beyond the boardroom into a director's public and professional life, including how they conduct themselves on social media, in the press, and in their other affiliations.

We do not expect perfection, and we recognize that everyone makes mistakes; context and patterns matter far more than isolated moments. What we ask is a genuine, good-faith commitment to model the values ADG champions (i.e., respect, honesty, honor, humility, and responsible association) and the willingness to step aside should a personal conduct issue ever risk damaging the organization. For directors, this is a matter of conduct, not signature; the Patriot's Pledge itself is reserved for public officials and candidates.

Eligibility & Independence

To protect ADG's nonpartisan integrity, certain roles are incompatible with board service. A prospective director should not be:

- A current candidate for elected office, or planning to run during their term.

- A current officeholder at any level (former officeholders are welcome).
- A current registered lobbyist at the federal or state level.
- A current party official or holder of a party-committee role.

ADG also maintains strict funding discipline. It accepts no money from candidates, parties, or candidate committees, and allows no paid influence over its scorecard or content. Directors are expected to understand and uphold these commitments.

We welcome interest from people who have served in public life in the past and now wish to give back in a nonpartisan way, as well as from those who have never held office but care deeply about the health of our democracy.

A Final Word

ADG is, frankly, an act of optimism. It's a wager that Americans across the political spectrum still share more in common than our politics suggests, and that decency is a foundation strong enough to begin rebuilding on. That wager only pays off if the right people are willing to help carry it.

If this work speaks to you, we would be honored to speak with you.

Send your resume and a brief statement on why ADG speaks to you to info@decencyingov.org

With respect,

Michael Cannon

Founder, & Board

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