

Hiring a New Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer

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National Community Action Partnership
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Presenters



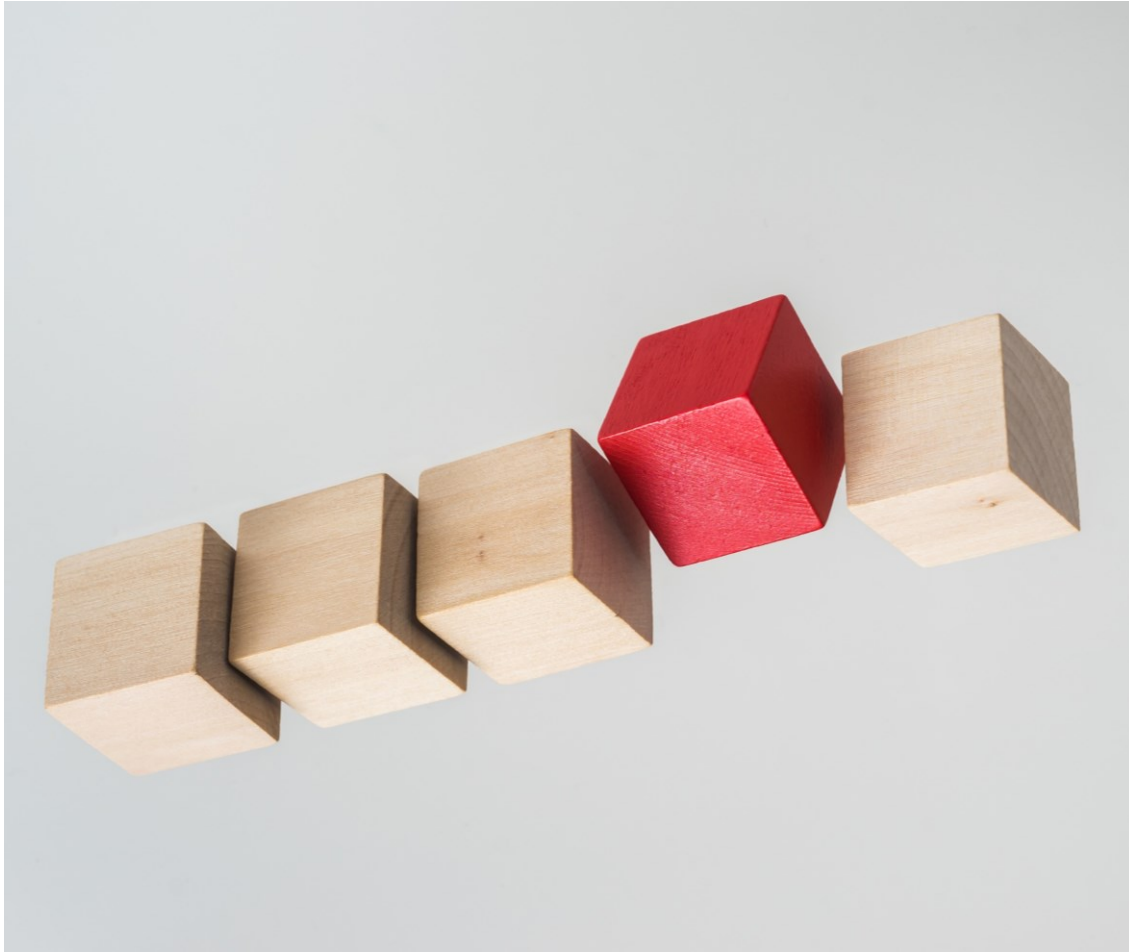
Denise Harlow, CCAP
NCAP CEO



Maribeth Schneber-Rhemrev, CCAP, PMP
NCAP Director of Organizational Capacity Building

Agenda *(yes, it is a lot to cover...)*

- Unexpected ED/CEO Departure vs. Planned ED/CEO Departure
 - Role of Succession Plan
 - Role of an Interim
- CAA Board Roles
 - Search Committee
 - Search Process
 - Search Budget
 - New ED Compensation alignment
- Role of Consultant or Search Firm
 - Staffing committee
 - Initial vetting
- CAA Staff Roles
 - Job Description and Posting
 - Interview Process
 - Offer/Negotiations
 - Retirement Recognition for ED
 - Contract or At Will
 - Role of Legal Counsel
 - Communications to staff and public
 - Office of Head Start Role/Impact



- **Reflect on ED/CEO transitions you've experienced.**
 - What have you seen that worked well?
 - What have you seen that didn't go so well?

