



Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities

Executive Director/CEO MCDD Policy #4.5 Succession Policy

Introduction

A change in executive leadership is inevitable for all organizations. It is a time of both risk and opportunity. It is a period in an organization's history when the Council Chair must increase his/her level of engagement. It is also a time when some may seek assurance of the organization's viability and long-term sustainability.

A succession policy for the Executive Director position is a routine risk management and sustainability planning tool. The Policy ensures organizational sustainability by providing a proactive, orderly plan for executive leadership transitions.

The Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities conducts its operations under the Policy Governance model, and as such, the full Council will make the final hiring decision for the Executive Director position.

To that end, the Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities is adopting this succession policy for purposes of:

Establishing principles, role clarity and procedures to support a positive leadership transition that foster good endings and beginnings with departing and arriving leaders and build organizational capacity when a planned or unplanned executive leadership change occurs

The Council Chair shall be responsible for implementing this policy and its related procedures, and for annually reviewing and updating the policy as needed.

In the event of a planned or unplanned leadership transition, the Council shall immediately appoint a Transition Committee which shall plan and manage the transition, including the search for a new Executive Director. Final candidates for the Executive Director position will be presented to the Council for an in-person meeting and interview with the final hiring decision to be made by the full Council.

The Transition Committee shall be comprised of at least five and no more than seven Council members. Ideally these Council members will represent past, present and prospective future leaders of the Council. The Council may also consider appointing a staff member(s) to the Transition Committee.

Guiding Principles

- MCDD is open to and will consider both internal and external candidates when filling the Executive Director position. As a matter of policy, the board believes that its due diligence responsibility, as well as the interests of the organization and its clients, will be best served by a robust, competitive search process that involves both internal and external candidates. Therefore, we will conduct a vigorous national search for the chief executive vacancy. A national search will be conducted unless the board concludes that a current staff member is appropriate and available for the job.
- In organizations such as MCDD, the Executive Director's position is often shaped by the incumbent's talents and areas of specialized interest. That person's departure might necessitate other organizational changes including the creation of new positions and/or realignment of current positions.
- The preeminent goal of a transition to a new Executive Director is maintaining continuity of MCDD's mission-related work. A transition also presents an opportunity for the organization to continue to grow and develop.

Lines of Authority

1. The selection of the Executive Director is the responsibility of the Council.
2. The current Executive Director has the responsibility to continuously identify, encourage, and help to develop staff within the organization who are qualified to meet future leadership needs, whether that be on

a temporary or permanent basis.

3. The current Executive Director has the responsibility to plan for the orderly transition of staff.

Board Action in the Event of Vacancy in the Executive Director Position

1. Organizational Assessment: The Transition Committee shall take time to assess the leadership needs of the organization before the search for a new Executive Director is conducted. The assessment shall include a review and update (if needed) of the organization's strategic plan. The assessment will be designed to help assure the selection of a qualified and capable leader who fits well with the organization's mission, vision, values, culture, goals, and objectives, and who has the necessary skills to lead the organization.
2. Option of appointing an Acting or Interim Executive Director: To assure the organization's operations are not interrupted while the Council assesses the leadership needs and recruits a new Executive Director, the Council may appoint an Acting Executive Director from senior staff or hire an Interim Executive Director from outside the organization.
3. Duties of the Acting/Interim Executive Director: Among such duties will be to ensure that the organization continues to operate without disruption and that all organizational commitments previously made are appropriately executed, including but not limited to, speaking engagements, grant and contract obligations, reports, licenses, certifications, membership renewals, and other obligations to funders and other stakeholders.

Preparation Time Frame for Replacement of the Executive Director

1. The optimal period for the Executive Director to announce his/her departure from that role - or proposed commencement of a new role in the organization - is at least six to twelve months before the date of departure.
2. The Council understands that the time required for successfully completing a planned leadership transition is approximately eight to twelve months.

Role of the Outgoing Executive Director in Planned Transitions

The departing Executive Director, unless otherwise directed by the Transition Committee, will be involved in some transition activities such as: fundraising, communicating with funders and other stakeholders, and briefing the incoming Executive Director. The departing Executive Director's role during the transition and after the new Executive Director starts shall be developed in consultation with the Council Chair and/or Transition Committee and communicated to the Council.

Initial Implementation of the Transition Plan

1. Within fifteen (15) days of the announcement of a planned departure, the Council Chair shall appoint a Transition Committee. This Committee shall be comprised of at least three, but not more than seven members of the Council.. Other external stakeholders and/or staff may be recruited to advise or assist the Committee at the discretion of the Council Chair and Transition Committee.
2. The Transition Committee shall be responsible for implementing this transition plan and further developing the plan as needed.

At its first meeting, the Transition Committee shall determine its role, including responsibilities related to conducting the search process. The Committee shall also discuss and decide on how the senior staff will be substantively involved in the transition planning process and consulted in the selection process.

3. The Transition Committee shall also determine the need for consulting assistance (i.e., transition management consultant and/or executive search firm) based on the circumstances.
4. As needed, the Council Chair shall authorize an organizational assessment and schedule a Board Retreat to review and/or refresh the organization's strategic plan.

MCDD's Commitment Regarding Diverse Candidates and Staff Leader Development

1. In order to support the Council's due diligence and ensure that the best possible candidate is hired, the Council shall implement a search and selection process that is open to internal and external candidates.

-
- 2. In order to develop a finalist pool that is reflective of the community, the organization shall work proactively to develop a diverse pool of candidates for the Executive Director position.**