



Executive  
Transition  
initiative



## Welcome . . .

No one likes to think about the possible illness, injury or death of a nonprofit Executive Director. Nevertheless, such a situation can happen. When emergency circumstances do occur, there is an enormous level of stress experienced by an organization's staff, board, funders, volunteers and recipients of service. Without preparation, an unplanned departure can throw an organization into turmoil and lead to immediate and long term adverse consequences for the organization.

The good news is – your organization can be better prepared.

The purpose of this **emergency succession planning toolkit** is to provide you with the information and tools needed to create an emergency succession plan that is unique to your needs. The toolkit includes step-by-step guidance, checklists and templates that can be used to prepare your organization in the event of an unforeseen executive extended leave or departure.

The Executive Transition Initiative would like to thank the **Bob & Linda Davis Family Foundation** for funding the development of this toolkit. We are grateful for your commitment to sustaining excellence in non profit leadership in Milwaukee!

It is important to note that every organization has its own unique leaders, culture and needs. Therefore, we encourage you to use the information that best suits your organization, and to modify the tools to address your specific organizational structure. While we have done our best to summarize the wealth of information about emergency succession planning that is available on the web. Finally, Powerpoint presentations are also included to share with Board members, staff and donors.

We welcome your feedback on the emergency succession planning toolkit, and we encourage your suggestions on additional succession planning tools and templates that may be helpful. We also caution you to remember that like a strategic plan, an emergency succession plan will evolve over time. It should be regularly revisited and modified as your organization changes.

We sincerely hope that your organization is never faced with an emergency leadership transition, but if you are, Executive Transition Initiative stands ready to support you with a wealth of information and resources and strengthen your organizational response.

Mindy Lubar Price  
ETI Project Manager

## Acknowledgements:

This toolkit would not have been possible without the insight and feedback of many nonprofit leaders who have shared their ideas, their experiences and even their personal stories in the spirit of contributing to the body of knowledge about nonprofit succession planning.

We would also like to thank the following foundations for their insight and commitment to developing leadership capacity in nonprofit organizations: the *Brico Fund, LLC*, for their early and ongoing leadership in raising awareness about the need for executive transition management; *The Bob & Linda Davis Family Foundation* for supporting the development of the Emergency Succession Planning Toolkit, and the *Nonprofit Management Fund* in Milwaukee Wisconsin for supporting the development of the Departure Defined Toolkit and for their commitment to supporting local nonprofits who are committed to succession planning in their organizations. Also to the *Annie E. Casey Foundation* for supporting the evolution of executive transition management in the nonprofit sector.

We would also be remiss if we did not acknowledge the *Center for Urban Initiatives and Research at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee* for their contribution to the 2004 survey about the leadership landscape in Milwaukee that raised awareness about the important need for nonprofit succession planning in our community. We would also like to thank the *Donor's Forum of Wisconsin* for its early stewardship in the development of the Executive Transition Initiative and the *Greater Milwaukee Foundation* for its commitment to expanding the visibility and reach of the initiative to nonprofit organizations.

We would especially like to recognize *Tim Wolfred at CompassPoint Nonprofit Services* for his stewardship in the development of ETI in Milwaukee, for his support and consultation in the development of this toolkit, and for his permission to use many of the tools he developed. We would also like to recognize *Tom Adams at TransitionGuides* and his colleagues for permission to use their work in the development of this toolkit and for their ongoing commitment to increasing our knowledge about best practices in executive succession planning. ETI would also like to acknowledge the contribution of *Mindy Lubar Price* from *Leading Transitions, LLC* for contribution and leadership in raising awareness about the need for nonprofit succession planning and to *Tom Cooper* from *Write/Ideas* for the creation of the overview and succession planning toolkits.



## Contents in the Emergency Succession Planning Toolkit

In this toolkit, you will find:

- Overview of Succession Planning and Emergency Succession Plans
- 10 Steps To Creating An Emergency Succession Plan
  1. Establish An Emergency Leadership Transition Activation Team
  2. Clarify Board Responsibility
  3. Update Organization Contact Information
  4. Review and Update Job Descriptions
  5. Assign Back-Ups for Critical Executive Job Functions
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  7. Address The Impact Of The ED Departure On Staff Milieu
  8. Identify an Acting or Interim ED
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- Tips for Hiring an Outside Consultant
- Resources and Citations
- Exhibits

## Overview of Succession Planning

When you think about succession planning, you might imagine some nebulous process that happens in board rooms of big corporations. In the for profit world, succession planning has traditionally focused on grooming a successor or heir apparent. Succession planning in the nonprofit world is a different matter.

It is no surprise that most nonprofit organizations do not have a succession plan in place. Small and medium size nonprofits have as many reasons for this gap as they have constituents. In nonprofits, planning for organizational health and sustainability often takes a back seat to efforts to serving your constituents or influencing social change.

It's time for nonprofit organizations to change that dynamic.

**The Case for Succession Planning:** In the fall of 2004, 1,080 nonprofit Executive Directors in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington and Ozaukee counties were surveyed in order to gather information about the potential scope and impact of executive leadership turnover over the next five to ten years, and to inform the further development of strategies to address the pending shift in leaders. Over 350 nonprofit Executive Directors responded to the survey.

**Leadership succession planning is an ongoing practice based on defining an organization's strategic vision, identifying the leadership and managerial skills necessary to carry out that vision, and recruiting, developing and retaining talented individuals who have or who can develop those skills.**

As part of the first national study of leadership transition in the nonprofit sector, the Milwaukee area survey was one of 24 conducted nationwide. The local study was sponsored by the **Greater Milwaukee Foundation**, in cooperation with **Donors Forum of Wisconsin**, **Center for Urban Initiatives and Research**, the **Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management**, and the **University of Wisconsin Milwaukee**, in collaboration with the **Annie E. Casey Foundation**.

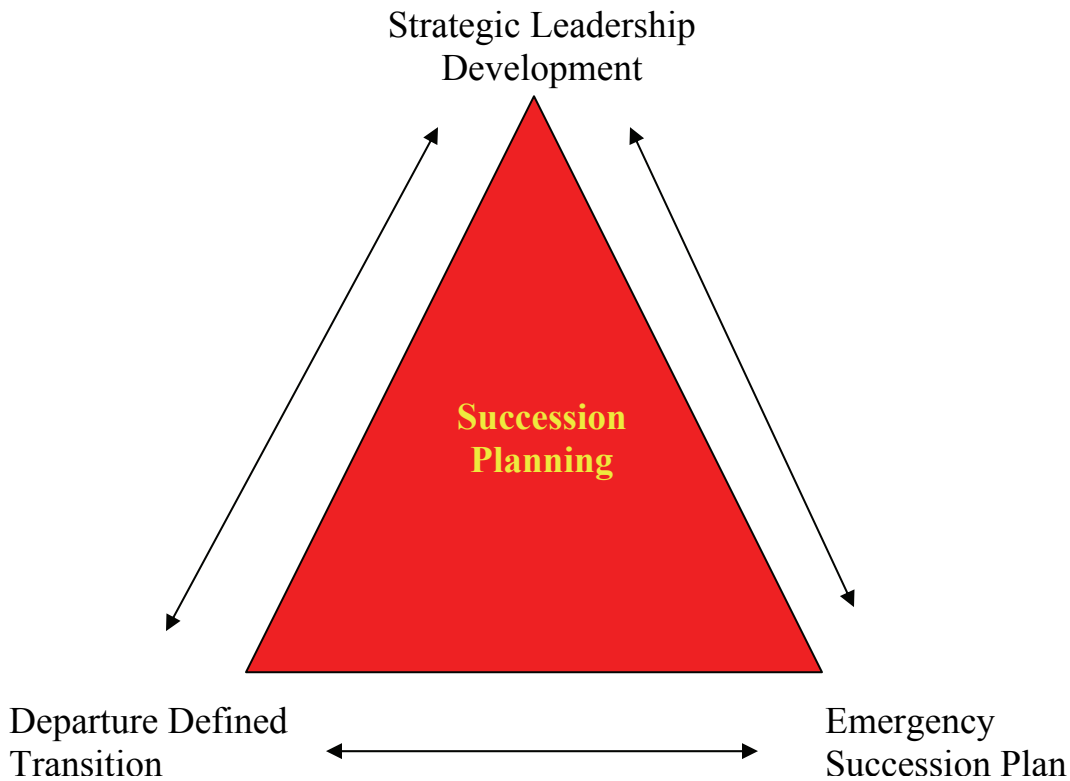
Results from the survey highlighted the need to address leadership transition issues among nonprofits. Specifically:

- 66% of nonprofit organizations surveyed were likely to experience an executive transition within the next five years, and 26% of those in the next two years. However, of those surveyed, only 1 - 2% reported having a succession plan in place.
- Organizations that had founding Executive Directors were even less likely to have a plan in place. In addition, most organizations surveyed approach executive change from a search and hire framework as opposed to a more comprehensive transition management approach that emphasizes thoughtful succession planning.
- 55% of the current nonprofit executives were over 50 years old.
- 84% of responding executives were white, 11% African American and 1.4% Hispanic/Latino.
- Only 33% of responding organizations had a deputy director.

**What is Succession Planning?** Leadership succession planning is an ongoing practice that is focused on defining an organization's strategic vision, identifying the leadership and managerial skills necessary to carry out that vision, and recruiting, developing and retaining talented individuals who have or who can develop those skills. Ideally, leadership succession planning will include the following components:

- **Emergency Succession Planning** – A thoughtfully prepared plan to address an unanticipated departure of an Executive Director, usually occurring with only a few days or weeks notice. Emergency succession plans ensures the uninterrupted performance of essential executive functions by outlining steps for the temporary appointment of an acting Executive Director.
- **Strategic Leadership Planning** – An ongoing process that identifies the core competencies, skills and knowledge needed by your organization in the next five years along with a plan to develop those competencies in your existing talent or recruit new talent from outside the organization.
- **Departure Defined Transition Planning** – A course of action that board members and Executive Directors can employ when an executive begins thinking about leaving an organization. Departure defined transition planning focuses on communicating the transition to staff and stakeholders, conducting an organizational assessment, building organizational capacity and sustainability, recruiting and hiring a new executive, and celebrating the transition.

It is important to note that each component of the succession planning process informs the others. The diagram below highlights how these three components relate collectively to each other and to the succession planning process.



**Emergency Succession Planning:**

An emergency succession plan is one that prepares the organization for an unexpected transition. Emergency succession plans address the following priorities:

- Identifying an alternate person(s) to assume executive leadership functions as an interim executive for a limited period of time.
- Clarifying the lines of authority within the organization following a leadership transition
- Creating a plan to communicate and educate key stakeholders (internal and external) about the transition and engage their support.

Unplanned departures can occur for a variety of reasons, including illness, disability, death, or termination. Because of this, emergency succession plans should include contingencies for:

- Short term unplanned absence – typically less than 3 months.
- Long-term unplanned absence – typically more than 3 months.
- Permanent unplanned absence.

**Steps in Creating an Emergency Succession Plan:** With the help of some of the leading experts in the field, we have identified the following steps to creating an emergency succession plan your organization. You may have already completed some of them. Each step is described in detail in this toolkit:



**Reviewing the Plan:** It is important to remember that like any organization, your organization will grow and change over time. Your emergency succession plan should therefore be updated annually to reflect changes in personnel, board leadership, program development and financial performance of the organization. We recommend that the Executive Director, senior leadership (if it exists) and Board review the Emergency Succession plan once per year to make certain that information in the plan (contacts, contracts, etc.) and subsequent strategies remain current.

**Getting it Done/Getting Help:** Depending on the size of your organization and how easily you are able to obtain the information you will need to document, developing an emergency succession plan can take between, 5 hours and 45 hours. In many organizations, the development of an emergency succession plan will take place over a period of several months. Ideally, the plan should be developed in collaboration with a minimum of two board members (e.g. the board Chair or members of the board's personnel committee.) Each component of the plan should be reviewed by the full board, formally adopted and noted in the board minutes for later review.

If the prospect of developing an emergency succession plan seems overwhelming to you, consider hiring an outside consultant. ETI has developed a number of tips for selecting an outside consultant. Smaller organizations with limited resources may also want to consider using graduate level interns, or applying for assistance through the local resources like the Trinity Fellows Program at Marquette University or Lutheran Core Volunteer program.

## Step #1: Establish an Emergency Leadership Transition Activation Team

*How would your organization perform in the event of your unplanned departure?*

The first priority in the event of an unplanned executive departure is to make sure organization operations and services continue uninterrupted. One approach is to create an **Emergency Leadership Transition Activation Team**. The team will be charged with ensuring the short-term continuation of agency operations in the event of an unplanned executive departure. The composition of the team will vary by organization, but can include a combination of:

- ❑ Board members—ideally executives who have a strong history and commitment to the organization.
- ❑ Organization managers and leaders – natural leaders within the organization who can move quickly to engage and motivate staff.
- ❑ Community stakeholders—collaborators, funders, volunteers and others who have a strong investment in the organizations long-term viability.

The size of the team will also vary by organization, but should be large enough to include a cross-section of diverse perspectives and experience without being too large to assemble.

The role of the emergency leadership transition team will be to implement the plan in the event of an unplanned executive departure.

Team members selected should have a strong commitment to the organization and willingness to make a increased, albeit short-term investment of their time during the early phases of the emergency transition.

*“There is no doubt that nonprofit organizations are only as effective as their leadership at the top. It is critical, therefore, that they be prepared to move quickly should the executive director become incapacitated or unable to continue in that position for whatever reason. This requires some deliberate and strategic thinking well in advance to assure uninterrupted leadership.”*

Jim Marks  
Program Officer  
Greater Milwaukee Foundation



## **Step #2: Clarify Board Responsibility**

Developing clear expectations about the roles and responsibilities of the board is a critical step in developing an emergency Executive Director succession plan. The days and weeks that follow an unplanned departure will be filled with many activities and may not provide adequate time to “discuss the details later.” Because of this, a frank discussion between the executive and the board during the planning process should address the following questions.

1. Who on the board will lead the emergency succession plan team?
2. Who on the board will take responsibility for communication to staff and stakeholders?
3. Who on the board will lead a search for a consultant to support the transition process, if one is needed?
4. How often will the board meet during the weeks and months following an unplanned departure?
5. Who may appoint the Acting or Interim Executive Director/What process must take place?
6. What will be the board’s role in oversight and support to the Acting or Interim ED?
7. What short-term financial oversight mechanisms will be put in place?
8. Who on the board will lead the executive search process?
9. What is the board’s policy if a board member is interested in the Acting, Interim or Executive Director positions?
10. How will the board be involved in orienting the new interim ED?