Executive Director/CEO Departures

Like everyone, EDs/CEOs leave for a variety of reasons

- Planned/Unplanned
- Retirement
- Moving to a new opportunity
- Illness/family obligation
- Termination
- Other





Roles of the Board

Vision, Mission & Purpose

Strategic Direction

Financial Oversight & Fundraising

Sustainability

Strategic Resource Allocation

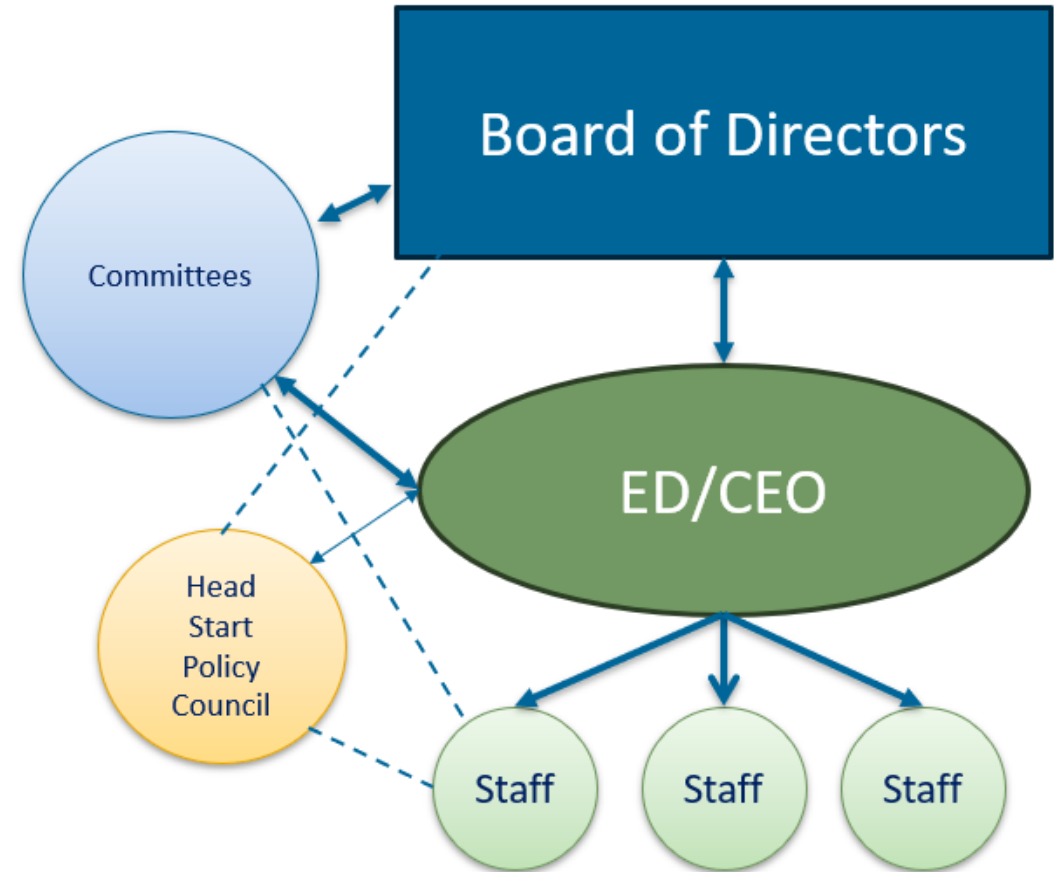
Board Leadership & Governance

Executive Director Oversight & Support

Community Education and Engagement

Performance Management & Evaluation

