

EMERGENCY SUCCESSION PLANNING

by Gianforte Foundation

Policies related to the death or extended leave of the Executive Director.

Death of Executive Director, Care of Surviving Spouse

Duration of Housing

Six months

- Can be extended based on an agreement between any new Executive Director, the former director's spouse, and the Board

Duration of Pay (if the spouse is an employee of _____)

As an employee, the spouse's pay would continue along with the job. It is assumed the spouse would continue to work after the executive director's death.

- Should the spouse wish to end employment within the first year of the start of a new Executive Director, the spouse would be paid for an additional 12 months beyond the last day of work.

Benefits

If the spouse is an employee of _____, the spouse would be entitled to any applicable benefits.

- Since the death of the Executive Director is a qualifying event for benefit enrollment outside of the annual enrollment window, it is assumed the spouse would enroll if the spouse wishes.
- Should the spouse wish to exit the organization as described under Duration of Pay, benefits would continue along with pay until the end of the 12-month window.

If the spouse is not an employee of _____, _____ would make a one-time payment to the spouse equivalent to the cost of 12 months of COBRA (or similar health insurance cost) plus any applicable tax payments for the same health benefits that _____ are providing at the time of the death of the Executive Director.

Extended Leave of Current Executive Director

Creation of Extended Leave, Medical, and Pay and Benefits status

If leave is needed beyond the 12 weeks available via FMLA, the HR Committee can review the leave request and make a recommendation to the Board for additional leave up to six months.

- The Executive Director would receive full pay during this time (or partial pay from _____ to fill any pay gap not supported by any insurance) and all benefits including housing would continue.

Spouse, Housing, Pay, and Benefits

- Housing, pay, and benefits would continue with no change for the spouse of the Executive Director if the spouse is an employee.
- Housing would continue with no change for the spouse of the Executive Director.
 - o It is assumed that benefits, like pay, would continue for the Executive Director during an extended medical leave.

Creation of Sabbatical

If the Executive Director requests a sabbatical, the HR Committee will create a recommendation for Board approval.

- Guidelines for Extended Leave (Medical) are suggested as a framework for a sabbatical leave but the HR Committee can make a specific recommendation based on the needs of CCCI and the Executive Director.

Interim Director

In the event of the death, extended leave, or sabbatical of the Executive Director, _____ will be named the Interim Director.

- The Interim Director role is expected to last no longer than 12 months.
- If the spouse of the Executive Director is an employee, it is expected that the spouse would continue to report to their supervisor as designed in the organizational structure prior to the departure of the Executive Director.
- The _____ Board is expected to continue to support the interim director and the organizations from a governance perspective as it does currently.
 - o The Chair and HR Committee should determine with the Interim Director if there are specific areas that need additional support or coaching beyond the governance work to ensure that needs are addressed and roles are clear.

- o The Chair, the HR Committee Lead, and Interim Director are expected to have frequent contact during this time.

Spokesperson Rough Script

_____ will act as the “official” spokesperson for the organization and be responsible for any “news” to be published via social media, website, or in a press release. Any announcements will be run past the Chairman to ensure consistency with Board intentions and discussions.

Key Messaging

Day #1. Announcement of ED’s Death, Disability, and Inability to Serve

“We are saddened to announce our long-time Executive Director of _____ (was killed) (succumbed to a long illness) (has suffered a traumatic injury) today.

[Insert some additional information, as appropriate, about the circumstances.... people will want to know “what happened” and they should be told as part of the moving ahead process. Let’s control the news and eliminate any speculation.]

Day #2A. Announcement of Interim Director to Full-Time Staff

Message to Staff

The Board of _____ wants you to know how grateful we are to you. We are committed to standing together through this time of unexpected transition. It comes as no surprise to you that _____ (E.D.) and the Board have worked very intentionally to prepare for a time like this. Although we hoped this would never happen, we are prepared. Here are a few things to know:

- **The _____ Board has confidence in God’s leadership.** This was not a surprise to Him.
- _____ **is going to serve as the interim leader.** (add a few qualifying reasons)
- **Team effort** from all of us is going to be very important. We need each other and are in this together, as we continue to live out our mission together.
- **The _____ Board has confidence in you** to walk the ministry through this time.

A special "all staff" meeting has been called for _____ at _____ (location). _____, Board Chair and one or two other board members will be at the meeting to answer questions and to help think through any immediate concerns regarding sustaining the momentum of the organization. _____ will be responsible for any communications with the various constituencies, and the staff should refrain from making any public statements at this time.

