

Essential Guides to Sustainability, Succession and Transition Planning

PART 3

Executive Transition Management Guide

Essential Guides to Sustainability, Succession and Transition Planning

August, 2013

This guide is intended to provide training and technical assistance to all health centers on the importance of leadership succession planning.

National Association of Community Health Centers

Health centers depend in large part on public financial help and need a unified voice and common source for research, information, training and advocacy.

To address these needs, the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) organized in 1971. NACHC works with a network of state health center and primary care organizations to serve health centers in a variety of ways:

- Provide research-based advocacy for health centers and their clients.
- Educate the public about the mission and value of health centers.
- Train and provide technical assistance to health center staff and boards.
- Develop alliances with private partners and key stakeholders to foster the delivery of primary health care services to communities in need.

TransitionGuides

TransitionGuides is a national consulting company specializing in sustainability and succession planning and executive search services for health centers and other nonprofit organizations. Our services are tailored to the unique needs of each organization. We value every organization's essential need for talented leaders, positioned to enable the nonprofit to survive and succeed. We add value to the organizations we serve through partnering with executives and boards to prepare for succession, to initiate action plans that advance organizational sustainability and to recruit and successfully onboard chief executive officers and other senior managers when transition occurs. Our consultants are all former nonprofit leaders who specialize in working with board and executive leaders. Since 1995, our TransitionGuides team has led over 400 nonprofit leadership search, transition, and succession and sustainability planning projects for organizations across the country. Our extensive nonprofit experience and knowledge offers guidance and processes that deliver proven results.

For more information on TransitionGuides, contact our office: 1751 Elton Road, Suite 204, Silver Spring, MD 20903; (301) 439-6635; or www.transitionguides.com.

Acknowledgement

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) initiated the production of the three-part *Essential Guides* series. The Guides, written by TransitionGuides, builds on prior educational materials developed by Don Tebbe, co-founder and thought-leader of TransitionGuides. Thanks to the TransitionGuides team which included Melody Thomas, Tom Adams, and Megan Lewis for their dedication and commitment to the accuracy and precision of each guide. A special thanks to the NACHC team, led by Julie Schmidt and included Sherry Giles, Program Associate, and Jaime Hirschfeld, who made this opportunity possible for TransitionGuides and those with an affiliation with NACHC.

This publication was made possible by grant number U30CS16089 from the Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Primary Health Care. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the HRSA.

Table of Contents

Background about the series	5
Introduction	7
Executive Transition Management	7
Figure 1 - The three phases of Executive Transition Management:	8
Key Principles of ETM	8
Managing the Executive Transition Process	10
Phase 1 – Prepare	10
Organize the transition committee	10
Announce the departure	10
Understand the transition	11
Clarify who’s in charge.....	11
Engage the Board and staff.....	12
Develop the Profile and Search Plan.....	12
Identify the Transition Issues and Begin the Handoff Plan.....	12
Phase 2 - Search & Select.....	13
Recruit.....	13
Screen	13
Select.....	14
Hire.....	15
Phase 3 - Onboard	15
Plan	15
Relate	15
Support	15
Evaluate	16
Special Topics.....	16
Candidates from inside the organization.....	16
Advancing diversity and inclusiveness.....	17
Transparency and disclosure	17
When you have fired your previous executive.....	18
Founder transitions.....	18
Understand the taking charge process.....	19
Conclusion & Additional Readings.....	20

Appendices21

Appendix 1 - Sample Transition Timeline22

Appendix 2 - Interim Chief Executive Sample Agreement & Work Plan23

Appendix 3 - Chief Executive’s Position Profile & Job Announcement Templates.....26

Appendix 4 – Nonprofit Job Posting Web Sites28

Appendix 5 - Sample Resume Scoring Sheet29

Appendix 6 - Sample Phone Screening Questions30

Appendix 7 - Sample Interview Agenda & Questions31

Appendix 8 - Sample Interviewee Rating Criteria.....32

Appendix 9 - Reference Checking33

Appendix 10 - Sample Employment Offer Letter.....34

Appendix 11 - Sample Regrets Letters to Candidates35

Appendix 12 - Sample Chief Executive 90-Day Entry Plan.....36

Background about the series

The three guides were written specifically with health centers in mind. The guides were designed to help health center strengthen the capacity of their organizations, especially those organizations that may be facing a chief executive or other leadership transition in the near future.

As a companion to the guides, the Organizational Sustainability and Leadership Succession Mini-Tool Kit, provide organizations a jump start, in deciding where to best begin with Organizational Sustainability Planning, Executive Succession Planning and Executive Transition Management with step-by-step instructions and tools to get started.