### **Additional Board-level Tasks:**

- Review organizational by-laws to ensure that the emergency succession plan is not in conflict with established procedures.
- Review the organization’s strategic plan to ensure the emergency succession plan is consistent with its goals and objectives.

### **Step #3: Update Organization Contact Information**

Remember your first day on the job? Imagine you are asked to walk into a new organization you have no history with, knowledge about, no expertise with the recipients or target population, no context, no contacts and no experience serving.

You've just imagined the experience of an external Interim Executive Director.

One of the best gifts you can leave behind for an Acting Director or Interim Executive Director is to provide him/her with accurate information about who they can contact to assist them in the continuation of organization operations.

Many executives keep this type of information in their personal planners, Outlook program or Blackberry. But what if you take that with you? What if your predecessor doesn't have your password?

Completing an operational inventory of important documents and contact information will ensure that the person who assumes temporary or permanent responsibility for the Executive Director has the basic information needed in order to ensure organization operations continue uninterrupted. **See Exhibit A for a Sample Operations Inventory.**

## Step #4: Review and Update Job Descriptions

Whether your organization is large or small, updating job descriptions is a task that falls off the radar of even the most seasoned Executive Directors. Despite this reality, there is never a time when a job description is needed more than when an Executive is suddenly unable to perform his or her responsibilities.

Ideally, job descriptions should be reviewed annually and should minimally include updates for everyone on the senior management team (e.g. Executive Director, Associate Director, COO, and Development Director) as these are the key personnel that may be identified to temporarily assume key functions of the Executive Director. Organizational charts should also be updated annually to accurately reflect lines of authority and responsibility.

A brief audit of organization job descriptions will reveal whether they will fully address the organization's needs in the event of an unplanned executive transition.

### Job Description Components:

- Does the Executive Director's job description include a detailed summary of his/her primary functions? A thorough job description should summarize key responsibilities in each of the following areas:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Board development	<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising
<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel management and supervision	<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal oversight
<input type="checkbox"/> Program development	<input type="checkbox"/> Compliance mandates
<input type="checkbox"/> Contract management	<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor oversight
<input type="checkbox"/> Public relations	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer coordination
- Do job descriptions for senior management positions clearly outline reporting responsibilities? Is it clear who each staff position reports to?
- Are too many positions reporting to the Executive Director? Are there any staff who are reporting to someone they shouldn't be reporting to in order to accommodate 'personality differences?' If yes, how will an unexpected departure of the ED effect lines of reporting?
- Do job descriptions clearly state minimum and ideal requirements for each position?
- Do job descriptions include a statement that reflects the need for senior staff to temporarily assume ED functions in the event of an unplanned absence?
- Are key job descriptions ready for immediate publication in the event of an unplanned departure?

### Compensation Package Review:

- Do salary and benefit packages for the Executive Director (and senior staff positions) reflect trends in the marketplace?

**Guidance:** If your organization is uncertain about the equity of your salary and benefit packages, a comparative analysis should be conducted using local data. Transition consultants who specialize in the nonprofit sector can also provide guidance. These experts can provide a useful guide that can be inform

decision making about whether salary adjustments should be implemented. Many factors influence salary and benefits, including:

- organization annual operating budget
- number of employees
- type of organization (health care, social service, advocacy, community development, etc.)
- financial health of the organization
- tenure of the Executive Director
- experience and credentials.
- relationship to other salaries
- what the organization can afford

**ETI Tip:**

Remember that compensation includes both salary and benefits. Some organizations often have the opportunity to offer flexible benefits (consider work schedule, personal time, professional development education, mentoring etc.) that may be equally important to some candidates.

Organizations would be wise to prioritize efforts to ensure that the Executive Director and senior management positions are compensated at equitable levels with their peers in the community. Making these changes now will avoid having to make radical and potentially unaffordable or unobtainable adjustments later in the event of an unplanned transition.

## Step #5: Assign Back-Up Individuals to Critical Executive Functions

The best way to ensure that your organization is fully prepared for emergency executive vacancy is to review the Executive Director's key functions and responsibilities and identify in advance one or more back-ups who have the skills to temporarily assume those responsibilities (for up to 30 days) until an Acting Director or Interim Executive Director is named.

This task falls largely on the Executive Director. It is critical to clearly identify as many day-to-day tasks that you as an ED engage in, and identify who in your organization has the skills to temporarily carry-out those duties. A strategy that may help you with this task is to spend two weeks carefully tracking all of your time and contacts. The detail this level of tracking will provide will not inform the planning process, it may surprise you as well! To assist you in getting started, see **Exhibit B: Executive Functions Inventory**.

### Designating Back-Ups:

Larger organizations may have an Associate Director or Vice President who is capable of assuming most or all of the ED's duties. Smaller organizations may need to assign ED responsibilities to several individuals. Think creatively.

- Can a board member with personnel experience step in and assist a senior supervisor with human resource issues?
- Can an administrative person temporarily coordinate vendor services?
- Can the board treasurer assist with fiscal oversight?

Ideally, emergency succession plans should name 1 or 2 possible back-ups for ED function area. This will reduce confusion later should one or more of the back-ups not be available to assume additional responsibilities that will then have to be delegated to others.

### ETI Tip: Board Participation:

Executive Directors would also be wise to include board members in the process of identifying back-up staff. Board members may be able to assist EDs in thinking creatively about how to assign functions—they may even have expertise (legal, financial, human resources) they can bring to the organization in the event of an unplanned departure. This responsibility can also be included in documentation around board member responsibilities.

**Step #6: Cross-Train Management Staff**

Even the best developed succession plan will fail if staff do not have the skills, experience or capacity to temporarily assume additional responsibilities assigned to them. Cross training is a powerful strategy for increasing performance in any organization and it is an essential strategy to prepare a transition team for an unplanned departure. Examples of simple cross training opportunities are provided below:

Executive Function	Cross Training Opportunities
<b>Board Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that a minimum of two staff have access to email and phone numbers of board members in the event of an emergency.</li> <li>▪ Invite staff to attend and present at board meetings.</li> <li>▪ Delegate agenda setting and scheduling for a meeting to an alternate.</li> <li>▪ Train your board chair successor.</li> <li>▪ Delegate meeting minute distribution to a board member or administrative/support staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication and Public Relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Delegate editing of press releases, newsletters and organization communication to key staff. Cross check their work for accuracy.</li> <li>▪ Invite staff to attend meetings with stakeholders. Provide them with concrete feedback after the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that all staff can accurately state the mission, vision and purpose of the organization.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that a minimum of three staff know where to locate the emergency succession plan – including the communication plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Fund Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that a minimum of two staff know how to access your donor list.</li> <li>▪ Invite staff to attend meetings with individual donors, foundation contacts and purchase of service contractors where appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Invite staff who have strong written communication skills to draft sections of grant proposals. Provide them with samples to use as templates. Also offer them opportunities to assist with individual donor appeals.</li> <li>▪ If you haven't already done so, establish a special projects team. Rotate team captains each year to give multiple people experience in planning and executing an event.</li> </ul>
<b>Fiscal Oversight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure the Board Treasurer is familiar with the organization budget process and auditors.</li> <li>▪ Include higher level managers or staff in meetings with organization accountants and budget development process.</li> <li>▪ Delegate oversight responsibility for petty cash to a trusted office management staff person.</li> <li>▪ Review the location of organization budgets and audit documents with several staff members.</li> </ul>
<b>Personnel Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invest in supervisory and leadership training for key staff.</li> <li>▪ Delegate the task of updating the organization policy and procedure manual.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that personnel job descriptions are updated.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that annual performance reviews are current.</li> </ul>

