



NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

Sample Executive Director Search Process and Timetable

Search process envisioned as 120-180 days, but each client will have their own timetable.

- Step 1. Appoint the Search Committee and Chair; Engage Search Consultant Day 1
Determine the Role the Chair of the Board will play; appoint a Search Committee to oversee the search process (others may be invited to participate in interviews); appoint a Chair of the Search Committee; agree on timetable and budget for the search process; enter into contract with a Search Consultant
- Step 2. Interview Board and Staff; Needs Analysis; Draft ED Position Description Month 1
With Search Consultant, agree on process, format, work plan, schedule and budget for the search; conduct interviews with Board and Staff and review documents to assess organizational needs; agree on position description for ED
- Step 3. Finalize ED Position Description, Search Criteria and Compensation Month 1
Gain Search Committee approval of the position description; using information from the interviews and assessment of organizational needs work with the Search Committee to prioritize capabilities and draft criteria to be used in assessing candidates; using informal compensation survey, gain approval of a range of compensation for the ED
- Step 4. Advertise the ED Position and Begin Recruitment Months 2-3
Gain agreement on the “reach” for the process and communications plan; retain candidate research firm to generate candidate leads; place ads in selected online and, perhaps, print media, recognizing that the best candidates are those not seeking employment; determine how the Board and industry leaders can be sources of prospects; continue outreach to identify high priority candidates
- Step 4. Recruit and Screen Candidates, Review w/Search Committee Months 3-4
30-90 day recruitment period, longer if necessary; candidate resumes received by Search Consultant, reviewed and categorized according to potential; respond to applicants in a timely manner; telephone interviews conducted by Search Consultant with “high potential” candidates; Search Committee provided with progress reports which categorize applicant status; summaries of high potential prospects to be offered in-person interviews presented to Committee for review and approval; inform Board of progress, without candidate names

- Step 5. In-Person Interviews and Selection of Finalists Months 4-5
Search Consultant and Search Committee determine pool of high potential candidates; travel to select candidates for out-of-town interviews; conduct in-person interviews with others; submit written summaries of high potential candidates to Search Committee with recommendations; schedule interviews by Search Committee (and possibly others) of 3 to 5 finalists; provide candidates with financials and other confidential information about the organization in advance of interviews; candidates sign Confidentiality Agreement
- Step 6. On-Site Interviews and Selection of Top Candidate Months 5-6
Search/Interview Committee, including Board Chair, prepare for on-site interviews of finalists with Search Consultant advising on logistics; provide interview guide with sample questions; interview training provided by Search Consultant; on-site interviews of selected candidate; background checks and drug tests authorized by nonprofit; references checked by Search Consultant; interviewers rate candidates using search criteria and interview rating sheet; Search Committee, in consultation with Board Chair, selects candidate (and back-up); terms of offer approved by Board (or Executive Committee)
- Step 7. Board Approval and Negotiation of Contract Months 6
Board Chair negotiates employment contract with selected candidate; leadership transition process is outlined and start date determined; Chair introduces new ED to the Board followed-by introductions to staff, key donors and strategic partners; search process concludes and “on-boarding” process begins following a Transition Plan to integrate the new ED.
- Step 8. New Leadership Integration Months 6-9
New ED is brought aboard and introduced to Board and senior staff; celebration of new leadership event is desirable but only after retirement/departure of former ED is publicly acknowledged; ED visits privately with each member of the Board; Board members introduce new ED to major donors and community leadership; ED establishes own Senior Management Team; Transition Plan is assessed after 90 days to determine additional steps that can be taken to ensure success of new ED.