

IN  
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# PREPARING FOR YOUR COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY'S FUTURE: Sustainability, Succession & Transition

**PART 3**  
**Executive  
Transition  
Management  
Guide**



## **Preparing for Your Community Action Agency's Future: Sustainability, Succession and Transition**

September, 2012

This document is intended for use of Community Action Agencies and other CSBG Eligible Entities within the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Network.

### **Community Action Partnership**

The Community Action Partnership is the nonprofit, national membership organization representing the interests of the 1,000+ Community Action Agencies (CAAs) across the country that annually help 17 million low-income Americans achieve economic security. Whether it's a Head Start program, weatherization, job training, housing, food bank, energy assistance, financial education, or any of the other 40-plus distinct programs, CAAs work to make America a better place to live.

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# Background about the series

The three guides in the Community Action Partnership Sustainability Toolkit were written specifically with Community Action in mind. These guides were designed to help Community Action Agency (CAA) leaders strengthen the capacity of their organizations, especially those organizations that may be facing a chief executive or other leadership transition in the near future.

The first guide, *Organizational Sustainability Planning*, is a tool for assessing and strengthening the four areas critical to the organization's long-term sustainability by conducting an organizational sustainability assessment and using the results of the assessment to develop an organizational sustainability action plan.

The second guide, *Executive Succession Planning*, provides an overview of three approaches to succession planning and presents a detailed approach for developing “succession essentials,” a board-adopted succession policy for the chief executive position and a companion emergency backup plan for the CEO position, but it can be adapted to other staff leadership positions as well.

The third guide, *Executive Transition Management*, presents a three-phase approach for managing turnover in a leadership position, especially the agency chief executive position.

While each of the guides can be used individually, together they are designed to help leaders strengthen their organizations and manage leadership turnover, especially important for agencies that have a long-term or founder chief executive in place. Quite often long tenured executives leave “big shoes” to fill, and careful planning for their succession is paramount.

The timing of the Executive Director/CEOs departure can be a guiding factor in the choice of which tool to use. In CAAs where the executive has no intention of leaving soon, or where retirement may be three or more years off, the *Organizational Sustainability Guide* can be an excellent tool for strengthening the organization, ensuring that when the transition occurs, there is a strong team in place with a clear plan for the future, solid systems and resources, and a resilient culture.

In agencies where the transition is two or more years away, the “succession essentials” in the *Succession Planning Guide* can help the leadership understand more deeply the role of the chief executive and develop the tools, principles and understanding for how to best manage that transition when it does occur. Moreover, development of the emergency backup plan ensures that the organization has a plan in place if something unforeseen were to happen to the incumbent executive. More importantly, the development of that backup plan provides a deep exploration of the chief executive role, and the sense of bench depth in the agency to back him or her up.

In situations where the transition is imminent – within the next 18 months or less – the *Executive Transition Management Guide* provides a well-tested framework for managing the entire transition process, including the search.

# Introduction

In any given year, between 7% and 9% of nonprofit chief executive positions turnover according to the 2006 and 2011 *Daring to Lead* reports. The truth of the matter is, all careers end in a transition. It's just a matter of when, how, and how well-managed that transition will be.

The question is not whether your CAA will experience an executive transition, but when. Although these are relatively infrequent events for individual organizations, managing the transition effectively is crucial to the organization's future impact and continued success. The chief executive plays a defining role in setting the agency's strategic direction, ensuring its long-term sustainability and managing its day-to-day affairs. The handoff from one chief executive to the next is, therefore, a critical moment for an organization that is unlike many of the personnel changes an organization may have experienced.

All transitions involve risk. According to the *Daring to Lead 2011* report, 34 percent of nonprofit chief executives leaving their positions were either fired or otherwise forced out. The majority of these can be traced back to a failed transition. Transitions can fail because of poor preparation, an ill-suited choice of new executive, or because the board didn't prepare itself or the agency to work effectively with its new executive. Whatever the source, these failures can be very costly to the CAA as well as its constituents and community.

More than mere risk management, a well-managed transition is an opportunity to enhance capacity and add to mission impact down the line.

## Executive Transition Management

An executive transition involves a series of events that begins with the current executive's decision to leave (or the board's decision to force a change) and concludes after the new executive has settled into the job. The entire transition process can take a few months, or several years (see [Appendix 1](#) for a sample transition timeline). The goal of Executive Transition Management, or "ETM" for short, is to provide the tools boards need to manage the process so it produces good outcomes for the CAA.

ETM is more than an executive search; it's a way of managing the entire turnover and handoff process in a manner that builds the capacity of the organization. The ETM process is based on a three-phase model for managing the entire departure, search, selection, hiring, and onboarding process. ETM takes the board from early-stage thinking about executive succession through the successful launch of the incoming executive.

**Figure 1 - The three phases of Executive Transition Management:**



- **Prepare** — This phase involves organizing the transition committee; conducting some level of organizational review to understand how current organizational factors should influence the position; engaging the board in exploring future direction and how that should drive the search; and, finally, developing the position profile and a plan to market the position.
- **Search** — This phase should include robust outreach to develop a diverse pool of candidates; a thorough screening process to identify interviewees; a selection process that involves multiple rounds of interviews and good research on the finalists, and, finally, a hiring process that sets the stage for the onboarding.
- **Onboard** — This final phase is often overlooked. It should include a solid orientation for the new executive and introduction to the community; an intentional process to build solid working relationships early in the new executive’s tenure; a planning process to clarify leadership priorities; and, finally, an evaluation and support process.

## Key Principles of ETM

**Transition requires a larger, longer view.** When facing an executive transition, boards tend to move quickly – sometimes too quickly, and advertise the position before they’re clear about what constitutes a successful search. Moreover, they often see the search as the transition. Search is but one component of the transition management process.

**Transitions are about capturing rewards, not just managing risk.** An executive’s departure can be challenging, but it’s also an opportunity. A proactively led executive transition can be a critical moment for the CAA– for an underperforming organization, it can be an opportunity to regroup and redirect. For a successful organization, it should be an opportunity to build on strengths and plan for scaling new heights.

**More than process, transitions involve emotions.** There’s a human dimension to transitions that shouldn’t be ignored. Whether it’s departure of a beloved executive or an executive’s tenure that’s ending badly,

transitions provoke our emotions. The board and committee should be aware of this and be prepared to address this through communication and, potentially, proactive intervention.

**Don't rush the process.** Take the time for careful planning before you launch the search and don't try to cut corners in the search process. Rushing usually leads to bad outcomes.