Executive Function	Cross Training Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allow supervisory and management staff to shadow you during employee performance discussions.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that a Board person and trusted staff person know how to access personnel files.</li> </ul>
<b>Contract Management and Organization Compliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assign a staff person to audit all internal and external contracts for compliance.</li> <li>▪ Develop a list of deliverables for each revenue stream or payor and review deliverables with program staff.</li> <li>▪ Review the process for renewing organizational licenses and certifications with a minimum of two key staff members.</li> </ul>
<b>Vendor Oversight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a list of organization vendors that includes contact information.</li> <li>▪ Develop contracts or memorandums of agreement for each vendor and make sure the files are easily accessible.</li> <li>▪ Invite appropriate staff members to sit in on meetings with external vendors.</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteer Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop clear policies about the role of volunteers, volunteer recruitment, supervision and recognition.</li> <li>▪ Assign oversight and coordination of volunteers to an appropriate staff person.</li> <li>▪ Assemble a contact list and make it accessible.</li> </ul>

## Step #7: Address the Impact of the Transition on Staff Milieu

An area that is frequently overlooked in developing an emergency succession plan is the impact that an executive's departure will have on the milieu and culture of the organization. This is especially true when an Executive Director suddenly departs an organization due to death, disability, or termination. The potential fall-out is even greater when the ED is the organization founder. For some staff, the change can be traumatic.

How an organization responds in the first 12-36 hours after an executive's departure is critical to staff morale and productivity. Without a clear plan of action in place, organizations may not act quickly enough to respond to employee's immediate needs. That is why it is important to include a critical incident response plan as part of an emergency succession plan.

A critical incident response plan doesn't have to be complicated in order to be effective. The primary goal is to ***give employees as much real-time information as possible, and provide them with a safe opportunity to process the impact the change will have on them.*** Steps to implementing a critical incident response plan are provided below.

### Critical Incident Response Plan:

- Identify who in the organization is responsible for notifying the board. It is best to empower two or three staff to make this call in the event that one or more are unavailable. If at all possible, a Board member should be called to be onsite at the agency when employees are notified.
- Identify who in the organization is responsible for notifying the onsite staff. The initial notification meeting need not be long. A "huddle" is a useful analogy to follow. For example, in the event of the death of an ED, an Associate Director or senior staff person might convene a brief (10 minute) meeting to share the news with staff. Employees should be informed at that meeting that an all-staff meeting will be conducted and the time of that meeting.
- Contact your Employee Assistance Provider (EAP), if the organization offers this benefit. EAPs are well-trained in responding to critical response events. Many of them will provide same-day or next-day onsite consultation, group debriefings, and counseling. If your organization does not have an EAP, consider contacting local EAP vendors. Many will provide pro bono assistance to small non-profit organizations.
- Notify offsite employees as soon as possible. Direct phone contact is preferable to email or voice mail messages.
- If at all possible, a board representative should be present at that first staff meeting. The best time frame for this meeting is within 12 hours of the initial announcement. Determine in advance who will lead the meeting. Be prepared to answer basic questions – who, when, where, why and how is a good framework for planning. If certain information must remain confidential, explain why this is so. If information isn't available, assure staff that you will share information as soon as it becomes available. Remind staff that the organization has developed an emergency succession plan.
- Schedule another meeting for the next day if needed, or determine another method (email, conference call, etc.) to update staff. Be prepared to name the person(s) who will be in charge of decision making during the next 72 hours. Ideally, that should be the same person leading the meetings and communicating information to staff.



- Group debriefings are an *extremely effective method* of providing staff with a safe environment and opportunity to process an unplanned executive departure. Debriefings are best facilitated by an outside consultant. Board members can be present at debriefings, but should only be there as a participant, not an observer. A local EAP can provide this service or recommend a trained debriefing consultant. Debriefings usually last approximately 2 hours and are limited to 15 participants per debriefing. Ideally, they should be conducted within 24-72 hours.
- The most useful guideline to follow with staff is to communicate, communicate, communicate. Share as much information as possible, as timely as possible. Huddle your emergency succession team each day to discuss the flow of communication. Provide a forum for employees to ask questions, express their concerns and share their ideas about what the organization can do to effectively manage the transition.
- An added advantage to developing a response plan is that the same steps can be followed to guide organization actions in the event of other unexpected emergencies, such as death of a co-worker, fire, loss of a major funding source, etc. For that reason many experts recommend such a plan be included in an organization's policy and procedure manual.

## Step #8: Identify an Acting and/or Interim Executive Director

Recruiting a new Executive Director takes time. Some recruiters recommend that organizations plan for between 6 and 9 months to complete the process. To support the ongoing stability of the organization, it is often necessary to identify an acting Executive Director and/or an interim Executive Director. There is a distinction between the two:

**Acting Executive Director:** An Acting ED is someone who is designated for a short period of time (typically defined by days or weeks) to assume the responsibilities of the ED. This role is usually assigned to a person inside the organization who has the skills and capacity to oversee day to day operations, make necessary decisions (in consultation with identified board members) and manage communication immediately following a transition. An Acting Executive Director may assume this role for several weeks to several months until an interim Executive Director or new Executive Director is hired.

**Interim Executive Director:** An Interim ED may be someone inside the organization, but not necessarily so. Interim EDs are “highly skilled managers who temporarily take the helm of an organization (up to nine months on average), help the board and staff address important systems and capacity issues, and lay the groundwork for the permanent leader’s success. Typically, an Interim ED is someone who does not want the permanent job of the executive, but is interested in a short-term assignment.

### **Acting Executive Directors:** *Clarity is the key to success!*

Given their brief tenure, Acting EDs will usually not be given the level of authority and autonomy that an Interim ED will be given. It is important that your emergency succession plan clearly outlines the Acting EDs level of authority within the organization and level of accountability to the board. Discussion with the board about what an Acting ED will be authorized to do and not do in the event of an emergency departure will reduce ambiguity and strengthen the organization’s functioning during those critical first weeks. The following questions should be asked:

- What level of communication will the board expect from the Acting ED? How frequent?
- Will the Acting ED have the authority to sign checks?
- Will the Acting ED have the authority to conduct performance reviews, administer employee discipline (including firing) and issue raises?
- Will the Acting ED have the authority to sign contracts with outside vendors?
- Does the Acting ED have the authority to prepare or make changes to organization budgets?
- Will the Acting ED have the authority to make changes to benefit plans?
- What authority will the Acting ED have over communication with the public? Can the Acting ED issue press releases?
- What ED functions will fall outside the Acting ED’s responsibility?

- What ED functions will require board approval?
- What compensation will the Acting ED receive during his/her brief tenure?