The Board Has **One** Employee: **The Executive Director**

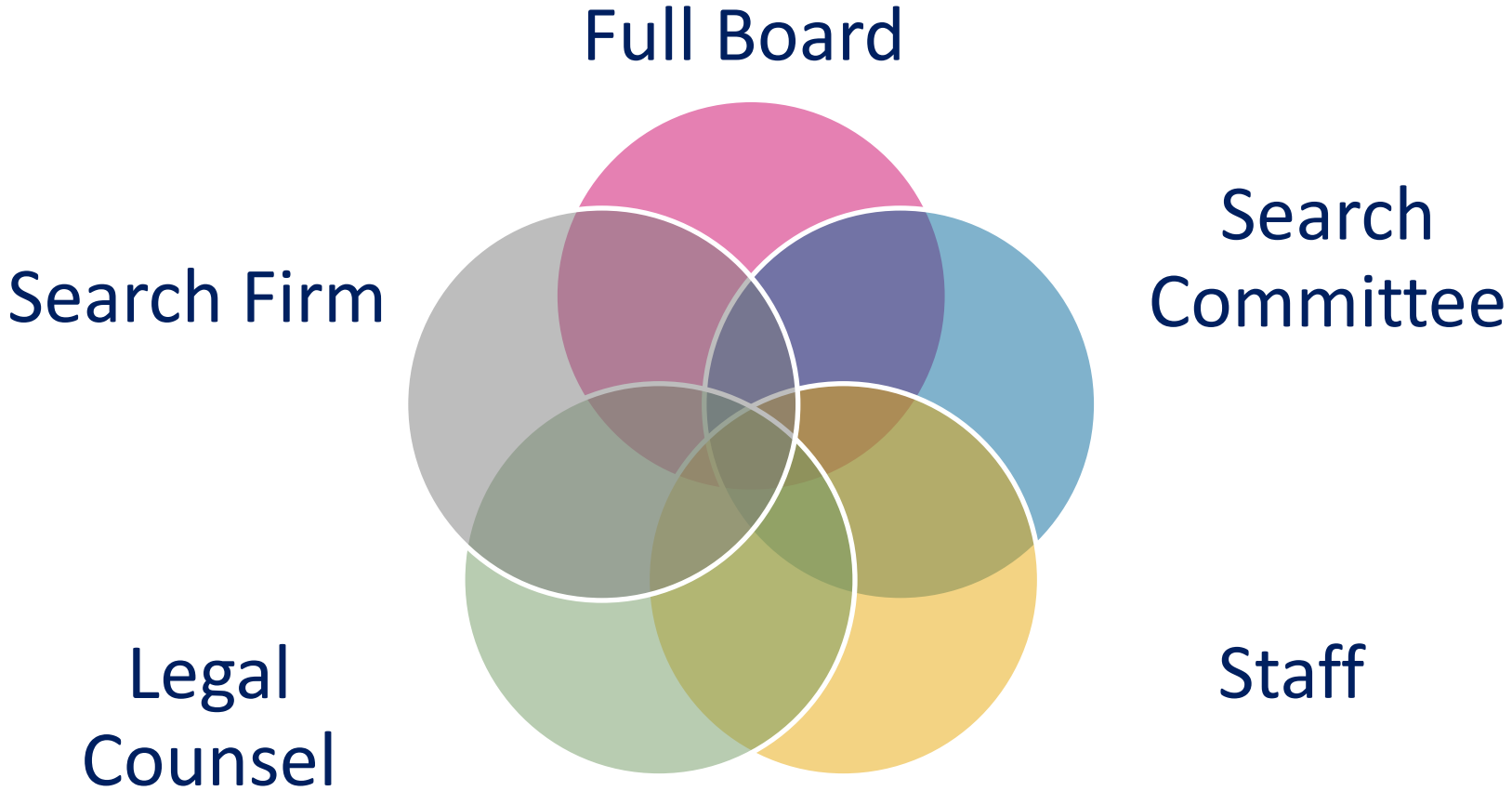


Hiring a Community Action Executive Director

- Hiring an Executive Director may be one of the most important decisions the Board will ever make
- **Hiring more than an ED** – Hiring a community leader, partner, advocate, national network member
- Recognize most board members have never been a CAA or other nonprofit ED
- Depending on experience, many board members (and senior staff) may not have a reference point for ED examples beyond the current ED