**Strive for a good ending, so you can have a good beginning.** How an executive leaves an organization can say a lot about him/her as well as the agency. If you're facing a messy departure, try to make the most of it. If it's a positive departure, make sure that there's ample time for celebration and closure with the departing executive.

**Begin with the end in mind.** A well-managed transition provides an opportunity for the organization to expand its mission results under new leadership. The outcome can be much larger than just identifying a successor.

**Don't be bound by history.** There's a natural human tendency to carry our history forward. If the board's facing a messy departure, they sometimes go too far in compensating for it. By the same token, if the departing executive is really successful, there's a tendency to try to look for someone just like him/her. The reality is neither of those executive profiles are appropriate for the future. Where the CAA is headed should be driving the profile for the new executive, not where it's just been.

**Be prepared to support the new executive.** The post-hire phase is a critical part of the transition process. It is an opportunity to build a strong working relationship with the new executive that centers on clarity about priorities, responsibilities, mutual expectations and performance measures.

**Founder and long-term executive transitions are special.** Often, the longer an executive is in place, the more deferential the board is to his/her vision and leadership. Moreover, often, but not always, the longer an executive is in place the more the job and the senior management team composition grows up around them – a reflection of the executive's skills, interests, and maybe even idiosyncrasies. It's important to unpack the job and understand how to make the job more doable for the successor.

## Managing the Executive Transition Process

The following sections walk you through the ETM process and action steps. See [Appendix 1](#) for the related timeline.

# Phase 1 – Prepare

The target outcomes for this phase: The committee and processes are organized; the board is clear and aligned about the successful search and transition; and tools and strategies are in place to launch the search.

## Organize the transition committee.

*Composition:* A good guide for the transition committee composition is past, present and prospective board leadership. *Past* so you have the institutional history represented. *Present* so that you have someone who can speak on behalf of the board. And *prospective* future leadership, because this hire is for the future. Having the potential board chair who might work with this executive in the future on the transition team helps pave the way for that future board-executive relationship. *Size:* Typically, five members is about the right size. In some especially complicated situations, more members may be needed, but a good rule of thumb is smaller is more effective. Usually the transition committee also serves as the search committee – conducting the search as well as planning the transition. *Responsibilities:* Typically the committee has five responsibilities: (1) overseeing communications, (2) ensuring healthy closure with the departing executive, (3) planning the hiring and transition process, (4) managing the hiring and transition activities, and (5) ensuring a healthy start with the new executive.

## Announce the departure.

Good communication is a critical part of successful transitions. The CAA’s key stakeholders – funders (including the State CSBG Office) and collaboration partners – will want to hear about the transition early and directly. They should not find out about the transition through the grapevine. Communication at this level is not overly complicated. The pieces you’ll need are: a departure announcement letter, typically signed by the board chair; maybe a press release; and, certainly, a simple communications plan. For the plan, consider dividing your stakeholders up into three groups: (a) those that need a phone call, (b) those that just need the letter, and (c) the rest who can read about it in the newsletter. The typical announcement process involves informing the staff immediately followed by calls to the “a” group above.

## Understand the transition.

There are four classic transition types:

1. Sustained success – The agency is well led and performing well. The board needs to resist the temptation to find someone “just like” the departing executive. High-performing executives are also often times hard to follow. The board should be on guard to ensure that the job is doable for the successor. That doesn’t mean dumbing down the job, it means smart delegation.
2. Underperforming – The agency is performing poorly or is about to go into decline. The challenge here is to properly diagnose the issues and make sure that they are addressed during the transition. There’s also a challenge to align the executive job duties with the real leadership needs of the organization. Finally, the board should guard against “hiding” their situation from candidates. Transparency is the best policy. If the candidate is going to blanch, better that they blanch during the search rather than a few weeks or a few months into the job.

3. **Turnaround** – The agency is in active decline. The board’s challenge is to stabilize the organization first. This should ideally be done before launching the search. This is a time to hire strong interim leadership to help turn the organization around, and focus on improving staff morale.
4. **Hard-to-follow executives** – The agency is facing the departure of the founder, a long tenured executive, a highly entrepreneurial executive, or an ultra-charismatic leader. With the departure of a hard-to-follow executive, even the best organizations can become unstable. The board needs to be clear about what vulnerabilities the departure is creating. It’s also vital that the committee unpack the job and delegate some of the executive’s accumulated responsibilities. Finally, it’s time to think differently about the board and executive roles. You’ll need to break out of the business-as-usual mentality and potentially rethink the role of governance, and reimagine the board-executive relationship with a new executive in place.

To really understand the CAA’s situation, consider conducting interviews with board members, executive leaders and external stakeholders.

## Clarify who’s in charge.

If the executive’s departure is abrupt, you’ll want to ensure that you’ve identified who’s in charge during the interim period. Often times the deputy CEO is appointed as the acting director. In other cases, lacking that position, or where that person may not be the most appropriate, an interim executive director from the outside may need to be appointed. In most cases, a board member, unless he/she has the requisite skills, is not the best choice for this interim role. Boards often times confuse organizational familiarity with preparation to step into the role. Interim leadership requires good leadership/management skills. For additional guidance on interim executives please see: [www.transitionguides.com/monographs-on-executive-transition-management](http://www.transitionguides.com/monographs-on-executive-transition-management). Also see [Appendix 2](#).

## Engage the Board.

The entire board should understand and be aligned in their responses to four critical questions: (1) Who do you want to hire – what’s the profile?, (2) Why that profile – what’s the rationale for that set of skills and experiences?, (3) What do you want the new executive to do when they come on board – what’s a reasonable picture of success?, and (4) How should you prepare to work most effectively with the new executive? The board should also clarify the charge to the transition committee, especially the “product” of the search. Does the board want the committee to bring a single finalist forward or does the board want to conduct the final interview with two or three candidates? (Note that the larger the board, the more challenging it is to conduct the final interview as a committee of the whole. Consider appointing a committee whom you trust and letting them do the legwork for you.)

## Develop the Profile and Search Plan.

Develop a position profile that summarizes the agency and the position. The search plan is usually a page or two that outlines your strategy for marketing the position, who you will contact for candidate suggestions, places where the position may be posted or advertised, and finally, a brief budget that summarizes the costs for ads and postings. See [Appendix 3](#) for examples.

