

# Sample Short Term CEO Succession Plan

## Introduction

The [**Organization Name**] Board of Directors recognizes its responsibility to make provisions for competent leadership for the organization. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Board also acknowledges that situations may arise which require a need for interim leadership and that future leadership transitions are inevitable.

Accordingly, this Short Term CEO Succession Plan is designed to address each of the following situations:

- Provision for leadership during anticipated or unanticipated short-term absences of the CEO.
- Leadership needs during longer absences of the CEO.
- In the event of a permanent leadership change, the process for conducting a CEO search.

The [**Organization Name**] Board of Directors is responsible for the approval, implementation and any modifications of this policy and its related procedures.

## Temporary Unplanned Absence: 30 days or less

In a situation where the CEO is absent temporarily, i.e. illness or leave of absence, and determined to be unable to carry out the CEO responsibilities, the following procedures will be followed:

1. As soon as possible, and not more than five business days after the date of the CEO's absence, the board authorizes the board chair, or vice-chair in the absence of the board chair, to appoint [**Individual Name**] to carry out the CEO functions. (There may be others identified if the first person is not available.) Several persons may be named to share responsibility. In such a situation, the responsibilities of each individual will be specified in writing in the succession plan document
2. The board chair is responsible to ensure that interim leadership arrangements are communicated to the board, staff and key stakeholders, including licensing agencies.
3. These appointments will remain in place until the CEO is able to resume the CEO responsibilities, an interim CEO is appointed by the board or until such a time that other appointments are made by the board or the executive committee acting on behalf of the board. The board maintains the prerogative to appoint or discontinue interim leadership appointments at any time.

4. As soon as possible following the notification of an unplanned absence of the CEO, the board chair will convene an Executive Committee meeting to affirm the procedures in this plan or to modify them as necessary.
5. The board chair shall remain in at least weekly contact with the person(s) assigned to provide interim leadership.

### **Temporary Planned or Unplanned Short-term Absence: longer than 30 days**

If the short-term interim arrangements as outlined above have not already been implemented, they should be implemented as soon as possible.

Within five days of the awareness that the CEO's absence is anticipated to be longer than 30 total days, the executive committee of the board shall appoint a transition committee consisting of at least one member of the executive committee and two additional members of the board of directors which shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Communicate with key stakeholders, i.e. lenders, key contributors, staff, etc.:
  - That the CEO succession plan has been implemented.
  - The arrangements that have been made for interim leadership including the person(s) who have been appointed for these leadership roles.
  - Any other arrangements that are being made, such as a request for an interim CEO.
2. Determine whether assistance is needed to secure outside interim CEO leadership. If so, recommend to the executive committee that a search firm be engaged to identify an interim CEO who can provide leadership until the CEO is able to return to the CEO responsibilities or until a permanent CEO is selected and available to serve.
  - Serve as the primary contact with the search firm and, after reviewing potential interim candidates, recommend a preferred candidate to the board for appointment.
  - If other consulting assistance is deemed to be needed, recommend an appropriate consultant(s) to the board for engagement.
3. Determine whether any priority issues must be addressed and develop and monitor a plan for addressing any identified issues.
4. Communicate at least weekly with any appointed interim leaders regarding the status of the organization.

The board maintains the prerogative to appoint or discontinue interim leadership appointments at any time.

## **Planned or Unplanned Permanent Absence of the CEO**

When the CEO is not available and not expected to return to the position (serious illness, death or termination) the above procedures for a temporary absence of the CEO will be followed. In addition, the procedures outlined below shall be implemented.

Within four weeks of a known permanent vacancy in the CEO position, the board executive committee will recommend a Search Committee to the board which will appoint the members.

1. The Search Committee will consist of five board members including at least two executive committee members.
2. The Search Committee will communicate to the Executive Committee its recommendation regarding the retention of a CEO search firm to conduct a search for a permanent CEO.
3. In addition, the Search Committee is responsible to:
  - Assess the status of the organization in order to identify leadership qualities that are needed.
  - Develop compensation and benefit guidelines for prospective candidates.
  - Review the candidate profile of desired qualities with the board for its input.
  - Keep the board and staff informed of its progress at appropriate points.
  - Bring a recommended candidate to the board for consideration or in the absence of a clear recommendation, bring two finalists to the board for consideration.
  - Maintain confidentiality as appropriate.
  - Recommend to the board a transition plan/timetable and support tools for the new executive.