Distinct but Supportive Roles



Full Board of Director Roles and Responsibilities

- Establish (and trust) Search Committee made of up board members
 - Strong Chair-organized, respected, good facilitator
- Agree to, and support search process
 - Timeline, action steps, communication plan
- Approve search process budget
- Provide input into desired characteristics for a new ED/CEO via survey or discussion
- Approve new ED/CEO compensation package
- Participate in interview(s) as needed
- Once candidate selected-support their selection
- Onboarding (and ongoing) support

Search Committee

- Made up of board members
- Install a strong chair
- Ensure support needs met (search firm, consultant, etc.)
- Communicates to the full board to keep informed of the process
- Meets frequently and needs consistent participation from its members
- Conducts first, second, and perhaps third interviews
- Makes final recommendation to the board



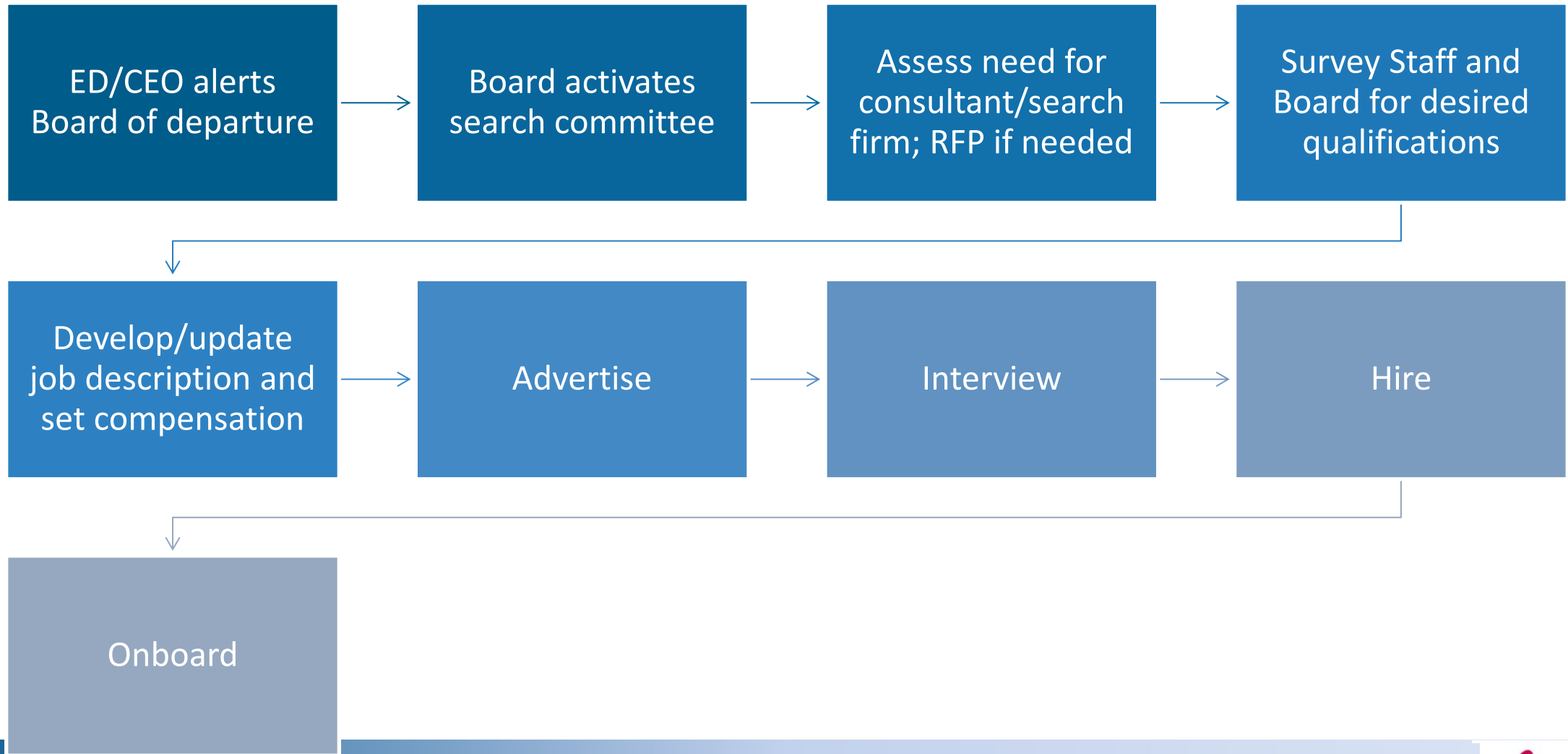
Staff Roles

- Complete tasks as needed by search committee. May include:
 - Post job announcement
 - Set up email inbox for applications
 - Compile needed agency materials
 - Email reminders to committee and board
 - Compile and distribute materials and other supports
 - Provide recent compensation study results on file
- Provide input into desired characteristics for a new ED/CEO via survey
- Onboarding support

Search Firm/Consultant (if used)

- Develop and post RFP to compare consultant options
 - Know what you need
- Price may be by process deliverable, hourly rate, or % of new ED/CEO salary
- Roles can vary but may include:
 - Staffing search committee
 - Development and posting of job announcement
 - Receiver of all application/resumes
 - Initial screening of all candidates
 - Development of screening tools
 - Participation in full interviews

General Process Outline



CAA's Succession Plan

- Required under CSBG Organizational Standard 4.5
 - *The organization has a written succession plan in place for the CEO/ED, approved by the governing board, which contains procedures for covering an emergency/unplanned, short-term absence of 3 months or less, as well as outlines the process for filling a permanent vacancy.*
 - Unplanned/emergency
 - Planned
- Role of an Interim ED/CEO in both a planned and unplanned departure

Search Budget

Consultant/Search Firm

Advertising/Posting of position

Travel, food, room rental etc.