## Identify the Transition Issues and Begin the Handoff Plan.

Concurrent with the search process, you'll want to begin to address any transition or legacy issues that might adversely impact the performance of the incoming executive. These began to surface at the above "Engage the board" conversation, especially question #4: What do we need to do to get ready to work effectively with the new executive? Ask your departing executive to begin to prepare a handoff plan that will help him/her assist in the orientation process of the successor.

## Phase 2 - Search & Select

The target outcome for this phase: Hire an exceptional executive who fits the current and future leadership needs, selected from a robust, diverse pool of finalists.

### Recruit

Recruit a strong and diverse candidate pool. This may involve advertising and web postings, but often times the best candidates are those who are not looking. The committee should be in touch with leaders in the field, the Community Action Partnership, your Community Action state association as well as leaders of allied associations who can help you identify "passive" talent- leaders who might be right for the position but who are not currently in the job market. Then call these prospects and enlist their interest in the position. See [Appendix 4](#) for list of job posting web sites.

### Screen

- Manage resume receipt and candidate communications. Have one person who manages the receipt of resumes, who ensures confidentiality and communicates with the candidates. Consider requiring email submission. If your committee is spread out, you might set up a *confidential* folder on a service such as Dropbox ([www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)) to file the resumes and provide committee access.
- Review the resumes. Consider having one or two committee members whose job is to pre-screen the resumes – read the resumes and look for evidence of the experience and attributes that you identified in the position profile. Assign the resumes to one of three categories: (a) those that meet all the criteria, (b) those that meet most of the criteria, and (c) those that meet few or none of the criteria. Consider whether to screen the just the "a" list or the "a" and the "b" lists. Those on the "c" list should be set aside. See [Appendix 5](#) for an example of a resume scoring sheet.
- Conduct screening interviews or candidate questionnaires with promising candidates. Depending on the size of your pool, you may want to conduct brief phone screening interviews or a questionnaire to help narrow the field. If your candidates are many and promising (more than 12-15), quick, pointed phone calls or a good candidate questionnaire can help you narrow the field and inform the interviewee selection process. If your candidates are few but promising, you may want to move directly to a resume review by the full committee. If your candidates are few but NOT promising, then it's time for more search work. The goal should be to have at least 5 to 6 promising candidates for the committee to consider. See [Appendix 6](#) for a sample of some phone screening questions.
- Review promising candidates with the committee, and identify interviewees. Have the entire committee read the best resumes and related review notes/questionnaires, then have a meeting or conference call to compare notes and identify 5-6 candidates (at least 3-4) for the interview process.

## Select

- Conduct two rounds of interviews. Good practice is to have more than one interview. Consider having a “Round 1” interview with a broader field of candidates – say 5 or 6 – and a second interview later with a narrower field of, say, 3 or 4 finalists. Have that second interview be focused on the future and how the candidates can help the organization capitalize on opportunities and address upcoming challenges. See [Appendix 7](#) for some sample interview questions and an interview agenda. Also see [Appendix 8](#) for a sample rating form.
- Consider engaging the staff and the departing executive. While in some cases it makes sense to have staff members on the transition team, it’s generally not a good idea to have staff members involved in the committee’s interviews. Doing so puts a damper on discussions about agency capacity and operations. That said, you may want to consider having some meet-and-greet sessions where the finalists have the opportunity to meet with the departing executive and members of the senior management team. Then, solicit input from the staff members. Make it clear to the staff that they are informing the selection process, not making a recommendation.
- Check references. Whether it’s prior to the second interview or before the finalist is selected, conduct robust reference checking. Typically, you should talk to at least two former supervisors, one or two direct reports, and a couple colleagues from the field. See [Appendix 9](#) for some sample reference check questions.
- Consider a pre-employment background check. Because Community Action involves vulnerable populations and receives public funding, you should consider conducting a pre-employment background check in accordance with your personnel policies. Such background checks are typically conducted by a third-party organization, and usually involve review of a number of databases - local, state, and federal criminal history, sexual predator listings and credit reports. Other typical checks include verification of prior employment and/or verification of education and/or licensing credentials. Many states are tightening up on pre-employment background checks. Be sure to check with your legal counsel to ensure what is permitted in your state.
- Establish an agreement in principle about compensation and employment parameters. Prior to the ratification by the board, you’ll want to establish an agreement in principle with your identified finalist concerning the salary offer and other factors in the employment agreement. This should be an agreement in principle, making it clear to the finalist that this is not a bona fide offer of employment until board ratification. Waiting until after the board vote, you run the risk of not being able to successfully negotiate the agreement with your preferred candidate. See [Appendix 10](#) for a sample employment offer letter.
- Ratify the selection. Almost all bylaws say that the board is responsible for hiring the chief executive. In some cases, the board – especially a smaller board – can conduct the second round of interviews and make the selection following that round. In other cases the transition committee conducts the second round interview, arranges for the board to meet their recommended candidate, and then conducts a formal vote.

## Hire

- Finalize employment agreement. After the board ratification vote, secure sign-off from the candidate on the employment confirmation letter or employment contract.

- Announce the search conclusion. After the executive has informed his/her current employer, you are ready to announce the conclusion of the search. Typically, this is announced to the staff first, followed by key stakeholders, potentially with calls to the really critical stakeholders.
- Wrap up the search and inform the other candidates. After the new executive has truly signed on – signed their employment confirmation letter or employment contract –wrap up the search by taking down any advertising and informing the other candidates of the conclusion of the search. See [Appendix 11](#) for a sample “regrets” letter.

## Phase 3 - Onboard

The target outcome for this phase: board and executive clarity and alignment on priorities, roles, expectations, and performance measures.

### Plan

- Plan the orientation and onboarding process for the new executive. The “in between time,” while the new executive is wrapping up things at his/her current employer and hasn’t started with your CAA yet, is a good time to plan the orientation and onboarding process. This is a great place to get staff involved. They generally have a more nuanced view of the critical factors in the orientation process than the board may have.
- Consider asking the new executive to prepare a 90-day entry plan. A simple “entry plan” can help make the most of the new executive’s early tenure, helping them to ensure that this precious time is invested with some balance – attention to the relationship building process that’s crucial during this early tenure. See [Appendix 12](#) for a sample CEO 90-day entry plan.

### Relate

- Clarify goals, roles, expectations and performance measures. Whether through conversations between the board chair and new executive, or between the entire board and the new executive, once the new executive is on board, strive to clarify these critical elements of the board-executive relationship.

