

# SouthEastern Arizona Community Action Program, Inc.

## Executive Director Emergency Succession Plan

### 1. Rationale

The Executive Director position in a nonprofit organization is a central element in the organization's success. Therefore, insuring that the functions of the executive director are well-understood and even shared among senior staff and board is important for safeguarding the organization against unplanned and unexpected change. This kind of risk management is equally helpful in facilitating a smooth leadership transition when it is predictable and planned.

This document outlines a leadership emergency succession plan for Southeastern Arizona Community Action Program, Inc. This plan reflects SEACAP's Executive Succession Policy and its commitment to sustaining a healthy functioning organization. The purpose of this plan is to insure that the organization's leadership has adequate information and a strategy to effectively manage SEACAP in the event the Executive Director is unable to fulfill his/her duties.

### 2. Plan Implementation

The Board of Directors authorizes the Board Chair to implement the terms of this emergency succession plan in the event of a planned or unplanned temporary or short-term absence.

- It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to inform the Board of Directors of a planned temporary short-term/long term absence, and to plan accordingly.
- As soon as feasible, following notification of an unplanned temporary or short-term absence, the Board President shall convene an Executive Committee meeting to affirm the procedures prescribed in this plan, or to modify them if needed.

### 3. Priority Functions of the Executive Director at SEACAP:

The full Executive Director position description is attached to this plan.

Among the duties listed in the position description, the following are considered to be the key functions of the Executive Director and have a corresponding temporary staffing strategy:

#### Key Executive Director Functions

Leadership and Vision  
Board Administration & Support  
Financial / Contractual Management  
Services & Programs  
Spokesperson

#### Temporary Staffing Strategy

Board Chair with Administrative Staff  
Program Mgr., Contract Mgr. and Secretary  
Contract/Fiscal Manager with Program Mgr.  
Regional Coordinators & WAP Program Mgr.  
Board Chair or his/her Designee

The positions assigned in the Temporary Staffing Strategy are based on SEACAP's organization structure as of July 1, 2017. In the event this plan is implemented and assigned positions are vacant or not available, the Board Chair shall select other senior staff to support each of the key executive director functions.

#### **4. Succession Plan in the Event of a Temporary, Planned or Unplanned Absence – Short Term**

##### **a. Definitions**

- A temporary absence is one in which it is expected that the Executive Director will return once the events precipitating the absence are resolved.
- An unplanned absence is one that arises unexpectedly, in contrast to a planned leave such as Vacation or a sabbatical.
- A temporary absence is 30 days or less.
- A temporary short-term absence is between 30 to 90 days.

##### **b. Temporary Staffing Strategy**

- For temporary planned or unplanned absences of 30 or fewer days, the Temporary Staffing Strategy described above will not be implemented.
- In the event of a temporary short-term planned or unplanned absence, the Executive Committee shall determine if the Temporary Staffing Strategy is necessary for this period of time.

##### **c. Appointing an Acting Executive Director**

- Based on the anticipated duration of the absence, the anticipated return date and accessibility of the current Executive Director, the Executive Committee may appoint an Acting Executive Director, as well as continue to implement the Temporary Staffing Strategy.

##### **d. Standing Appointees to the Position of Acting Executive Director**

- The first position in line to be Acting Executive Director is the current Board Chair. If the current Board Chair accepts the position, he/she will take a temporary leave from the Board of Directors.
- The second position in line is Director-level staff.
- In the event the available staff is new to the position or fairly inexperienced with SEACAP, the Executive Committee may consider another appointee or the option of splitting executive duties among the designated appointees.

##### **e. Authority and Restrictions of the Acting Executive Director**

- The Acting Executive Director shall have full authority for day-to-day decision making and independent action as the regular Executive Director.
- Decisions that shall be made in consultation with the Board Chair and/or Executive Committee include staff hiring and terminations, financial issues, taking on new projects and taking public policy positions on behalf of the organization.

##### **f. Compensation**

- Director-level staff appointed as Acting Executive Director may receive a salary adjustment if serving in this capacity for more than 6 months. This will be determined by the Executive Committee based on the duration of the assignment and available resources.
- The Board Chair, choosing to accept the position of Acting Executive Director, may enter into an independent contractor agreement, depending on the circumstances of their availability.

**g. Board Oversight and Support to the Acting Executive Director**

- The Acting Executive Director reports to the Board Chair. In the event the Board Chair becomes the Acting Executive Director, the Vice President shall be appointed Board Chair.
- The Executive Committee shall be alert to the special support needs of the Acting Executive Director in this temporary role. The Executive Committee shall convene monthly when an Acting Executive Director is appointed.