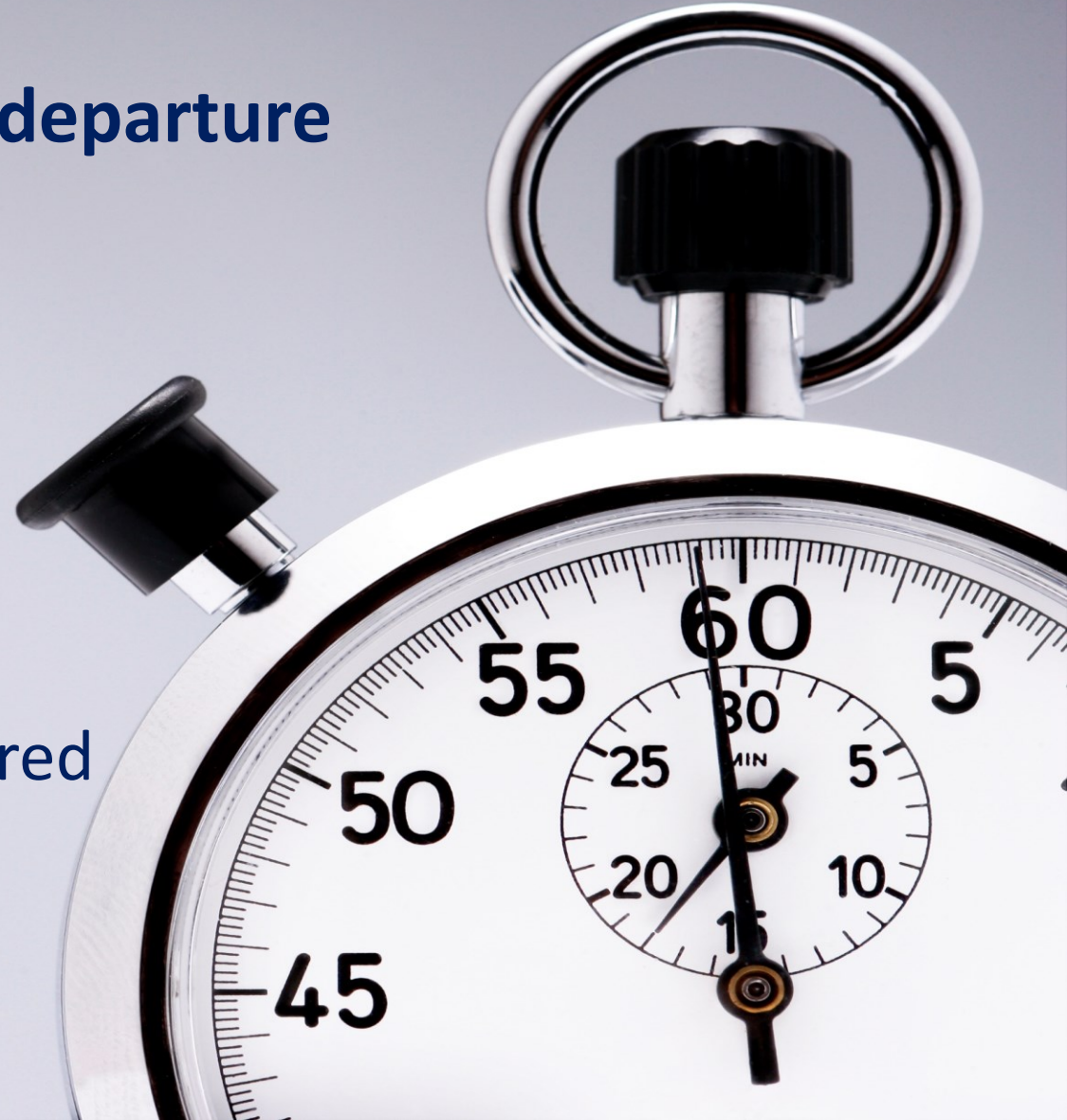
Staff Time

- Be aware of cost allocation methodology that stems from staff time

Legal

Search Timeline

- Can vary greatly depending on ED departure horizon
- Account for:
 - Gathering input/setting priorities
 - Job posting timeframes
 - At least two rounds of interviews
 - Funder approval of new hire if required
 - Planned overlap with outgoing ED (if desired)



DRAFT Search Plan and Process

Milestone/Action	Projected Timeframe / Completion Date	Responsible Party
1. Board and Policy Council Training and Consensus Meeting	May 15 - July 1, 2025	
1.1. Background Review	5/30/2025	NCAP
1.2 Executive Qualities and Priorities Survey	6/18/2025	NCAP/Search Committee
1.3 Board Meeting	6/23/2025	NCAP/Search Committee
1.4 Identified Executive Priorities/Profile	7/1/2025	NCAP/Search Committee/Board/Council
2. Search Plan	May 28 - July 30, 2025	
2.1. Kickoff Call	5/28/2025	NCAP/Search Committee
2.2 Finalized Job Description	7/30/2025	NCAP/Search Committee
2.3 Recruitment Strategy	7/30/2025	NCAP/Search Committee
2.4 Final Search Plan with Detailed Timeline	7/15/2025	NCAP
3. Search	August 1 - September 30, 2025	