### Support

- Support your new executive. Encourage the new executive to seek out support resources. If he/she hasn’t been a chief executive before, encourage them to seek out colleagues that might serve as informal advisers to them, or as a sounding board. This might be executives of other Community Action Agencies in the state, or other nonprofit executives in the community who are known to be exemplary leaders. Your statewide Community Action Association may be helpful in this.
- Encourage involvement in Community Action Network experiences. New executives are likely to be conscious of travel and time away from the office. Community Action comes with a history that is an important component of Community Action Leadership and attendance at NCAF, CAPLAW, NASCAP, and Community Action Partnership events can be helpful in providing linkages to new executives who come from outside the Network.

## Evaluate

- Establish clear measures and an evaluation process. Your new executive's first year with the agency is unlike any other in their tenure. It's a time to gain knowledge about the CAA and build relationships with the staff, board and beyond. Consider a staged evaluation process, beginning with a 90-day "check-in" conversation that focuses on accomplishments and challenges from their 90-day entry plan. Consider whether another 90-day plan would be useful. At the six-month point, consider a slightly more formal evaluation process, perhaps with the executive committee talking with the new executive about their perception of his/her performance in assuming leadership within the key responsibilities of the job. The annual performance evaluation should focus on the new executive's impact on agency performance.

## Special Topics

### Candidates from inside the organization.

According to the 2011 *Daring to Lead* report nearly half of current executives (48%) were internal hires – 31% were previously on the staff and 17% were on the board. The transition committee should establish a clear guideline about how they intend to handle internal candidates. Most organizations encourage internal candidates to apply, but put them through the same screening and interview process as any other candidate. Doing so assures that there's not only fairness to the process, but that the committee is working from direct information gathered during the selection process rather than assumptions they are making based on prior experience. You may be surprised at what you find when you actually interview someone you thought you knew, or conduct reference checks with their previous employer (assuming they are not a long-term employee with the organization )

### Transparency and disclosure.

As the candidates move forward in your process, so should the level of disclosure. Prior to the first round of interviews, most organizations have sufficient information on their website that very little else needs to be provided. Prior to the second interview, where candidates are expecting to do their own due diligence on the organization, you should provide sufficient background information. Here's a representative list of information you should consider providing:

1. General:
  - a. Annual reports from two previous years (if published)
  - b. Recent back issues of the newsletters/journal, etc.
  - c. Information about membership or donor categories
  - d. If relevant, a list of any publications
  - e. Information about any existing or proposed formal coalitions, joint ventures, etc.
2. Governance, policies, and direction:

- a. Strategic and/or business plan
  - b. Bylaws
  - c. Board list (with bios, if available)
  - d. Major policies that are directly relevant to the position, e.g., board governance policies, etc.
  - e. Information about the relationship of any chapter and subsidiary organizations
  - f. Executive summary section of any recent needs assessment reports
  - g. Executive summary section of recent management studies
3. Financial:
- a. Last two audits (three if there are major fluctuations)
  - b. Current year budget
  - c. Most recent year-to-date financial statement
  - d. Cash flow projection (if available)
  - e. Data on membership and/or donor growth or decline
4. Personnel/Operations:
- a. Personnel policies
  - b. Employee benefit schedule
  - c. Staff and board organization charts (if available)
  - d. Information about major operational contractors, e.g., external fundraisers, major service delivery contractors, etc.
  - e. Disclosure about any ongoing or proposed contracts (or other relationships) with the previous chief executive(s) or any current or past officers

Some organizations adopt a wait-and-see attitude, preferring to wait until the candidates ask for information. This is dangerous. One of the top reasons that executives leave prematurely is that they felt misled about the job. Put your cards on the table.

That said, there are some pieces of information that really can't or shouldn't be disclosed until the new executive is identified, or prior to the ratification vote with the board. These items might include the following:

1. Results of any recent or pending merger or acquisition discussions. This information usually is discussed in general terms during the first round of interviews. If a merger is pending, it can be discussed in-depth prior to the final interview.
2. Disclosure of any pending lawsuits.
3. Disclosure of any pending or recent regulatory actions — e.g., IRS, OSHA, DOL, or other federal or state actions. Consider whether this can and should be disclosed earlier.
4. Disclosure of any pending or recent actions by the agency's sanctioning or accrediting bodies — e.g., health care facility recertification, etc. Also consider whether this can and should be disclosed earlier.
5. Delineation of check- and contract-signing authority as well as personnel hiring and discharge authority.

## **When you have fired your previous executive.**

In these situations there may be raw feelings and yet to be resolved issues. Strive to ensure that the organization is stable – emotionally, financially, politically or otherwise – before you launch the search. Come

to terms with history wherever possible, including acknowledging and addressing the board's role in allowing the situation to deteriorate, putting measures in place to ensure that those circumstances don't occur again. Don't let the perceived deficiencies of the former executive inappropriately sway the selection of his/her successor. Often boards that have fired their previous executive hire with an eye towards what they don't want and end up doing the "pendulum swing," hiring against the shortcomings of the former executive and finding out later that they missed a whole lot of things that they should have focused on. Take a step back, look at where the organization is headed, and let that drive your selection criteria.

## Understand the taking charge process.

John Gabarro of The Harvard Business School identified five phases of the taking-charge process, when leaders move into a new role. Each of these phases is driven by the executive's learning process rather than a strict timetable.

- **Entry or taking hold** — This phase usually encompasses the first few months of the new executive's tenure and typically involves his/her introduction and orientation, and the relationship-building with staff, board, funders and constituents.
- **Immersion** — With the early learning out of the way, the executive begins to manage the organization in a more informed fashion. Learning continues, but usually at a less hectic pace. During this phase, the executive often begins the planning process – significant strategic or business planning – that is implemented during the Reshaping phase that follows.
- **Reshaping** — This phase often involves the implementation of the planning work done during the Immersion phase.
- **Consolidation** — This phase includes follow-through on the work done in the Reshaping phase, addressing any unintended consequences of changes initiated during the Reshaping phase.
- **Refinement** — This is the final phase in the taking-charge process. The executive is no longer considered new, and the job is no longer new to the executive. The pace of change often slows down and involves mostly the refinement of operations and exploration of new opportunities for the organization.

# Conclusion & Additional Readings

At this point, the whole process may seem a bit daunting. A lot of information has been presented in this guide, but if you take a look at the sample transition timeline in [Appendix 1](#), you'll see that the entire transition process involves a relatively few, but critical, key action steps. An executive transition is nothing more than a multistage project. And like any other project, it can be managed, and managed effectively. Hopefully you will find the information in this guide to be a useful resource. There are a number of recent publications that can help you “dig deeper.” They include:

Adams, T. H. (2010). The Nonprofit Leadership Transition and Development Guide: Proven Paths for Leaders and Organizations. San Francisco, Wiley/Jossey-Bass.