**h. Communications Plan**

- Within 48 hours after an Acting Executive Director is appointed, the Board Chair and the Acting Executive Director shall meet to develop a communications plan including the kind of information that will be shared and with whom.
- As soon as possible, the Board Chair and Acting Executive Director shall implement the communications plan to announce the organization's temporary leadership structure to staff, the Board of Directors and Funding Sources.
- Within 5-7 business days, the Board of Directors shall distribute a release with general information appropriate to the situation.

**5. Succession Plan in the Event of a Temporary, Unplanned Absence – Long Term**

**a. Definition**

- A long-term absence is 90 days or more.

**b. Procedures**

- Procedures and conditions to be followed shall be the same as for a temporary short-term absence with the following additions:
  - ◆ The Executive Committee shall give immediate consideration, in consultation with the Acting Executive Director, to temporarily filling the management position left vacant by the Acting Executive Director, or reassigning priority responsibilities where help is needed to other staff. This is in recognition that, for a term of 90 days or more, it may not be reasonable to expect the Acting Director to carry the duties of both positions.
  - ◆ The Board Chair and Executive Committee are responsible for gathering input from staff and reviewing the performance of the Acting Executive Director according to the organizations Performance Review Policy. A review shall be completed between 30 – 45 days.

**6. Succession Plan in the Event of a PERMANENT Unplanned Absence.**

**a. Definition**

- A permanent absence is one in which it is firmly determined that the Executive Director will not be returning to the position.

## **b. Procedures**

- Procedures and conditions to be followed shall be the same as for a temporary short-term absence with the following additions:
  - ◆ The Board of Directors shall consider the need to hire an Interim Executive Director from outside the organization instead of appointing an Acting Executive Director. This decision shall be guided, in part, by internal candidates for the Executive Director position, the expected time frame for hiring a permanent Executive Director and the management needs of the organization at the time of the transition.
  - ◆ The Board of Directors shall appoint a Transition Committee to implement the organization's Executive Succession Policy to transition to a new permanent Executive Director.

## **c. Hiring an Interim Executive Director**

- If an Interim Executive Director is hired, the Board Chair and Executive Committee shall negotiate and independent contractor agreement with a defined scope of work.
- The scope of the agreement with an Interim Executive Director shall be determined based on an assessment of the organization's needs at the time of the leadership transition.
- The rate of compensation shall be determined by the Board of Directors and based on the duration of the assignment and available resources.

## **d. Responsibilities of the Interim Executive Director**

- An Interim Executive Director shall have full authority for day-to-day decision making and independent action as the regular Executive Director.
- Decisions that shall be made in consultation with the Board Chair and/or Executive Committee include staff hiring and terminations, financial issues, taking on new projects and taking policy positions on behalf of the organization.
- For additional communication guidelines, refer to the organization's operating policies.

## **e. Board Oversight and Support to the Interim Executive Director**

- The Interim Executive Director reports to the Board Chair.
- The Executive Committee shall be alert to the special support needs of the Interim Executive Director in this temporary role. The Executive Committee shall convene monthly when an Interim Executive Director is hired.
- The Board Chair and Executive Committee are responsible for gathering input from staff and reviewing the performance of the Interim Executive Director according to the organization's Performance Review Policy. A review shall be completed between 30 – 45 days and 90 days thereafter.

# **7. Approvals and Maintenance of Record**

## **a. Emergency Succession Plan Approval**

- The emergency succession plan shall be approved initially by the Board of Directors.
- Thereafter, annually, the Executive Committee shall review the plan and recommend amendments to the full Board as needed.

**b. Signatories**

- The Board Chair, Executive Director and the appointees designated in the Emergency Succession Plan shall sign the plan.
- At all times, the Board Chair, Treasurer, and at least one Director-level staff, in addition to the Executive Director, shall have signature authorization for checks and contracts for the organization.

**c. Maintenance on Record**

- Copies of this plan shall be maintained by all member of the Board of Directors, Director-level staff and the organization's auditor in accordance with document retention requirements.

**d. Financial Considerations**

- It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Committee to review the organization's finances during an unplanned absence of the Executive Director.

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SEACAP Board Chairman

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Executive Director

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Contract / Fiscal Manager

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Program Manager

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Regional Coordinator

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Regional Coordinator

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WAP Program Manager

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Secretary