3.1 Screening Criteria	7/30/2025	NCAP/Search Committee
3.2 Posting to Outlets	8/1/2025	NCAP
3.3 Candidate Screening	9/15/2025	NCAP
3.4 Screening Summary for Search Committee	9/15/2025	NCAP
3.5 Pool of Candidates for Interview	9/30/2025	NCAP
4. Interviews	October 1 - October 31, 2025	
4.1 Interview Questions	10/1/2025	NCAP/Search Committee
4.2 Scoring Rubric	10/1/2025	NCAP/Search Committee
4.3 First Interviews	10/15/2025	NCAP/Search Committee
4.4 Selection of Candidates for Second interview	10/15/2025	Search Committee
4.5 Second Interviews	10/31/2025	Search Committee
4.6 Interview Summary	10/31/2025	NCAP
5. Final Selection	November 1 - November 15, 2025	
5.1 Final Recommendation Decision	11/1/2025	Search Committee
5.2 Final Recommendation for Board and Policy Council	11/1/2025	NCAP/Search Committee
5.3 Final Decision by CAA Board and Policy Council	11/15/2025	Board and Policy Council
5.4 Offer to Candidate	11/15/2025	CAA Board
6. Onboarding Support	January 1 - March 31, 2026	
6.1 Onboarding Plan	1/1/2026	NCAP
6.2 Consultation Hours (Up to 4)	3/1/2026	NCAP
6.3 NCAP New Executive Director Institute Registration	3/1/2026	NCAP