### **The Interim Executive Advantage:**

Interim EDs provide a powerful capacity-building opportunity for non profits organizations in transition. While not all organizations require an interim ED, research by CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, a consulting, research, and training organization for nonprofits, suggests that organizations that do use an interim ED “emerge stronger, more financially sound, and with high levels of optimism about the future impact of their organization services.” Other advantages include:

- Providing an objective overview – interim EDs are uniquely positioned to adopt an “outsider looking in” view of the organization. This approach can result in an unbiased assessment of administrative and operational systems. Interim EDs are uniquely free to “speak the truth” about what is working well, what is not working, and what to do about it.
- Solving problems of the past – interim EDs can use their significant experience to develop short-term solutions to organizational barriers during the transition – leaving longer term strategies for the next executive to decide. Interim EDs can also address problems rooted in the past so that the newly hired Executive Director can focus on the future. In this respect, an interim ED can be a catalyst for change.
- Opening the door new possibilities – organization staff have a natural tendency to remain fixated on the past, or to get stuck in “the way it’s always been done.” Interim EDs provide an opportunity to challenge old habits, add distance from the tenure of the departing ED, and create a more welcoming environment for the new leader.
- Facilitating a fresh vision – interim EDs can use their neutral role to bring a fresh and positive outlook about the organization’s future. This is especially true for organizations that are struggling during the transition.
- Mentoring for the new Executive Director – interim EDs can also support the newly hired executive (especially rookie EDs) to “land on his/her feet running.” They can be invaluable to supporting the successful launch of a new executive.
- Reducing executive search anxiety – board members and staff are often anxious to identify a replacement executive during a transition. Interim EDs can reduce the tendency to rush the process. They also send a positive message to outsider stakeholders (including funders) that the organization “is in good hands” during the search process.
- Conserving organization resources – interim EDs can be a cost-effective strategy for the organization, because most are hired on a consultant basis. Most EDs are typically hired for a 25-35 your work week. Even if the interim ED demands a higher hourly rate, cost savings can be realized from reductions in benefits, payroll taxes and other perks.

### **Strategies for Recruiting an Interim Executive:**

1. Board members should clarify what the organization needs most from the interim ED. Is a major organization fundraising event pending? Is the organization fraught with personnel problems? Is

the organization facing a major financial crisis? Identifying the short-term needs of the organization will strengthen the board's capacity to pick an interim ED with the right skills needed to move the organization forward.

2. Draft a one-page position description. The description should include background information on the organization, a brief job description, any specific tasks that will need to be completed, the anticipated duration of the ED assignment, and how to apply. **See Exhibit C for a Sample Interim ED Job Announcement.**
3. Seek outside assistance in your search. The Nonprofit Management Fund and the Nonprofit Center are all available to assist organizations in identifying prospective interim EDs.
4. During interviews, make it clear to candidates that they will not be a candidate for permanent hire. Interim EDs who have an eye on a permanent position will be less forthcoming with board and staff. The real power of the interim ED lies in his/her role as a 'compassionate truth teller' who can remain outside the existing organizational culture.

### **Beginning the Executive Search Process:**

Please see the **Departure Defined Executive Transitions Toolkit** for guidance on the executive search process.

## Step #9: Develop a Communication Plan

Properly communicating an unplanned executive transition to external stakeholders is one of the most delicate yet essential tasks in transition management. Careful consideration should be made to hiring temporary outside consulting assistance to provide guidance during the critical weeks that follow an unanticipated executive departure. Recommendations for developing a communication plan include:

1. Determine who will act as the spokesperson for the organization regarding the transition. In some organizations this may be the board chair or other board member. In others it may be the Acting Executive Director. Identifying the person who will notify external stakeholders early will avoid miscommunication or leaving outsiders wondering “who is steering the ship?”
2. Be strategic about your communication. The fundamental principles in communicating strategically involve three things: listening, speaking the truth, and helping stakeholders understand your thinking and actions. This is easier said than done. An [executive transition communication plan template](#) is provided to guide your organization.
3. Communicate your intentions clearly by employing the **three Rs**:
  - **Relevance:** Ensure that statements are clearly tied to the organization’s mission and strategic plan. Keep messages short, memorable and energizing.
  - **Responsiveness:** Listen to your stakeholders and note their questions and concerns. Address what you can immediately, and follow-up with them about questions or issues that require further consideration.
  - **Reinforcement:** Repeat key messages frequently. Be consistent with words and actions. Use a range of media and other forums to communicate your message. Remember that there is no substitution for face-to-face communication.
4. If there is bad news to deliver, be upfront about it. Some emergency transitions are precipitated by an organizational crisis that involves the removal of an Executive Director. Crisis communication strategists like Barry McLoughlin and others echo the same advice to organizations in crisis. If there is bad news to deliver, you want to be the one sharing it to your constituents. That requires moving quickly and thoughtfully. Strategists also recommend sharing all the bad news at the same time to avoid layering bad news on top of bad news later.

## Step #10: Develop an Emergency Leadership Transition Policy Statement

The importance of developing a written emergency succession plan cannot be overstated. A written document serves to validate the thoughtful planning of an Executive Director and board. It also provides a tangible tool that can be referenced in the event of an unplanned departure.

An **emergency leadership transition policy statement template (see Exhibit D)** is provided to guide you in the development of an organization specific emergency succession plan for your organization. Adapt the written plan to address your unique organizational culture and needs. A helpful checklist for adoption of the written plan is provided below:

- ❑ **Promulgations:** The plan should begin with a letter of promulgation or a governing board resolution that validates the plan.
- ❑ **Succession Plan Approval:** The succession plan should be approved by the Executive Committee and forwarded to the full Board of Directors for vote and approval.
- ❑ **Signatures:** The Board Chair, Executive Director, and Deputy Director or Human Resources Administrator and Acting Executive Director should sign the plan and the appointees designated in this plan.
- ❑ **Organizational Charts:** Two organizational charts should be attached to the plan. The first should reflect the current structure and reporting relationships within the organization. The second should reflect temporary changes that reflect the emergency/unplanned absence of Executive Director.
- ❑ **Important Organizational Information:** An updated list of the Board of Directors (with contact information) should be attached. The Emergency Succession Plan Contact List should also be attached.
- ❑ **Copies:** Copies of the plan and attached documentation (including the Executive Director job description) should be maintained by the Board Chair, the Executive Director, the Acting Executive Director appointee, the Human Resource Administrator and the organization's legal counsel.
- ❑ **Updates to the Plan:** The plan should be reviewed and updated at least annually and/or when a major organizational shift or change occurs.

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): *Emergency Leadership Transitions***

***Q: How do you define emergency?***

A: An emergency leadership transition is an unplanned departure that comes with only a few days (or less) notice.

***Q: How does emergency planning tie into succession planning?***

A: An emergency leadership transition plan is an essential component in the development of an overall leadership succession plan. It provides a blueprint that the Board of Directors and management staff can follow in the event of an ED's unplanned departure. Many of the steps in an emergency transition plan run parallel to steps taken in succession planning and departure defined planning. Often each type of planning process (succession planning, departure defined planning and emergency transition planning) informs the others.

***Q: How do I get board members engaged in developing the plan?***

A: Board members are more likely to become engaged in the process when they have a clear understanding of how it benefits them and the organization. Having an emergency leadership transition plan will make their jobs easier in the event of the ice cream truck scenario (i.e. you get run over by an ice cream truck.) Another compelling justification is that foundations and donors are beginning to see the value in leadership succession planning—and increasingly they are requiring that funded organizations have an emergency transition plan in place. You can also recommend that your board members review the

***Q: What if I don't have staff that I feel are capable of assuming ED functions, even in the short-term?***

A: All the more reason to review the ETI Succession Planning Toolkit. This toolkit is full of great information and strategies you can employ to mentor and develop the leaders of tomorrow in your organization. If you are struggling with this issue, we also strongly recommend that you seek outside assistance. Frequently an outside consultant can help you identify talent inside your organization (and outside) that may not be on your radar screen.

