

Succession Planning for Nonprofits



The unexpected departure of a nonprofit's leader can cause organizational chaos. A nonprofit may establish policies and procedures to guide leadership transitions—unplanned and planned—to prevent damage to the organization and its work.

Succession planning—putting in place policies and procedures to ensure smooth and orderly leadership transitions—helps nonprofits prevent organizational chaos and harm to programs and projects if crucial staff or officers depart unexpectedly. Succession plans may also detail the procedures for handling routine or expected leadership changes (e.g., a plan might call for the formation of a search committee to find a new executive director and specify the composition of the committee) and shape efforts to develop staff so that they are ready to step into leadership roles within an organization.

This guide provides links to guides, articles, and model succession plans to help organizations optimize their succession planning. See the [Succession Planning library topic](#) at the WeConservePA Library for these and other resources.

Guides

These guides provide an in-depth look at the need for and strategies to implement effective succession planning.

- [Nonprofit Executive Succession-Planning Toolkit](#)
- [Emergency Succession Planning](#)
- [Building Leaderful Organizations: Succession Planning for Nonprofit](#)
- [Staying Engaged, Stepping Up: Succession Planning and Executive Transition Management for Nonprofit Boards of Directors](#)

Articles

These short articles outline key elements of succession planning and offer concise tips to establish or improve a succession plan.

- [“The Importance of Linking Leadership Succession, Strategy, and Governance”](#)
- [“Blending Nonprofit Succession Planning and Executive Transition: A Successful Case”](#)
- [“A Practical \(and Possibly Proactive\) Approach to Leadership Transitions”](#)
- [“Nonprofit Succession Planning: It’s Not Just for the CEO”](#)
- [“Avoid Transition Trauma with a CEO Succession Plan”](#)
- [“A Nonprofit’s Checklist for Better Board Succession Planning”](#)

Model Succession Plans

Organizations can use these model plans to craft or inform their succession plans and policies.

- [Model Succession Plan](#) (CompassPoint Nonprofit Services)
- [Model Emergency Succession Plan](#) (Third Sector New England)
- [Model Succession Plan Policy](#) (Texas Council for the Arts)



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