

Emergency Succession Planning Key Questions for Board Leadership

QUESTION	YES	NO	TO DO
1. Does your organization have an emergency succession plan that outlines a process for appointing interim leadership and new permanent leadership if required?			Follow the guidelines provided by GCN or view the sample plans on the website of the Texas Commission for the Arts or other resource sites recommended by GCN.
2. What committee of the board follows trends, challenges and opportunities for your sector and organization?			Ensure that board meeting agendas regularly include discussion of strategic issues, an updated SWOT.
3. Is the board well briefed on the strategic plan and the annual plan for the current year of it?			Ensure reviews of the strategic plan, current progress, road blocks and board contributions to progress are reviewed regularly at board meetings.
4. Does the board fully understand the role of the executive director and his/her functions?			Ensure that the board performs an annual review of the ED and participates in knows priorities related to the strategic and operational plan.
5. Does the board have a specific focus for its role in fulfilling the strategic plan? Beyond fiduciary oversight, strategic planning, board giving and serving as ambassadors, what is the board uniquely positioned to do more effectively than staff?			With the executive director, ensure that a full board meeting is dedicated to identifying the board's specific role in meeting the strategic plan.

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Georgia Center for Nonprofits

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6 Does the board conduct an annual self-assessment to ensure it is meeting goals and contains the diversity, expertise and contacts required for success?			Develop a self-assessment tool based on the many available online from BoardSource and other resources recommended by GCN.
7 Has the board reviewed how do-able the executive director’s job is? Is the compensation commensurate with market rates required in the event the ED must be replaced?			As a part of the annual review of the ED, consider whether the job is feasible for one person. Make salary adjustments to market, even if the ED is reluctant to accept money that could be used for programs.
8 Is the organization properly staffed and are systems up to date?			Ask the executive director for a staffing assessment to see if key staff are overworked and whether churn could contribute to difficulty developing staff.
9 Are there key donors, stakeholders, or other relationships that only certain board members handle exclusively? Who else should know? Who else can be introduced into those relationships?			Spread the weight of key relationships among the executive director, staff and other board members. This creates institutional confidence rather than the sense that a key board member’s departure
10 What else could the board do to ensure leadership continuity and operational sustainability in your organization in the event of an emergency?			Understand that the board and executive director cannot achieve all these steps immediately. With the ED, create a plan for prioritizing these steps.