***Q: What happens when an unplanned temporary departure becomes permanent later on?***

A: Establish a transition and search committee and communicate this change to all essential constituencies.

***Q: How do I know if I need outside help to create an emergency plan and how do I pay for it?***

A: We recommend that organizations consider hiring an outside consultant when any of the following conditions are present:

- You don't have up to 40 hours of time to devote to developing a plan (over 3-4 months).
- You have serious concerns about the ability of key staff to step into leadership roles.
- You don't have a staff person or volunteer who could assume the Acting ED position.
- You have a tenuous relationship with your board and you feel uncertain about their commitment.

However, most of the work in this toolkit can be done with the support from your board and senior management team.

Paying for an Outside Consultant: Ideally, funds should be set-aside in the organization budget to devote to hiring outside support. If funds are not available, look into applying to the Nonprofit Management Fund for technical assistance. You may also consider contacting a private foundation and/or individual donor with whom you have a long standing relationship to inquire about a technical assistance grant.

## Tips for Hiring an Outside Consultant

Developing an emergency leadership transition plan often requires more time than an Executive Director has to spare. If this is the case in your organization, consider hiring a transition consultant. A transition consultant is someone who has received advanced training in the principles and practices of leadership transition and succession planning. The advantages of hiring outside help are many:

- An outside consultant can maintain the “laser vision” required to keep the emergency succession planning process focused and on task.
- A transition consultant will share information with the Executive Director and board about best practices in transition management.
- A transition consultant will create a safe and supportive environment during the planning and ensure that all stakeholders are engaged in the process.
- A transition consultant can bring a neutral outsider “truth teller” perspective that can be extremely helpful in guiding decision making.

**Selection Tips:** Understanding what your organization needs and what your budget allows is the most important first step. Identifying clear objectives will guide your selection process:

- Need Statement:
  - Expectations from the consultant.
  - Deliverables:
  - Skills and experience required by the consultant
  - Contact person inside the organization
  - Time Frame: beginning and end date

**ETI Tip:** Make sure your consultant has advanced training in executive transition management. ETI is in the process of developing a list of trained consultants you can contact for assistance.

**Send out a Request for Proposals (RFP):** An RFP is a method of soliciting proposals from consultants interested in being hired for a project. The RFP provides basic information about your organization, and the project or problem you would like the consultant to address. The RFP should establish a general format for the proposals, which will allow you to evaluate and compare consultants equally and efficiently. The following format can be modified to fit the needs of your organization.

- Organization Mission & Description: Brief description of your organization’s mission, programs, services and sources of funding.
- Background: A brief statement of the final product you are looking for.
- The Problem or Need: The issues, factors and/or problems that are driving you to undertake this project at this time.
- Anticipated Outcomes: What you would like the project to accomplish. If the final product is a report, list the
- Types of recommendations you would like included.

**Paying for a Consultant:** Ideally, funds should be budgeted to cover the cost of hiring outside help. Smaller organizations with limited resources may also consider using graduate level interns, or applying for assistance through the local resources like the Trinity Fellows Program at Marquette University or Lutheran Core Volunteer program. Organizations may also consider approaching a foundation or donor with whom the organization has a long-standing relationship. **If your organization doesn’t have the financial resources to retain a consultant, you can implement many of the strategies described in the toolkit by establishing a committee comprised of staff and volunteers.**



## Resources

A number of articles, monographs, toolkits and other resources were used in the development of this toolkit. Citations and acknowledgements have been included in the text where it was possible to do so without disrupting the flow of information. A complete list of resources is provide below for future reference.

Albert, Sheila, (1993) *Hiring the Chief Executive: A Practical Guide to the Search and Selection Process*. Published by the National Center for Nonprofit Boards.

Gilvar, Barbara J. (2007). *The Art of Hiring Leaders: A Guide for Nonprofit Organizations*. Gilvar Publications. Available at: [www.theartofhiringleaders.com](http://www.theartofhiringleaders.com).

Liteman, Merianne, (2003) *Planning for Succession: A Toolkit for Board Members and Staff of Nonprofit Arts Organizations*. Published by the Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation in collaboration with the Arts & Business Council of Chicago.

Naughton-Travers, Joseph. *Succession Planning in Behavioral Health & Social Service Organizations: How to Ensure Continuity in Critical Leadership Management Positions*. OPENMINDS Article Reprint by Behavioral Health Industry News, June 1, 2004.

Sessa, Valerie and Taylor, Jodi (2000) *Executive Selection: Strategies for Success*. San Francisco: Published by Jossey-Bass and the Center for Creative Leadership. Available at [www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com).

Weisman, Carol and Goldbaum, Richard, (2004) *Losing Your Executive Director Without Losing Your Way: The Nonprofit's Guide to Executive Turnover*. New York, New York: John Wiley & Sons. Available at: [www.joseybass.com](http://www.joseybass.com)

Wolfred, Tim. *Executive Transitions Toolkit*. Developed for Executive Transitions at CompassPoint Nonprofit Services. Available at: [www.compasspoint.org](http://www.compasspoint.org).

Wolfred, Tim. *Stepping Up: A Board's Challenge in Leadership Transition*. San Francisco: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, 2006.

Wolfred, Tim. *Daring to Lead*. San Francisco: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, 2006. <http://www.compasspoint.org/daringtolead2006>.

*A Guide to Executive Search: Discovering Leaders of the Future*. Published by the Alliance for Children and Families (2000).

**Executive Transitions Monograph Series:** The Executive Transitions Monograph Series is a series of monographs on executive transitions and executive transition management, funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund. The series is a joint effort of TransitionGuides (Silver Spring, MD) and CompassPoint Nonprofit Services (San Francisco, CA).

*Capturing the Power of Leadership Change: Using Executive Transition Management to Strengthen Organizational Capacity*. Published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2004). Available at: <http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/LeadershipDevelopment/LdrshpResources.aspx>

*Founder Transitions: Creating Good Endings and New Beginnings: A Guide for Executive Directors and Boards.* Published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2005). Available at:  
<http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/LeadershipDevelopment/LdrshpResources.aspx>

*Up Next: Generation Change and the Leadership of Nonprofit Organizations.* Published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2005). Available at:  
<http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/LeadershipDevelopment/LdrshpResources.aspx>

*Staying Engaged, Stepping Up: Succession Planning and Executive Transition Management for Nonprofit Boards of Directors.* Published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2006). Available at:  
<http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/LeadershipDevelopment/LdrshpResources.aspx>

### **Additional Resources on Nonprofit Succession Planning:**

Adams, T. *Departing? Arriving? Surviving and Thriving: Lessons for Executives* (PDF). Silver Spring, MD: TransitionGuides.

Adams, T. *When the Boss Bails, Surviving - and even thriving - after a change in leadership* (PDF). Silver Spring, MD: TransitionGuides.

Axelrod, N.R. (2003). *Chief Executive Succession Planning: The Board's Role in Securing Your Organization's Future.* BoardSource.

Bridges, W. (1991) *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change.* Boston: Perseus Publishing.

Gilmore, T. (2003). *Making a Leadership Change: How Organizations and Leaders Can Handle Leadership Transition Successfully.* Author's Choice Press.

