



ED Succession Plan

Purpose

A succession plan provides for an orderly and seamless transition that minimizes disruption to the organization and allows the board and staff to focus on moving forward in a productive way. To ensure the continuous coverage of executive duties critical to the ongoing operations of High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, Inc. (High Hopes) and its services to visitors and stakeholders, the following guidelines have been created to facilitate the transition of the Executive Director, (ED).

Scenarios

There are a variety of circumstances which require an ED succession plan, some of which provide time to think through next steps in a careful, methodical way, and others that occur under circumstances that provide no warning. There are two primary scenarios in which the ED is unavailable to serve:

1. The ED is suddenly unable to perform his/her duties: Emergency Succession Plan
2. The ED gives notice that he/she plans to vacate the position on a future date: Long-Term Succession Plan

Emergency Succession Plan

In order to ensure that the mission of High Hopes continues uninterrupted in the event that the ED is no longer able to perform his/her duties in an emergency situation, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Board Chair will be informed of the absence, as soon as reasonably possible, by a member of the High Hopes Management Team.
2. The Chair will convene a meeting of the Executive Committee within 48 hours to affirm the procedures prescribed in this plan or to make modifications as the committee deems appropriate.
3. An acting ED will be appointed to fulfill the responsibilities of the ED. The Acting ED shall have the full authority for decision-making and independent action as the regular ED.

The Chair, or designee, will determine whether a member of the Management Team is appropriate and available to serve in the capacity of Acting ED for the duration of the absence. If so, the Chair will recommend, and the Executive Committee will approve, an internal, Acting ED. If a member of the Management Team is not selected to serve in this capacity, the Chair may elect to hire an external, interim ED/CEO to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.

The Executive Committee may offer additional compensation to the Acting ED based on the financial situation of the organization at the time of the absence. This may be offered in one of the following ways: a temporary salary increase or a one time bonus.

The Board Chair and Executive Committee will be responsible for monitoring the work of the Acting ED while remaining sensitive to the special support needs during this temporary leadership role.

If the absence is expected to last longer than three months, the Executive Committee will give immediate consideration, in consultation with the Acting ED, to temporarily filling the position left vacant by the ED.

4. The Board Chair, or designee, will notify staff members and the Board of Trustees of the temporary change in executive leadership.
5. As soon as possible after the Acting ED has begun covering the unplanned absence, the Acting ED shall communicate the temporary leadership structure to the key external supporters of High Hopes. This may include (but is not limited to) participants, volunteers, legal counsel, foundation program officers, major donors, community leaders, and others as determined by the Board of Trustees in conjunction with the Acting ED. If deemed necessary, a formal announcement will be disseminated to the general public.

In the event that the ED is unable to return to the position, the long-term succession plan will begin.

Long-Term Succession Plan

Leadership transition is a process that begins before the outgoing leader departs, and presents an opportunity to move forward with a new understanding of the issues the organization must address. In the event that the current ED provides notice of resignation to the Board, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Board Chair will conduct an Organizational Assessment with board and management representation to develop an understanding of the needs and priorities the organization must address when selecting a new ED.
2. The Board Chair will appoint a Search and Transition Committee to manage the recruitment, selection, and transition of the new ED. The committee shall be comprised of at least five members, including at least three current Trustees, and other non-board members as deemed appropriate by the Chair. The full board shall approve the Chair's recommendation.
3. Responsibilities of the Search and Transition Committee include:
 - a. Develop a communication strategy to announce the leadership transition to staff, partners, and key external supporters. This should include regular updates to the Board Chair and staff on key developments in the process.
 - b. Engage a consultant to help design an appropriate recruitment and selection process. The Executive Committee will approve a budget for this purpose.
 - c. Determine the involvement of the current ED in the search process and if necessary, appoint an interim ED due to timing of the departure of the current ED.
 - d. Work with the selected recruiting firm and High Hopes management to develop the job profile and compensation plan, review applicants, and conduct interviews.
 - e. Recommend an ED candidate and compensation package for full board consideration.
 - f. Develop and manage orientation and onboarding for the incoming ED. The process should clarify priorities for the first 90 days, overall roles and responsibilities of the position, and organizational goals, and set expectations for monitoring and evaluating performance.
4. The full board will review and vote on the recommendations of the Search and Transition Committee related to hiring and compensation of a new ED.

Resources

The following documents are available:

- A. Executive Director Job Description
- B. Annual Timeline of Organizational Activities
- C. Board Policies and Procedure

BoardSource.org, is a leading Governance resource for nonprofit organization. Additional information pertaining to ED Succession Planning is available through this site.

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