The first guide, Part 1 *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, Part 2 *Executive Succession Planning*, provides an overview of three approaches to succession planning: The first is a detailed approach to "Succession Essentials" by developing a board-adopted Succession Policy and Emergency Backup Plan. The second is a list of important considerations for selecting an internal successor, and the third is an illustrative summary on combining sustainability and succession planning for maximum organizational benefit.

The third guide, Part 3 *Executive Transition Management*, presents a three-phase approach for managing turnover in a leadership position, especially the chief executive position. This Guide provides an opportunity to address transition issues, strategic direction, and an outstanding search when there is a change in executive.

While each of the guides can be used individually, together they are designed to help leaders strengthen their organizations and manage leadership turnover, adapt to changes in the environment and competition, and to increase the odds of remaining effective and true to core values over the long-term. This series aims at organizations with long-tenured executives and founders, relatively new executives and those seeking to address leadership succession and organizational sustainability.

The timing of the chief executive's departure can be a guiding factor in the choice of which tool to use. In health centers 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 *Executive 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 organization to back him or her up. These organizations are often best served by combining sustainability and succession planning.

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 health center 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 organization'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 organization to work effectively with its new executive. Whatever the source, these failures can be very costly to the health center as well as its constituents and community.

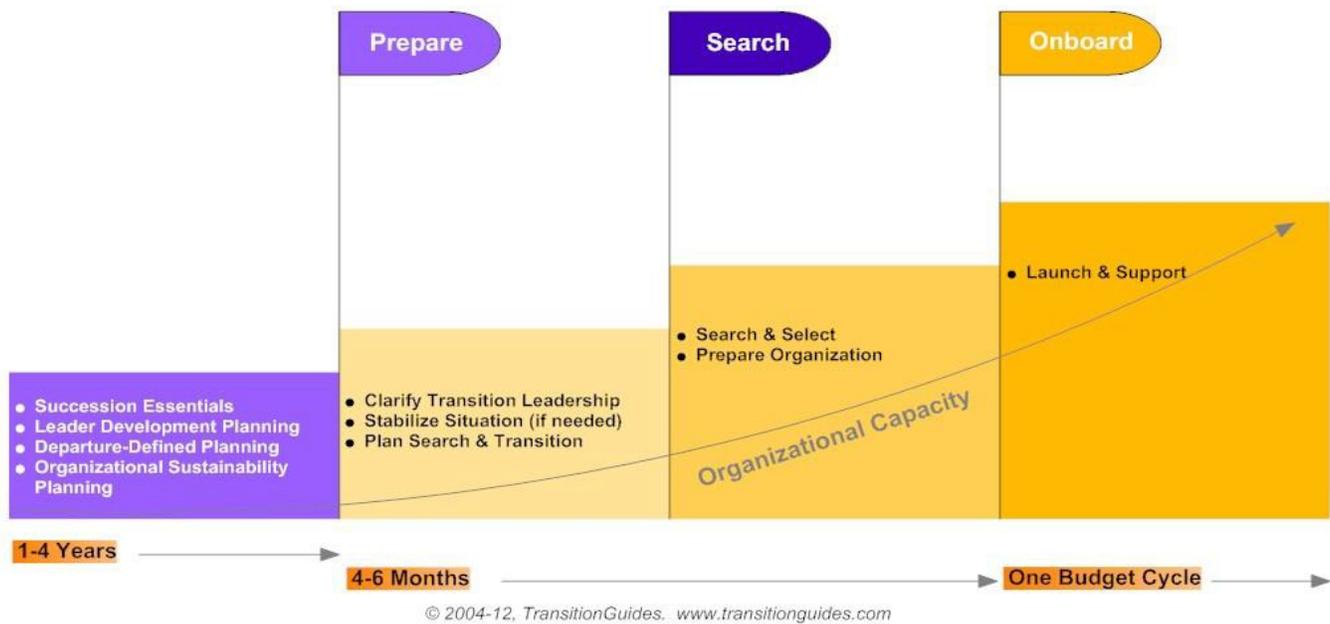
More than mere risk management, a well-managed transition is an opportunity to enhance capacity and add to mission impact down the line.

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 health center.

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 health center– 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 organization. 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 is appropriate for the future. Where the health center is headed should be driving the profile for the new executive, not where it's just been.