We are asking that God make us stronger through this time of unexpected loss and change.

With gratitude for each one of you,

Day #2B. Announcement of Interim Director to Organization's Family

_____, Board Chair of _____, announced today that _____ will serve as Interim Director in the immediate future. _____ has been a key member of the _____ family since _____ and has demonstrated his love for the ministry. Please join us in praying for _____ as he/she stands in the leadership gap for this season and time.

Day #3. Announcement for Memorial Service

A celebration of life service, to honor (Name of Executive Director), will be held on _____ at _____.

Grieving and Guided

As we move through this time of grieving, we are also grateful for the guidance for a time such as this that was developed intentionally and thoughtfully with the Board and _____ (Executive Director). As we reflect with gratitude on _____'s life and leadership, we also move forward with a process that:

- Ensures ministry stability with a strong transition team
- Prayerfully prepares a search process for the next leader of _____
- Invites you to join with us in prayer through this time of unexpected transition.

Search Committee for New Executive Director

_____ Board of Directors is pleased to announce the establishment of the search committee for the next Executive Director of _____. Attached is a position description. Please feel free to share this with people that you think would be a good fit. Please join us in prayer for God's leadership in this. Thank you.

The Big Ideas

- The entire board reviews the written Contingency Plan and written Succession Plan at least annually.
- The board chair and the CEO regularly affirm that any "elephants in the room" (concerning

succession) are appropriately addressed in a timely manner.

- The full board conducts a CEO performance review at least annually.

Every board should have the necessary tools to:

- Write a good, simple, communicated Contingency (emergency) Plan.
- Write a clear Succession Plan

A GOOD, SIMPLE, COMMUNICATED CONTINGENCY PLAN IS FIRST

To get started, work through these questions/statements:

- Who is to take the lead?
- What are the decision-making parameters?
- How much money can be spent?
- When and what do we communicate, and to whom?
 - Organization
 - Donors
 - Family
 - Insurance – should you have it?
 - Constituents
 - Bank
 - Others?
- What about the organization?
 - Who is in charge?
 - Will we pay them extra?
 - How do we communicate?
- What about the family?
 - Do they know?
 - What can be done to ease the pain?
 - Is there an interim leader?
 - Do we start a search?
 - How is the search to be paid for?

DEVELOP A WRITTEN “DRAFT” CONTINGENCY PLAN

- Share this Draft Plan with a small group of your most trusted advisors.
- Incorporate their comments into your thinking.
- Work through the plan with your staff, denomination, and board.
- Do not try to finish the plan all at once. Think, take your time.
- Make sure it is consistent with your Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, policies, etc.
- Finalize your “Contingency Plan” and be sure copies are circulated to the people who need to know.
- Think through the benefits or liabilities of sharing your plan within the organization.
- Revisit your Contingency Plan at least annually.

A WRITTEN SUCCESSION PLAN AND THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

- Why do so few of us have a good written plan
 - Insecurity of the CEO/ED
 - Are they forcing me out?
 - I don't have enough to retire.
 - I am not doing a good job.
 - I haven't had a review in years.
- Uneasiness from the Board
 - Poor CEO evaluation process, if there is one
 - Marginal performance by the CEO
 - Not wanting to “talk money”
 - Not sure how to create a plan
 - Who should have the conversations?
 - How do we start the conversations without causing concern of the CEO?
- Questions to answer:
 - Do we review the CEO/ED at least annually?
 - Is there a job description in place?
 - Is the succession conversation part of the review?
 - How is a competitive wage established?
 - Is there a process and timetable for retirement and/or planned departure?
 - Is there an internal successor(s)?

- If so, what development needs are there for that person?
- What training or additional exposure can be offered?
- If there is not an internal choice, do you have a search firm identified?
 - If not, how do we get started learning about search firms?
- Who is on the Search Committee?
- What is our severance policy?
 - Forced termination?
 - Performance issues?
 - For cause?
 - Unforced termination?
 - Change in direction for the organization?
 - Performance not up to expectations?
- Does the Board have a formal evaluation process in place?
- Does the Board require SMART Goals to be developed and measured annually by the CEO/ED?
- Is there a Strategic Plan in place?

These questions must be answered by the Board and the CEO/ED. Once these questions are answered, you will have 90 percent of your Succession Plan complete. Good luck and get started.