Howe, F. (2003). *The Nonprofit Leadership Team: Building the Board-Executive Director Partnership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lubar Price, M. *Emergency Succession Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, Wisconsin Philanthropy News, Volume V Issue 3, 2005.

Lubar Price, M. *Succession Planning and Sustainability of Nonprofit Organizations*, Wisconsin Philanthropy News, Volume VI Issue 1, 2006.

"Managing Executive Transitions: A Handbook for Nonprofit Organizations." Washington, D.C.: Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, 1999.

"Leadership Transitions: Critical Thresholds." *The Nonprofit Quarterly*, Winter, 2002.

Peters, J. and Wolfred, T. *Daring to Lead: Nonprofit Executive Directors and Their Work Experience.* San Francisco: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, 2001.

Pidgeon, W.P. (2004). *The Not-For-Profit CEO: How to Attain and Retain the Corner Office.* San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.

Readington, E. and Vickers, E. "Following the Leader: A Guide for Planning Founder Director Transition." *Leadership Report No. 1*. Columbus: The Academy for Leadership and Governance, 2001.

Sessa, V.I. and Taylor, J.J. 2000. *Executive Selection: Strategies for Success*. Jossey-Bass.  
Tierney, Thomas J. *The Nonprofit Sectors Leadership Deficit*. (PDF) Bridgespan.

**About CompassPoint Executive Transitions:** Executive Transitions is part of the Executive Leadership Services unit of the CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, an organization that has served the training and consulting needs of Bay Area nonprofits for more than 25 years. The consultants of Executive Transitions are a carefully recruited team of experienced nonprofit executives. They have received special training in executive transition management (ETM) and executive search. Many also serve on boards of directors for area nonprofits. Tim Wolfred serves as director of the program, which has provided support for more than 160 nonprofit organizations in transition since 1978. They can be reached at: [www.compasspoint.org](http://www.compasspoint.org).

**About TranstionGuides:** TransitionGuides is a leader in the development and delivery of executive transition management (ETM) services around the country. It is a collaboration of experienced consulting firms with extensive track records in working with nonprofit organizations and leadership transitions. The TransitionGuides team offers a full range of ETM services to nonprofits in the Mid-Atlantic region and nationally and has collectively provided executive transition assistance to over 200 nonprofit organizations. Tom Adams is the president and senior managing partner. Tom can be reached at [www.transitionguides.com](http://www.transitionguides.com).

**About Leading Transitions:** Leading Transitions strengthens non-profit organizations through assessment, education and empowerment of leadership during periods of transition and change. Leading Transitions uses time-tested, healthy principles to work with Executive Directors, boards of directors and senior staff to increase their operating capacities. Committed to the future vitality of non profit organizations, Leading Transitions recognizes the inherent challenges in leadership succession, fund development and executive support. The practice has been refined to provide the flexibility necessary to adapt to the intricacies and dynamics of any non-profit organization. They can be contacted at: [www.leadingtransitions.com](http://www.leadingtransitions.com).

## **Exhibit A: Sample Operations Inventory**

### **Nonprofit Status:**

IRS Determination Letter  
IRS Form 1023 –  
Mission Statement  
Board Minutes

### **Financial Information:**

Employer Identification Number (EIN #): \_\_\_\_\_  
Current and previous 990s  
Current and previous audited financial statements  
Financial statements  
Sales Tax Exemption Certificate  
Blank checks  
Computer passwords  
Donor records  
Client records  
Vendor records  
Volunteer records  
Or where those records can be easily accessed

### **Key Contacts:**

#### **Bank Name:**

Account Number(s)  
Branch Contacts:  
Account Number(s):  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

#### **Investment Firm:**

Financial Planner/Broker:  
Representative Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

#### **Legal Counsel:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

#### **Payroll Contact:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

#### **Office Lease:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

#### **Building Management/Maintenance:**

Contact Name:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

#### **Security System Consultant:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

#### **Insurance Contacts:**

##### **General Liability:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

##### **Directors and Officers Liability:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

##### **Health Insurance:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

##### **Unemployment Insurance:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

##### **Workers' Compensation:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:

Phone: Fax:  
Email:

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

**Disability Insurance:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

**Long Term Care:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

**Life Insurance:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

**Retirement Plan:**

Contact Name:  
Account Number:  
Phone: Fax:  
Email:

**Dental:**

**Name of person completing this document:** \_\_\_\_\_

**This information last updated on:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Components of the Operations Contact Inventory were developed using sample templates created by the Center for Nonprofit Advancement ([www.nonprofitadvancement.org](http://www.nonprofitadvancement.org))

**Exhibit B: Executive Director Essential Functions Inventory**

Executive Director Function	Possible Back-Ups
<b>A. Board Development/Communication:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Scheduling meetings and distributing agendas and materials.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sending out meeting notes.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular email and telephone communication with board members.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reporting to the board during board meetings.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Assisting board members in identifying an Acting or Interim Director.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<b>B. Organization Communications/Public Relations:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Press releases.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters (print and electronic).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Notifying board members and advisory committee members.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Notifying stakeholders: funders, purchase of service payors.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Who will accept calls from outside parties who call the ED and do not know about the transition?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Who will assume responsibility for the ED’s email, voicemail and snail mail?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<b>C. Fund Development:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fund development planning: implementing a calendar of organization funders with timelines and tasks.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grant writing and proposal writing.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reporting to funders: writing, submitting, etc.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Special events planning and implementation.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual donor appeals.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Coordinating communication with funders on transition issues.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<b>D. Fiscal Oversight:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Accounts receivable and accounts payable.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Petty cash administration.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check signing/authorizing purchases.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization budget oversight (monthly).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication with outside accountants and auditors.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<b>E. Personnel Management and Supervision:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly communication/meetings of the management team.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing and approving payroll.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Addressing benefit questions and issues.	

Executive Director Function	Possible Back-Ups
<input type="checkbox"/> Hiring and training new staff.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Addressing employee performance problems (including termination).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring supervisory and management staff.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Coordinating communication with staff on transition issues.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<b>F. Compliance Mandates:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> EEOC compliance: (administration and oversight).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Compliance with federal and state licenses (annual renewals, audits, etc.).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Compliance with county and city licenses: (building codes, etc .)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<b>G. Contract Management:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Public funding sources: federal, state, etc.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Private funding source.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<b>H. Vendor Oversight:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Accountants and auditors.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grant writers.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Insurance underwriters.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Building repair and maintenance.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Security.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
<b>I. Volunteer Coordination:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruiting and training.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Supervising, delegating and communicating.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Overseeing advisory committees.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	

**Exhibit C: Sample Interim Executive Announcement**

Sample Interim ED Job Announcement
<b>Job Announcement:</b> Interim Executive Director
<p><b>Organization Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mission, purpose, founding year.</li> <li>▪ Major program areas.</li> <li>▪ Target population</li> <li>▪ Annual operating budget and major funding sources</li> <li>▪ Website address</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interim ED Job Description:</b> (examples of functions include)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Board development:</li> <li>▪ Donor development and relationship management:</li> <li>▪ Mission Match:</li> <li>▪ Fiscal oversight:</li> <li>▪ Personnel management and supervision:</li> <li>▪ Program development:</li> <li>▪ Compliance mandates:</li> <li>▪ Contract management:</li> <li>▪ Vendor oversight:</li> <li>▪ Public relations:</li> <li>▪ Volunteer coordination:</li> </ul>
<p><b>Specific Tasks Needed:</b> (examples are provided)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement organization annual fundraiser</li> <li>▪ Develop proposal for pending purchase-of-service RFP</li> <li>▪ Implement new program in response to recent grant award</li> <li>▪ Complete annual audit</li> </ul>
<p><b>Anticipated Duration of Assignment:</b> Usually up to 9 months</p>
<p><b>If interested, please contact:</b> (Board Chairperson)</p>



**Exhibit D: Sample Policy Statement: Emergency Leadership Transition\***

**Template for Emergency Leadership Transition Policy Statement  
For ABC Organization**

The Board of Directors of \_\_\_\_\_ recognizes the need to ensure the continued operation of the organization in the event of the unforeseen disability, death or departure of the Executive Director. In the unlikely event of an untimely vacancy, \_\_\_\_\_ has in place the following emergency succession plan to facilitate the transition to both interim and long term leadership.

