



Succession Planning

Guide to Getting Started

Getting Started

- 1.** Clarify who is responsible for creating and approving a written succession plan for the organization:
- 2.** Define the following terms as they relate to the organization:
 - a.** Temporary unplanned absence (SHORT-TERM)

 - b.** Temporary unplanned absence (LONG-TERM)

 - c.** Permanent unplanned absence (PERMANENT)

- 3.** Confirm who is responsible for reviewing and revising succession policies.
- 4.** Determine how often succession planning policies will be reviewed and revised.
- 5.** Identify essential resources needed to create, implement, or revise policies (targeted training, professional consultant, board liaison, financial, etc.)
- 6.** Prioritize succession planning based on leadership roles that have the potential to impact the mission most negatively during a transition/personnel gap.
- 7.** Outline a cross-training plan to ensure the first, second, and third, leaders in line of succession:
 - a. Understand the roles and responsibilities of the position they may be called upon to fill.
 - b. Know how/where to access essential information (files/contacts/calendars/assets)
 - c. Possess a functional knowledge of how to fill the role in case of an unplanned absence.
 - d. Are willing to step up should the need arise.

Sample Verbiage: Unplanned Absence of the Executive Director

□ **1. Rationale:**

*Explain WHY the organization is creating a succession plan.

“To ensure the ongoing success and sustainability of the organization, the board of directors understands that a continuous flow of leadership must be maintained. The board is committed to implementing policies and procedures to ensure uninterrupted leadership during the event of an unplanned/unexpected absence of the Executive Director(ED). Additionally, the board is committed to exercising due diligence by appointing and overseeing of an interim ED until the position until [the ED returns from a short-term absence/ or the position is filled with a qualified, permanent, successor].

□ **2. Priority functions of the Executive Director Position**

*Attach the most current, detailed job description.

Should an interim be unable to complete all duties associated with the ED’s job description, the board of directors deems the following core functions to be a priority:

- a. [Insert content here]
- b. [Insert content here]
- c. [Insert content here]
- d. [Insert content here]
- e. [Insert content here]

□ **3. Appointment of an Interim ED**

The board of directors authorizes [who? The Executive Committee, an HR committee, a special standing committee] to implement succession planning policies in the event of the ED unplanned [short-term/long-term] absence.

These authorized representatives have the power to implement this succession plan and take the following steps to appoint an interim:

- a. Inform...
- b. Complete...
- c. Appoint...
- d. Etc...

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The first in the line of temporary succession for the ED position is [insert job title]

Should the [insert job title] be unable or unwilling to step into the interim role, the next in line shall be [include 2nd and 3rd potential successors].

4. Oversight of an Interim ED

*Outline core tasks and timelines of the representatives who have been charged to oversee the interim.

The [Executive Committee] shall equip and support the interim ED in the following ways:

- a. Provide the interim with an approved, modified job description*
- b. Assess the increased workload of the interim ED to reduce the potential of burnout*
- c. Address priorities by adjusting tasks/timelines or delegating to when able.*
- d. Conduct regular “check-in meetings” at least [insert frequency].*
- e. Honor/acknowledge the interim ED’s successes/challenges.*

5. Authorities and Restrictions of the Interim ED

Unless otherwise stated, the board of directors bestows the following authorities upon the interim ED

- a. [Insert content here]*
- b. [Insert content here]*
- c. [Insert content here]*
- d. [Insert content here]*
- e. [Insert content here]*

The interim ED’s authority is restricted in the following areas:

- a. [Insert content here]*
- b. [Insert content here]*
- c. [Insert content here]*
- d. [Insert content here]*
- e. [Insert content here]*

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□ 6. Compensation

The board of directors acknowledges that performing a dual role in the absence of the Executive Director presents an increased burden on the interim and other supporting team members. Compensation for the interim ED shall include:

- a. [Insert content here]
- b. [Insert content here]
- c. [Insert content here]
- d. [Insert content here]
- e. [Insert content here]

The following supporting team members shall also be entitled to compensation during the interim period:

Job Title:

- a. [Insert content here]
- b. [Insert content here]
- c. [Insert content here]

□ 7. Communication Plan

The board of directors will communicate with the following stakeholders to inform them about the temporary change in leadership structure:

- a. *Clients*
- b. *Community partners*
- c. *Local government/civic leaders*
- d. *Donors*

Essential messaging will include the following:

[Craft a statement that can be easily modified and shared with stakeholders]

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The board of directors will notify stakeholders about leadership changes within **[insert time frame]** of implementing this emergency/succession plan.

The board of directors will keep stakeholders informed using the following marketing/delivery methods:

First notification to stakeholders-Method:

a. Method: **[Insert: newsletter, press-release, e-blast, social media, radio, etc.]**

b. Timeframe: **[Insert: within x days/weeks of implementing the plan]**

c. Person responsible:

d. Contact List/Access: **[Indicate how to access updated list]**

Subsequent notification to stakeholders-Method:

a. Method: **[Insert: newsletter, press-release, e-blast, social media, radio, etc.]**

b. Frequency:

c. Person responsible:

d. Contact List/Access: **[Indicate how to access updated list]**

- 8.** Create a quick financial plan, identifying costs and forecasted sales, to see if your capital gets you to a profit.

Approvals and Maintenance of Plan

- 1.** The full board of directors/Executive Committee/ or other authorized representatives has the authority to activate the stated succession plan.
- 2.** Signatures- Activation, maintenance, and termination of the stated plan will be evidenced by the signatures of the following leaders: **[insert roles]**
- 3.** Records- the [Insert title] is responsible for maintaining all records related to the implementation of this succession plan. Those records will be submitted to the full board of directors for review and approval **[when/where?]**
- 4.** Special authorities: The following leaders are authorized to **[Insert: access bank records, sign checks, etc.]** in the absence of the ED.

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