Tebbe, D. (2008). Chief Executive Transitions: How to Hire and Support a Nonprofit CEO. Washington, DC, BoardSource.

Wolfred, T. (2009). Managing Executive Transitions: A Three-Phase Guide for Nonprofits. St. Paul, Minn., Fieldstone Alliance.

Also see: <http://www.transitionguides.com/guides-for-executive-board-leaders>

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# Appendix 1 - Sample Transition Timeline

## CEO Search & Transition Time Line- Date

[Note: Assumes departure has been announced and transition committee has been appointed. If not, those items need to be added.]

	Activity	Responsibility	Target Date(s)	Estimated Time Needed
Prepare	Conduct Transition Committee Project Launch Meeting	Trans Committee	Week 1	1 hour
	Conduct Board/Staff Interviews & Review Documents		Week 1-2	-
	Conduct Transition Planning Session w/ Sr. Staff		Week 2	-
	Draft Position Profile		Week 2	
	Preview Org. Review & Position Profile	Trans Committee	Week 2 or 3	
	Conduct <i>Strategy and Leadership Review</i> Session	Board	Week 3	1.5 to 3 hours
	Review & Finalize Profile & Search Plan (Meeting or Call)	Trans Committee	Week 3	1.5 hours
Search	Launch the Search		Week 3 or 4	-
	Conduct Recruiting Outreach		Week 4 to 10	
	Receive Resumes, Vet Promising Candidates, etc.		Week 4 to 10	-
	Provide Periodic Search Updates (email)			-
	Search Check In Meeting (or Call)	Trans Committee	Week 7 or 8	45 minutes
	Conduct Resume Review Meeting (or Call)	Trans Committee	Week 11	1.5 hours
	Round 1 Interviews	Trans Committee	Week 13	~8 hours
	Conduct Site Visit Coaching Session w/ Sr. Staff		Week 14	-
	Site/Office Visit & Meet with Departing Exec. & Sr. Staff	Semifinalists	Week 14	-
	Conduct Final Reference Checks		Week 14	-
	Round 2 Interviews	Exec or Trans Committee	Week 15	4-6 hours
	Meeting to Ratify Selection	Board	Week 16	1.5 hours
	Finalize Offer		Week 16	-
	Notice Period (Exec. Gives Notice to Current Employer)	-	Week 17	-
	Plan On-boarding Process	Trans Committee	Week 17	1 hour
Announce Appointment	Staff - Guided by	Week 17	-	
Post-Hire	Conduct Entry/Onboarding Planning Call/Meeting	New Exec. & Board Chair	Week 18	45 min.
	Support Exec. To Develop a 90-Day Entry Plan	New Chief Executive	Week 18	-
	New Chief Executive's Start Date	-	Week 22	-
	Implement Orientation Plan	New Chief Executive w/ Members of the Exec. Committee & Mgt Staff		-
	Conduct Posthire Check-In Call #1	Calls New Exec.	30 days post-start	30 min.
	Conduct <i>Priorities/Roles/Expectations/Performance Measures</i> Discussion	New Chief Executive & Board	~60 days post-start	2-4 hours
	Conduct Posthire Check-In Call #2	Calls New Exec.	90 days post- start	30 min.
	Conduct Initial Performance Review	Board Chair	90 days post- start	1.5 hours
	Conduct a Post-Project Completion Call	Board or Trans. Committee Chair &	~90 days post- start	30 min.
	Conduct Six-Month Evaluation	Executive Committee		3 hours
	Conduct Annual Performance Evaluation	Executive Committee		4 hours

## Appendix 2 - Interim Chief Executive Sample Agreement & Work Plan

Dear (Interim's Name)

I am looking forward to working with you as interim chief executive for [CAA]. This engagement letter outlines our mutual understanding about the key responsibilities, terms, and fees as well as the agreed-on priorities for the interim period.

### POSITION OVERVIEW

The interim chief executive's role is to provide management and supervision while a permanent chief executive is hired, and to assist the board and staff in preparing the agency for the new executive.

### Responsibilities:

Serve as interim chief executive with authority to supervise, on a part-time basis, all staff through the management structure; oversee the day-to-day operations of the organization; and carry out responsibilities determined by the Transition Committee.

[Clarify authority here.] All hiring and firing of staff, if any, will be done with concurrence of the board chair. The interim executive is authorized to sign all checks, except checks over \$ \_\_\_\_\_ require a second signature by the treasurer or another officer. [OR All checks are to be signed by a board member. Contracts can be executed only with the written approval of the board.]

General Management Duties: [the following is just an example, replace with your own]

- Provide supervision of staff and consultants, and coordination and oversight for day-to-day operations
- Provide leadership in cultivating and managing relations with key stakeholders, partners and donors
- Meet all deadlines from funding or contract sources for applications, reports, and other requirements
- Assist board in fundraising planning, proposal writing, and event planning as mutually agreed and subject to time availability
- Provide oversight and review of management systems and recommend changes as needed
- Support the activities of the board, as agreed, in preparing and recruiting and orienting the new chief executive
- Carry out other agreed-upon activities based on priorities of the attached work plan

In addition to providing general management, the preliminary assessment and discussion with the Transition Committee suggest the priorities outlined in Attachment #1. We will want to establish a communication plan, such as regular conference calls, so that the Transition Committee has adequate access to the interim chief executive for information sharing, strategic discussion, and reporting.

**Supervision:**

Day-to-day supervision of the interim chief executive is the responsibility of the board chair.

**Term, Hours, Fees:**

The term of the assignment will be \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_. The termination date is flexible, depending on the progress of the executive search and the organization’s needs. The assignment is part-time, not to exceed an average of \_\_\_ hours per week/ \_\_\_ hours per month.

The interim chief executive will be retained as a consultant, at the rate of \$\_\_\_ per hour. As an independent contractor, the interim chief executive will not be entitled to any employee benefits. Invoices will be submitted monthly and payment is expected within fifteen (15) days. A timesheet will be provided to the board chair or his/her designee for review and approval.

The interim chief executive may terminate this agreement with fifteen (15) days written notice for any reason, unless a shorter time period is agreed upon. [Organization] may terminate this agreement immediately upon a breach or, if no breach has occurred, upon fifteen (15) days written notice.