Advance diversity and inclusiveness. Leadership transition provides a great opportunity to review the health center's progress in fully reflecting the communities it serves in the governance and management of the organization. What dimensions of diversity are most important to success in your mission? How might the process of planning for, selecting and hiring a new executive result in a more diverse and inclusive organization?

Consider a sustainability review. If your organization is facing a big change due to the environment, resources, or in key leadership, it might make sense to spend a little more time in the Prepare phase and add a sustainability review. (See Part 1 *Organizational Sustainability Planning Guide*)

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 between the board and 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
- 5) Ensuring a healthy start with the new executive

Announce the departure

Good communication is a critical part of successful transitions. The health center’s key stakeholders – funders 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:

- 1) Those that need a phone call
- 2) Those that just need the letter
- 3) The rest who can read about it in the newsletter

The typical announcement process involves informing the staff immediately followed by calls to the “1” group above.

Understand the transition

There are four classic transition types:

1. Sustained success – The organization 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 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 organization 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 organization 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 organization 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 will 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 health center’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 executive 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, see: www.transitionguides.com/monographs-on-executive-transition-management. Also see [Appendix 2](#).

Engage the Board and staff

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?
- 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: 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.)

Staff are also a key stakeholder during transition and search. Without clarity of how they are involved and regular communication, anxiety and misinformation tend to grow. In larger organizations, the senior managers are typically involved in developing the position profile and have an opportunity to meet the semi-finalists and comment on strengths and perceived fit with the organization. In smaller organizations, the entire staff will typically have input in the position profile, and some or all may meet the semi-finalists.

Develop the Profile and Search Plan

Develop a position profile that summarizes the organization 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 National Association of Community Health Centers, 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) 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:
 - 1) Those that meet all the criteria,
 - 2) Those that meet most of the criteria, and
 - 3) Those that meet few or none of the criteria.

Consider whether to screen just the “1” list or the “1” and the “2” lists. Those on the “3” 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 you have many promising candidates (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 recruitment 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 organization 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 checking questions.
- Consider a pre-employment background check. Because health centers involve vulnerable populations and receive 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 health center 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 health centers in the state, or other nonprofit executives in the community who are known to be exemplary leaders. The NACHC may be helpful in this.

- Encourage involvement in health center experiences. New executives are likely to be conscious of travel and time away from the office. Consider attending national, regional, state-wide health center related events which can be helpful in providing linkages to new executives who come from outside the network.
- Consider initiating a sustainability review in conjunction with succession and/or strategic planning. Depending on the circumstances of executive transition and level of preparation, one way to support a new executive in the first 12-18 months is to launch a joint executive-board sustainability and succession planning process. This provides the executive, managers, and board with a framework for setting an action plan based on a fresh assessment of the four domains of sustainability – strategy/business model, leadership, resources and culture. See Part 1 Organizational Succession Planning Guide for more details on this process.

Evaluate

- Establish clear measures and an evaluation process. Your new executive’s first year with the organization is unlike any other in their tenure. It’s a time to gain knowledge about the health center 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 organization 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). (See *Part 1 Organizational Succession Planning Guide* for more on internal candidate succession).

Advancing diversity and inclusiveness

Accordingly, times of leadership transition offer many opportunities to take actions to advance diversity and inclusiveness in an organization. These actions might include a review or inventory of progress in becoming a diverse and inclusive organization and reflecting communities served in board, management and staff, addressing needs to increase outreach and recruitment among certain populations or constituencies, increased diversity in the transition and search committee and in the finalist pool for executive position and future positions, among others.

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. If relevant, a list of any publications.
 - d. Information about any existing or proposed formal relationships, 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 organization'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.

Founder transitions

When a founder or long-tenured executive who feels like the founder prepares for departure, more is happening than in a typical transition. There is a unique relationship the founder has with both Board and staff. Depending on the founder's skill in letting go and building a leadership team, there may be unique challenges that come with the transition. A common one is the shift by the Board to more governance and less the role of advisor. Attention to the good ending and the transition process is critical for these transitions.

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. A number of recent publications 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>

Appendices

[Appendix 1 – Sample Transition Timeline](#)

[Appendix 2 – Interim Chief Executive Sample Agreement & Work Plan](#)

[Appendix 3 – Chief Executive’s Position Profile & Job Announcement Templates](#)

[Appendix 4 – Nonprofit Job Posting Web Sites](#)

[Appendix 5 – Sample Resume Scoring Sheet](#)

[Appendix 6 – Sample Phone Screening Questions](#)

[Appendix 7 – Sample Interview Agenda & Questions Interview Agenda](#)

[Appendix 8 – Sample Interviewee Rating Criteria](#)

[Appendix 9 – Reference Checking](#)

[Appendix 10 – Sample Employment Offer Letter](#)

[Appendix 11 – Sample Regrets letters to Candidates](#)

[Appendix 12 – Sample Chief Executive 90 – Day Entry Plan](#)

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
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 Post hire 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 Post hire 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 [HEALTH CENTER]. 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 organization 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:

[HEALTH CENTER] 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

[Date] through [DATE]

[This is a sample outline. Replace with your HEALTH CENTER's own priorities.]

