

Template for Association Succession Plan

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The following is a brief outline of the key steps to be included in a succession plan:

- 1. Board approves development of a Staff Succession Plan**
 - a. Board agrees on importance of a staff succession plan
 - b. Determine if consultant or staff will facilitate development

- 2. Statement of Purpose**
 - a. A statement of purpose and a policy expressing the rationale for the plan and the board's commitment to orderly executive transitions for both short-term absences and long-term absences or departures
 - b. Commitment to stewardship for organization during transition
 - c. Commitment to association's values, mission and member service

- 3. Definition of length of departure by executive director (short term or permanent)**
 - a. *Planned* departure - expected and anticipated in advance.
 - b. *Unplanned* departure - sudden or unanticipated.
 - c. *Short-term* absence - 3 months or less.
 - d. *Long-term* absence - more than 3 months.
 - e. *Temporary* absence - executive director expected to return.
 - f. *Permanent* departure - executive director will not return.

- 4. Procedures for absences where executive director will return**
 - a. Define role of key staff during absence (See staff continuity plan section)
 - b. Determine willingness and ability of current staff to revise roles until executive director returns

- 5. Procedures for permanent absence of executive director**
 - a. Implement staff continuity plan (See staff continuity plan section)
 - b. Consider need for interim association executive to manage staff
 - c. List options for who will conduct the search
 - i. Search/Transition Committee
 - ii. Search firm
 - iii. Staff role

- 6. Staff Continuity Plan**
 - a. Key executive staff can be as important to the organization as the CEO. Consideration should be given to preparing a succession plan for each executive staff position
 - b. ED determine roles and responsibilities of senior staff, including those in case of a departure of the CEO
 - c. ED identifies professional development opportunities to develop and strengthen the source of ongoing knowledge in senior staff areas of responsibility and assure continued operations in the event of a change in management

7. Outline search options: Search firm, AMC or internal

- a. Search firm:
 - i. RFP to firms specializing in associations
 - ii. RFP to include information on firm, timeline and work plan, length of guarantee, fee basis (flat vs. percentage), administrative expense, advertising plan, background of account executive, how they will work with Search Committee, on-boarding, etc.
 - iii. Search firms: Such as Tryon-Heideman, Tuft & Associates, Association Strategies, Transition Management Consultants, local firm that has association experience
- b. Manage the search internally
 - i. Executive Committee or Board decision on who to facilitate
 - ii. Appointment of Search or Transition Committee
 - iii. Identify role of staff in search
 - iv. Develop timeline and work plan for search
 - v. Advertise, interview candidates, background checks, select finalists
 - vi. Board final review and decision
- c. Association Management Company (AMC):
 - i. This provides for outsourcing all staffing and infrastructure
 - ii. RFP process to select
 - iii. Association Management Company Institute has the resources that will help you through the process of searching for a management firm.
 - iv. http://www.amcinstitute.org/?page=prepare_RFP

8. Outline responsibilities of Search Committee, Board and Executive committee

9. Appointment of Search Committee (SC)

- a. Plan should outline charges for Search Committee
 - i. Coordinates the selection of the Executive Search firm, if utilized
 - ii. Contributes to creating (updating) a job description, core competencies, position announcement and organizational profile;
 - iii. Approves the creation of a Source Plan for ad placement and press release;
 - iv. Conducts initial telephone and in-person interviews of candidates or assigns this to search firm
 - v. Reviews the collection of information through references, and background checks;
 - vi. Presents the final candidate(s) to the Board of Directors for final affirmation;
 - vii. Supports the decisions of the Search Committee and accepts the decision of the Board; and,
 - viii. Recommends a compensation package and employment contract to the Executive Committee.
- b. Composition should be outlined in the plan
 - i. Five to seven person Search Committee
 - ii. 1-2 Past Presidents
 - iii. President-elect (assuming they will not assume presidency during search)
 - iv. Treasurer
 - v. 1-2 Board members

- vi. 1-2 Members at large (Committee chair, state board president, active leader)
- vii. All appointees will maintain total confidentiality and will not share information on any candidate

10. Job Description and Criteria for New Executive

- a. Board determination of core competencies and experience desired
- b. Update job description (AAFP is a good resource)
 - i. Duties and responsibilities
 - ii. Knowledge/skills
 - iii. Expectations
 - iv. Education and experience

11. Financial Considerations

- a. Retirement benefits for retiring executive (Are they reasonable?)
- b. Search firm: 25-35% of first year salary
- c. Search related expenses for travel for candidates, committee, etc.
- d. Compensation review, if necessary
- e. Relocation expenses
- f. Overlap salaries in old and new executive
- g. On-boarding
- h. Consultant expenses (assist in coordination)
- i. Resolution on bank account signatures

12. Communications Plan

- a. A communications plan will be helpful to leadership and staff in preparing announcements, news releases and ongoing communications related to the ED transition
- b. Announcement of executives departure
- c. List of stakeholders to communicate (leadership, members, staff, suppliers, AAFP, related organizations, etc.)
- d. On-going messages on the status of the search
- e. Chief spokesperson appointment.
- f. Plans for recognition of outgoing exec
- g. Regular reports to the board

13. Board interview of final candidate(s)

- a. Determine how many candidates to present to board
- b. Some recommend only one candidate
- c. Others like a choice of two

14. Negotiation of contract

- a. Determination of compensation
- b. Retirement/benefits package
- c. Notice of termination
- d. Utilize search firm or legal counsel advice

15. On-boarding for new executive director

- a. First nine months are critical
- b. Utilize search firm, outside consultant or internally coordinated
- c. Minimal overlap with retiring executive (two weeks)

- d. Introduce to staff, leadership, membership, vendors, suppliers, AAFP and affiliates
- e. Development of 90 day and one year goals
- f. Performance appraisal process agreed upon

16. Update Executive Director Succession Plan when new exec is onboard

For additional information:

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