**Other agreements:**

[CAA] will provide reimbursement for business-related out-of-pocket expenses, such as approved out-of-area travel and local non-commuting travel for [organization] business.

Please indicate your acceptance of this agreement on behalf of [organization] by countersigning below. Thanks again for being willing to act as interim chief executive. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Sally B. Board Chair

Date

**ACKNOWLEDGED:**

Jane Q. Interim

Date

## INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PRIORITIES

[this is an attachment to the above letter]

[Date] THROUGH [DATE]

[This is just a sample outline. Replace with your CAA's own priorities.]

In addition to the general management duties, the following are [CAA's] priorities for the interim period:

### IMPROVING INTERNAL/ EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

- [bullet points]

### UPCOMING ANNUAL EVENT

- [bullet points]

### FUND DEVELOPMENT

- [bullet points]

### STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- [bullet points]

### BOARD RELATIONS/DEVELOPMENT

- [bullet points]

### SYSTEM/PROCEDURES DEVELOPMENT

- [bullet points]

## Appendix 3 - Chief Executive's Position Profile & Job Announcement Templates

NOTE: The position profile is a multi-page document that is used to ensure internal agreement about the nature of the job, and as a tool to support discussions with serious candidates. The job announcement is one page or less, and is used to publicize the job. The announcement might be used as a paper handout, as an attachment to an e-mail, etc.

### **POSITION PROFILE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE XYZ NONPROFIT**

[location]

[Opening paragraph that sums it all up.] XYZ CAA is seeking an entrepreneurial chief executive to build on our exceptional eight-year record of...

#### **THE ORGANIZATION**

[Insert a few paragraphs about the agency's background.] XYZ was founded in...

##### **Programs**

[Insert a few paragraphs or bullet points about the programs/services.]

[Insert a concluding paragraph about the organization's background and key programs or services, budget, staffing and board, and conclude with a link to the organization's web site.] XYZ is governed by an XX-member board of directors. The organization's budget is... Current staffing includes.... More information on XYZ may be found at (web site).

#### **THE POSITION**

[Insert a paragraph or two about the executive's role and leadership opportunity.]

[Bullet points about the 12–18 month priorities.] Toward these ends, our near-term priorities for the next 12–18 months include (not necessarily in priority order):

- [Bullet points]

#### **Key Responsibilities**

[Insert an opening paragraph followed by several bullet points about the key responsibilities. For example: Reporting to the board of directors, the chief executive will provide leadership to the organization and manage its day-to-day affairs...

- [Bullet points]

## Experience and Attributes

[Insert an opening paragraph followed by several bullet points about the experience and attributes. For example: Ideal candidates for this position will share our commitment to... and will bring a variety of experiences and attributes to XYZ, including:]

- [Bullet points]

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply, send an e-mail with a cover letter detailing your qualifications, resume and salary requirements to (e-mail address). Resumes will be considered until position is filled. XYZ Nonprofit is equal opportunity employer.

## POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT: CHIEF EXECUTIVE XYZ NONPROFIT

[location]

[Insert opening paragraph that sums it all up.] XYZ CAA is seeking an entrepreneurial chief executive to build on our exceptional eight-year record of...

[Paragraph about the organization's background and key programs or services, budget, staffing and board, and concludes with a link to the web site.] XYZ was founded in... XYZ is governed by an XX-member board of directors. The organization's budget is... Current staffing includes.... More information on XYZ may be found at (web site).

[Insert paragraph about key responsibilities that concludes with a link to the full position summary.] Reporting to the board of directors, the chief executive will provide... For a full description of the position and its responsibilities, please visit: (web site).

[Insert paragraph identifying the key attribute the agency is seeking followed by a few key bullet points drawn from the attributes section of the position profile. Conclude with education or experience in lieu of education requirement.] Ideal candidates for this position will share our commitment to... and will bring a variety of experiences and attributes to XYZ, including:

- [Insert various bullet points]
- [Education requirement bullet point]

[Conclude with how to apply and EEO statement if applicable. Also include application deadline if one has been established.] To apply, send an e-mail with a cover letter detailing your qualifications, resume and salary requirements to (e-mail address)

Resumes will be considered until position is filled. XYZ CAA is an equal opportunity employer.

## Appendix 4 – Nonprofit Job Posting Web Sites

- [www.communityactionpartnership.com](http://www.communityactionpartnership.com) – The central Community Action job posting site.
- [www.asaenet.org](http://www.asaenet.org) - (see Career Headquarters) Association with individual members who manage leading trade, professional, and philanthropic associations.
- [www.CEOUpdate.com](http://www.CEOUpdate.com) - A premier source for up-to-date information on senior-level nonprofit jobs in trade associations, professional societies, cause-oriented organizations, and foundations.
- [www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org) - A membership organization of grant-making foundations and giving programs worldwide. Postings for all levels of philanthropic or related nonprofit positions are welcome.
- [www.ExecSearches.com](http://www.ExecSearches.com) - Features executive, fundraising, and mid-level job postings in nonprofits, government, healthcare, and education.
- [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org) - A portal for anyone interested in nonprofit careers, volunteering, and internships.
- [www.NPTimes.com](http://www.NPTimes.com) - The online service of The Nonprofit Times.
- [philanthropy.com/jobs](http://philanthropy.com/jobs) - Philanthropy Careers is the online job site of The Chronicle of Philanthropy.
- [www.opportunityknocks.org](http://www.opportunityknocks.org)- One of the original nonprofit job posting services.
- [www.nonprofitjobs.org](http://www.nonprofitjobs.org) Fee-based job site for nonprofit organizations.