In addition to the general management duties, the following are [HEALTH CENTER'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 HEALTH CENTER is seeking an entrepreneurial chief executive to build on our exceptional eight-year record of..

THE ORGANIZATION

[Insert a few paragraphs about the organization'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 HEALTH CENTER 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 organization 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 the position is filled. XYZ HEALTH CENTER is an equal opportunity employer.

Appendix 4 – Nonprofit Job Posting Web Sites

- www.communityactionpartnership.com – The central Community Action job posting site.
- www.asaenet.org - (see Career Headquarters) Association with individual members who manage leading trade, professional, and philanthropic associations.
- 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 - 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 - Features executive, fundraising, and mid-level job postings in nonprofits, government, healthcare, and education.
- www.idealists.org - A portal for anyone interested in nonprofit careers, volunteering, and internships.
- www.NPTimes.com - The online service of The Nonprofit Times.
- www.philanthropy.com/jobs - Philanthropy Careers is the online job site of The Chronicle of Philanthropy.
- www.opportunityknocks.org - One of the original nonprofit job posting services.
- 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. Mgmt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Nonprofit Mgmt	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	?	?
Health	Y	Y	N	?	Y	Y	N	?
CCAP	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Internal Scope	CEO	CEO	CEO	CEO	CEO	CEO	Program Manager	Program Manager
External Scope	Major Metro	Local	Statewide	Local	National	National	Local	National
Worked w/ govt	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	?	Y
Grants	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Degree	BA	MSW	MBA	MA	MBA	PhD	MSW	BA
Notes	Extensive ED experience	Has an excellent grasp of our community	Experience with our programs	Extensive experience in self-sufficiency programs	ED experience is limited	Has been a friend of health centers 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, what would they say are...
 - a. 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

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

CORE QUESTIONS

1. To get us started, please give us a very brief summary 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 health centers? 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 | • Arrest record | • Marital status |
| • National origin or birthplace | • Military discharge | • Family issues |
| • Age | • Credit history | • Height and weight |
| • Gender | • Religion | • Disabilities |
| • Sexual orientation | • Political affiliation | • If in doubt, don't ask. |

Appendix 8 - Sample Interviewee Rating Criteria

Candidate Name: _____

Attribute/Factor	Check the appropriate rating - add comments
<p>Commitment to Mission Commitment (or ability to commit) to our health center’s mission and customers.</p>	
<p>Leadership Ability to confidently guide the organization – to inspire and enroll people into action.</p>	
<p>Entrepreneurship Ability to understand our health center’s primary customer and develop a vision and strategy that serves the customers and delivers our organization’s mission.</p>	
<p>Program Ability to assume the appropriate leadership role for our programs.</p>	
<p>Fund Raising Ability to provide leadership to (and involvement in) the fundraising efforts.</p>	
<p>General Management & Internal Operations/Systems 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.</p>	
<p>Staff Leadership/Supervision Ability to select and develop staff and motivate the best work from them. Commitment to staff development.</p>	
<p>Financial Leadership Ability to provide the appropriate level of guidance, oversight and involvement in our health center’s financial management and its development. Is financially literate.</p>	
<p>External Visibility & Communications Ability to communicate clearly with appropriate audiences using appropriate means. Ability to build the organization’s stature and raise its profile.</p>	
<p>Board Relations/Development Ability to be an effective leadership partner with the board and to support the board’s work and its development.</p>	
<p>Cultural Competency Ability to relate to people of varied economic, racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds</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 [HEALTH CENTER] 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.]
 - a. Health Insurance: ...
 - b. Retirement: ...
 - c. Annual Leave: ...
 - d. 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 /LETTER FOR CANDIDATES WHO *WERE NOT* INTERVIEWED

Dear [Name]:

On behalf of [HEALTH CENTER], 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 [HEALTH CENTER], 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 board chair and all commissioners covering our service area by March 31

DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING AND ASSUMING APPROPRIATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HEALTH CENTER'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 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].