



Succession planning for non-profits

Succession planning in non-profit organizations is preparing for leadership transitions by identifying and developing potential leaders, creating a plan and ensuring an onboarding and transition to help ensure continuity and sustainability.

A board succession plan outlines the process that boards and committees must follow when replacing board members, board leadership or the Executive Director. These plans can also serve to help fill an existing vacancy or plan ahead for a future vacancy. In the event of sudden or gradual change, effective succession and proactive change management strategies can help the organization remain intact with little disruption.

Succession planning can address two types of departures:

1. **Emergency departure:** An individual unexpectedly resigns or is removed from the position.
2. **Planned departure:** An individual's term limit is approaching, or they announce an early departure.

Effective succession planning can:

- **Reduce risk by** having a plan in place, non-profits can minimize the risks associated with leadership transitions.
- **Enhanced stability through a** smooth transition can help maintain stability and continuity during times of change.
- **Improve performance: with** well prepared leaders can lead to better outcomes and a stronger non-profit.
- **Sustainability** with succession planning is crucial to ensuring the long-term sustainability of non-profit organizations.

Steps to succession planning, made simple:

1. **Assess leadership needs and expectations.**
2. **Develop a leadership pipeline.**
3. **Create and document the succession plan.**
4. **Communicate the plan.**
5. **Onboarding and transition.**