## Appendix 5 - Sample Resume Scoring Sheet

Name	Candidate 1	Candidate 2	Candidate 3	Candidate 4	Candidate 5	Candidate 6	Candidate 7	Candidate 8
Score								
5 Yrs Sr Mgt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
NP Mgt	Extensive	Extensive	Y	Y	Y	Extensive	Y	Y
Personnel	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Finance	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?
Boards	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	?
Comm. Action	Y	Y	N	?	Y	Y	N	?
CCAP	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Internal Scope	CEO (77-82)	CEO	CEO	CEO	CEO	CEO	Program Manager	Program Manager
External Scope	Major metro	Local	State-wide	Local	National	National	Local	National
Worked w/ gov	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y
Grants	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Degree	BA	MSW	MBA	Masters	MBA	PhD	MSW	BA
Notes	Extensive ED experience	Should have excellent grasp of our community	Experience with our programs	Extensive experience in self - sufficiency programs	ED experience is limited	Has been a friend of Community Action in our area	Head Start orientation	Management Experience limited

## Appendix 6 - Sample Phone Screening Questions

1. From your resume, I gather that you are... [currently employed or between positions]?
2. [Have a candidate walk you through their last three jobs: (a) what were his/her key responsibilities – budget, direct reports, etc.?, (b) what impact did they make – how is the organization different as a result of his/her leadership?
3. What are your salary expectations?
4. Can you give me a quick thumbnail sketch of your work on grants and other fundraising?
5. If I were speaking to your board chair or former supervisor...
  - a. What would they say are your strengths?
  - b. Your weaknesses?
6. Please describe an experience that you have had (professional or otherwise) where you were involved in developing and implementing a new idea, program, service or concept.
7. What achievements are your greatest sources of pride?
8. At this point in your personal and professional life, what are the issues/factors that will most influence your next career move?
9. How would you describe the personal values and philosophy that would guide you as you provide leadership in this position?
10. Why do you think you are well suited for the position?
11. If the board were to make you an offer, when would you be available? What notice do you need to give your current employer?
12. Are you under consideration for another position or are you a candidate in another executive search?  
[If, “yes”] Do you have any active offers or do you anticipate an offer?
13. Any other comments you’d like to make?
14. Is there a question that you would like to pose to us?

## Appendix 7 - Sample Interview Agenda & Questions Interview Agenda

- Welcome
- Round-the-table introductions: Name, affiliation and role/involvement with the CAA.
- Core questions (below)
- Open questions
- Candidate questions
- Wrap-up

### CORE QUESTIONS

1. To get us started, please give us a very brief thumbnail sketch of your career as it leads up to your interest in this position. Probe: Why this position at this time?
2. Looking at your last job, what's different about the organization as a direct result of your work there?
3. Please give us an example of a really significant obstacle or challenge that you have faced in your career and how you tackled it.
4. Could you give us an example of a problematic relationship that you turned around... or one that you couldn't turn around and what you learned from that?
5. How would you go about learning about our staff and departments and what they do?
6. What is your experience in or with Community Action? Can you give us an overview of your understanding of what makes Community Action unique?
7. What experiences would you draw on to build relationships with our current donors, develop new donors/support and ensure that our organization meets its fundraising targets?
8. What skills and specific experiences would you draw on to raise the visibility of our organization?
9. As chief executive, what are the key things that you will expect from the board and what should they expect from you?
10. What are some crucial ingredients in fostering high levels of staff performance? Follow up: Do you have some examples of putting those into practice?
11. Given what you know about our organization, why do you think you are well suited for the position? What about the job do you think might be most challenging?

Illegal or Inappropriate Questions - Question pertaining to the following topics should be avoided, as they may be illegal:

- Race, color or ethnicity
- National origin or birthplace
- Age
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Arrest record
- Military discharge
- Credit history

- Religion
- Political affiliation
- Marital status
- Family issues
- Height and weight
- Disabilities
- If in doubt, don't ask.

## Appendix 8 - Sample Interviewee Rating Criteria

Candidate:

Attribute/Factor	Check the appropriate rating – add comments as desired
<p align="center"><b>Commitment to Mission</b> <i>Commitment (or ability to commit) to our CAA’s mission and customers.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak
<p>Leadership <i>Ability to confidently guide the agency – to inspire and enroll people into action.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak
<p>Entrepreneurship <i>Ability to understand our CAA’s primary customer and develop a vision and strategies that serves the customers and delivers our organization’s mission.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak
<p>Program <i>Ability to assume the appropriate leadership role for our programs.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak
<p>Fund Raising <i>Ability to provide leadership to (and involvement in) the fundraising efforts.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak
<p>General Management &amp; Internal Operations/Systems <i>Ability to guide the overall structure, methods and controls - organize the whole, plan the action/follow the plan, develop the methods/systems and exercise control.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak
<p>Staff Leadership/Supervision <i>Ability to select and develop staff and motivate the best work from them. Commitment to staff development.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak
<p>Financial Leadership <i>Ability to provide the appropriate level of guidance, oversight and involvement in our CAAs financial management and its development. Is financially literate.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak
<p>External Visibility &amp; Communications <i>Ability to communicate clearly with appropriate audiences using appropriate means. Ability to build the organization’s stature and raise its profile.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Weak

<p>Board Relations/Development</p> <p><i>Ability to be an effective leadership partner with the board and to support the board's work and its development.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong      <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate      <input type="checkbox"/> Weak</p>
<p>Cultural Competency</p> <p><i>Ability to relate to people of varied economic, racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strong <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate      <input type="checkbox"/> Weak</p>

## Appendix 9 - Reference Checking

### REFERENCE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. May I ask in what capacity you have known [candidate] and how long have you known [him/her]?
2. How would you describe his/her major strengths?
3. Do you have perspective on his/her leadership skills? How did the organization change under his/her leadership? What are some of the challenges and opportunities he/she may have faced and how did he/she address them?
4. Have you had an opportunity to observe [candidate's] communications skills?
  - a. Are there communication situations or approaches where you think he/she excels?
  - b. How about his/her ability to communicate with diverse constituencies?
5. Do you have any perspective on [candidate's] financial management abilities?
  - a. How would you rate his/her financial management abilities: Strong, so-so, or weak?
  - b. [Probe for comments.]
6. Do you have any perspective on [candidate] fundraising abilities?
  - a. [If yes] How would you rate his/her fundraising abilities: Strong, so-so, or weak?
  - b. [Probe for comments.]
7. Do you have any perspective on [candidate's] skill at selecting and managing a staff, and building a team?
  - a. [If yes] How would you rate his/her abilities in this area: Strong, so-so, or weak?
  - b. [Probe for comments.]
8. Do you have any perspective on [candidate's] skill at marketing an organization or building public awareness?
  - a. [If yes] How would you rate his/her abilities: Strong, so-so, or weak?
  - b. [Probe for comments.]
9. Managing a small nonprofit involves managing a lot of competing demands. Have you had occasion to observe [candidate's] work ethic, approach to time management, and his/her sense of organization and planning? How would you describe?
10. One of the major aspects of the job is working with a board. [Describe board situation, dynamics.]
  - a. Do you have any comments on how [candidate] might excel?
  - b. What aspects of this do you think he/she would find most challenging?
11. Given the thumbnail sketch of the job that I provided at the start of the interview...
  - a. Are there particular aspects of the job at which you think [candidate] will excel? [Probe]
  - b. Are there aspects of the job that you think he/she would be better off leaving to others? [Probe]
12. Is there anything else you think it would be helpful for the committee to know as we go forward in this process?