The Board of \_\_\_\_\_ has participated in the development of the attached emergency succession plan. This process has included a careful review of the job description of the Executive Director and assignment of key responsibilities in the areas of organizational leadership, program development, program administration, operations, Board of Director’s relationships, financial operations, resource development and community presence.

**Promulgation:**

Whereas \_\_\_\_\_ has a rich tradition of leadership dating to its founding in \_\_\_\_ (add year);

Whereas this leadership has enabled \_\_\_\_\_ to grow and enhance its mission and operations to a position of prominence in its services area, and;

Whereas, in order to continue this tradition of excellence in leadership, it is essential that \_\_\_\_\_ further develop volunteer and staff leadership for the future and establish procedures for the continuity and transition of leadership;

Therefore, be it resolved that the \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Directors adopt and review and update annually, an Emergency Leadership Succession Plan to facilitate the continuity and orderly transition of staff leadership in the event of an unforeseen departure of the Executive Director.

Approved by action of the Board of Directors on \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed on this day by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President/Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Acting Executive Director Appointee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Human Resource Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- A. **Rationale:** In order to ensure the continuous coverage of Executive Director duties critical to the ongoing operations of the organization and its services to clients and/or constituents, the Board of Directors is adopting policies and procedures for the temporary appointment of an Acting Executive Director in the event of an unplanned or extended absence of the Executive Director.

While the Board acknowledges that such an absence is unlikely and undesirable, due diligence in exercising its governance functions requires that the Board have an emergency succession plan in place. It is expected that this plan will ensure continuity in external relationships, organization operations and staff functioning.

- B. **Temporary, Unplanned Absence (Short-Term):** A temporary absence is defined as an absence of less than three months and one in which the Executive Director will return to his/her position once the events precipitating the absence are resolved. An unplanned absence is one that arises unexpectedly, in contrast to a planned leave, such as a vacation or sabbatical.

- B.1. In the event of an unplanned short-term absence, the Board of Directors empowers the Executive Committee of \_\_\_\_\_ to implement the terms of this emergency plan.

- B.2. In the event of an unplanned absence of the Executive Director the Deputy Director or highest ranking staff member is instructed to immediately notify the Board Chair or highest ranking volunteer board member of the absence. As soon as feasible, the Chair is instructed to convene a meeting of the Executive Committee/Board to affirm the procedures in this plan or to make modifications as the Committee/Board deems appropriate.

- B.3. At the time this policy was approved, the Board has determined that the position of Acting Executive Director will be assigned to:

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
    - Title: \_\_\_\_\_

- B.4. Should the standing appointee to the position of Acting Executive Director be unable to serve in that capacity, the first and second back-up appointees for the position of Acting Executive Director shall be:

First back-up:	Second back-up:
Name: _____	Name: _____
Title: _____	Title: _____

- B.5. If the Acting Executive Director is new to his or her position (less than \_ months/years), the Executive Committee or Board of Directors may appoint one of the back-up appointees to the position. The Executive Committee/Board may also consider the option of splitting executive duties among designated appointees.

- B.6. Authority of Acting Executive Director: The Acting Executive Director shall have the authority for decision-making and independent action as the departing Executive Director with the following stipulations:

- B.6.1. Stipulation (if any)
    - B.6.2. Stipulation (if any)

- B.6.3. Stipulation (if any)
- B.6.4. Stipulation (if any)
- B.6.5. Stipulation (if any)
- B.6.6. Stipulation (if any)

- B.7. Compensation of Acting Executive Director: To compensate for the additional responsibilities required of the Acting Executive Director, he/she shall be offered additional compensation for the term of the short-term unplanned absence. Compensation will be in the form of:
- A temporary increase to the entry-level salary of the Executive Director position.
  - A bonus of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the time period of \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ in which he/she assumes acting Executive Director duties.
  - No additional compensation.

- B.8. Board Oversight of Acting Executive Director: The Acting Executive Director shall report to the Board Chair (or board designee) about fiscal and operation issues during the short-term absence of the Executive Director. It is anticipated that reporting will occur frequently, minimally weekly, to ensure that the Board Chair (or board designee) is fully informed about matters important to the organization's stability.

- B.9. Completion of Short-Term Emergency Succession Plan: The decision about when the absent Executive Director returns to lead \_\_\_\_\_ will be determined by the Board Chair and the Executive Director who will mutually decide upon a return to work dates. A reduced schedule for a set period of time may be allowed with approval of the Board Chair.

- C. Long-Term Unplanned Absence:** A long-term unplanned absence is defined as an absence of more than three months and one in which the Executive Director will return to his/her position once the events precipitating the absence are resolved. A long-term unplanned absence is one that arises unexpectedly. The procedures and conditions to be followed should be the same as for the short-term absence with one addition:

- C.1. The Executive Committee or Board of Directors will give immediate consideration, in consultation with the Acting Executive Director, to temporarily filling the management position left vacant by the Acting Executive Director. This is in recognition of the fact that for a term of more than three months, it may not be reasonable to expect the Acting Executive Director to carry the duties of both positions. The position description of a temporary manager will focus on relieving the Acting Executive Director of priority duties for his/her position during the term under which he/she is serving as Acting Executive Director.

- D. Unplanned Permanent Change in Executive Director:** A permanent change occurs when the Board of Directors determines that the Executive Director will not be returning to the position. In the situation, the procedures and conditions will remain the same as for the long-term temporary absence with one addition:

- D.1. The Board of Directors will appoint a Transition and Search Chair and subsequent Committee within \_\_\_ days to plan and carry out a transition to a new permanent Executive Director. The Board will also consider the need for outside consulting assistance depending on the circumstances of the transition and the board's capacity to plan and manage the transition and search. The Transition and Search Committee will also determine the need for an Interim Executive Director, and plan for the recruitment and selection of an Interim Executive Director and/or permanent Executive Director.

**E. Communications Plan:** Immediately upon transferring the responsibilities to the Acting Executive Director, the Board Chair or designee will notify staff members, members of the Board of Directors and key volunteers and/or funders of the delegation of authority. The Board members and Acting Executive Director shall also communicate the temporary change in leadership structure to the key stakeholders of the organization in accordance with the attached communication plan.

\*Components of the Emergency Succession Plan were developed using sample templates created by the Center for Nonprofit Advancement, 2006 ([www.nonprofitadvancement.org](http://www.nonprofitadvancement.org))