## Appendix 10 - Sample Employment Offer Letter

[Date]

[Name & Address]

Dear [Candidate Name]:

The Board of Directors of [CAA] is pleased to extend to you an offer of employment as its Chief Executive. The following outlines the specifics of the offer:

1. Starting Salary: [Salary expressed in monthly terms. Stating an annual figure could be construed as an annual contract.]
2. Benefits package: [May just refer to employee handbook or personnel policies. If no handbook or policy is available, or if the benefits are to be different, then specify here.]
  - c. Health Insurance: ...
  - d. Retirement: ...
  - e. Annual Leave: ...
  - f. Holidays: [Holidays should be the same as for other employees]
3. Relocation Stipend: [If Applies]
4. Performance goals: The board (or chair) will meet with you within the first six weeks of your employment to begin setting performance goals and the protocol for evaluating your performance. In large part, this will be based on a “leadership agenda” that outlines key priorities, which we expect you to develop for our review, discussion, and approval. You and the board will evaluate your performance after your first six months of employment against these mutually agreed goals.
5. [Use this only if an at-will state.] Although the Board expects that the relationship with you will be long-term and mutually rewarding, you are an at-will employee. You and the board have the right to terminate employment at any time for any reason.
6. Full-time employment as chief executive is to begin on [date].

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am excited and delighted to extend the offer and look forward to a successful professional relationship.

Sincerely,

[Signature of Board Chair/Transition Committee Chair]

Acknowledged:

Candidate's Name

Date

## Appendix 11 - Sample Regrets Letters to Candidates

### SAMPLE REGRETS E-MAIL (OR LETTER) FOR CANDIDATES WHO WERE NOT INTERVIEWED

Dear [Name]:

On behalf of [CAA], thank you for your interest in the chief executive position. I am writing to inform you that the search for this position has concluded with the selection of a new executive.

The transition committee was faced with the challenge of choosing among many qualified candidates for the open position. We certainly appreciate your taking the time to share your credentials with us and wish you all the best in your professional pursuits and goals.

Sincerely, [Name]

Transition Committee Chair

### SAMPLE REGRETS LETTER FOR CANDIDATES WHO WERE INTERVIEWED

Dear [Name]:

On behalf of the board of directors of [CAA], I want to thank you for your interest in the chief executive position and for taking the time to interview with us. I am writing to inform you that the search has concluded with the selection of a new executive.

The transition committee was faced with the challenge of choosing among many qualified candidates for the open position. We certainly appreciate your taking the time to share your credentials with us and wish you all the best in your professional pursuits and goals.

While in the end we hired another candidate, we want you to know that we were impressed with your qualifications and abilities. In the process of interviewing you, we gained fresh insights on our work and the challenges we face.

Thank you and best wishes in all your endeavors.

Sincerely,

[Name]

Transition Committee Chair

## Appendix 12 - Sample Chief Executive 90-Day Entry Plan

(Assumes a Jan. 1 start date)

### BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- Staff - Meet with each staff member (individually or in teams) within my first two weeks.
  - Assess their perspectives and evaluation of our organization
  - Impart my management, mission philosophy and key expectations
  - Hold first monthly all-staff meeting by March 31
  - Board Members - Hold face-to-face or phone conversations with each member of the board within first 30 days
  - Ask about specific expectations for my first 12 to 18 months
  - Inquire about concerns
  - Discuss their sense of the vision for our organization's future.
- Key Donors – Plan joint visits with former CEO by February 15 (if agreed).
  - Complete joint visits with donors by March 31. Initiate individual conversations with at least three donors per week until development director position filled, then 6 to 8 per week
  - Recruit table captains and sponsors for the benefit breakfast by March 31
- Other Close-In Stakeholders (collaboration partners, etc.)
  - Visit each program sponsor by March 31
  - Introduce self to leaders of our collaboration partners by March 31
- Other Community Stakeholders (powers-that-be in the community)
  - Introduce self to relevant senior-level county and city staff by March 15
  - Meet with county board chair and all commissioners covering our service area by March 31

### DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING AND ASSUMING APPROPRIATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CAA'S OPERATIONS

- Programs
  - Receive briefings from key staff regarding the programs they direct by February 1
  - Review key grant agreements by February 1
  - Meet with all significant grantors by March 31
- Finances
  - Review current financial statements (profit and loss, balance sheet, and cash flow projections) by February 1. Review at least monthly thereafter
  - Meet in person with accountant and treasurer at least once each month
  - Meet with the finance committee by February 15 and at least monthly thereafter.
  - Ensure signatories on all accounts are up to date by February 1
  - Provide updated budgetary information to key staff on a weekly basis by March 1

- Provide strategy to finance committee to address equipment upgrades by the committee’s March meeting
- Fundraising (see “Donors” under “Building Relationships”)
  - Assess skill requirements and develop plan for filling vacant development director position by February 15; hire a development director by March 15
  - Assess overall development resources by February 28
  - Develop plan to address donor acknowledgment issues by March 1
- Marketing
  - Develop media plan to include news articles and coverage of major events by February 15
  - Review current marketing materials by March 15
  - Develop process for evaluating possible changes in web site by April 1
- Support for Board of Directors
  - Maintain personal contact with all board members at least once per month. Return all messages and phone calls within 24 hours
  - Consult with the executive committee on agenda for March board meeting
  - Distribute a monthly chief executive update to the board beginning on March 1

#### BUILDING THE ORGANIZATION’S CAPACITY

Take the initiative and develop a plan to lead the board to formulate and implement its vision regarding:

- Relocation and expansion of office
- The shape of the “next leap” in services, e.g., expanding our meals program, etc.
- Broadening the base of major donors
- Implementing a planned giving initiative

#### PERSONAL LEARNING GOALS AND SUPPORT NEEDS

- Seek professional training in board relations, especially regarding building donor support and the tension between governance and management
- Identify and hire an executive coach

Participate in the executive peer support program sponsored by [state association].



Community Action Partnership  
1140 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 1210  
Washington, DC 20036

202.265.7546 | fax 202.265.5048  
[www.communityactionpartnership.com](http://www.communityactionpartnership.com)