Hiring an Executive Director

- The Board is responsible for identifying the skills/ qualifications necessary for the CEO/ED role, and identifying the duties and responsibilities of the CEO/ED
 - The skills/qualifications, duties, and responsibilities should be documented in a formal job description

Agency mission,
vision, values

Strategic Plan &
Direction

Organization
Strengths/Needs/
Gaps

Community
Needs

Funding Source
Requirements

Available Funding
for Compensation

Community/Job
Market
Conditions

Structure –
Contract or
Employee?

Staff and Board Input Into Qualities, Skills, Needs, Challenges, Priorities

- Can use a brief survey for both staff and board
 - Provides board critical insight into staffing needs and priorities
- Include hard skills, qualifications, and personal qualities
- Priorities, challenges, needs can give direction to early work of the incoming ED
- Current ED input during this time can also be helpful:
 - Internal challenges to navigate
 - Changes or shifts that may be needed

Special Consideration – Founding Leadership & Longtime ED Transitions



**Founder as the
Face of the
Organization**



**Board Alignment
with Founder, Not
Governance Role**



**Staff Loyalty and
Uncertainty
During Transition**



**Volunteer and
Funder Ties
Rooted in Founder
Relationships**



**Informal
Operations and
Undeveloped
Internal Systems**



**Balancing
Founder's
Influence Post-
Exit**



**Cultural Shift in
Leadership Style
& Organizational
Identity**

Sources:

[The Moran Company - Replacing the Founder – Challenges and Opportunities for Nonprofits](#)
[BoardSource - Nonprofit Founder Departures - Five Challenges; Five Novel Solutions](#)

CEO/ED Position Description

- Agency and position overview
- Required qualifications
- Desired qualifications
- Primary location
- Travel requirements
- Residency requirements
- Salary range and other compensation
- Application process



At-Will vs Contract

- **At-Will Employment**

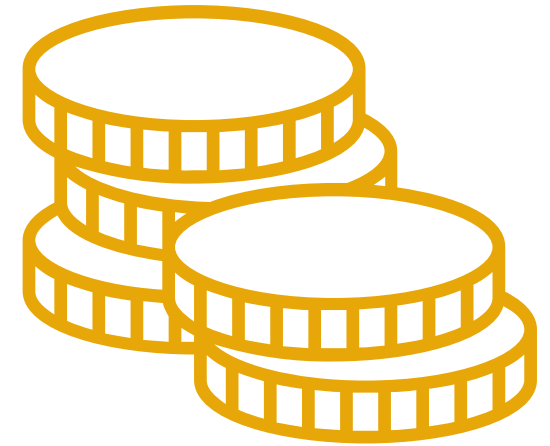
- Default in most states
- Termination possible by either party at any time (per law)
- Policies and handbook govern role, benefits, expectations
- Easier to adjust terms (salary, duties, etc.)
- May feel less secure to the candidate

- **Employment Contract**

- Defines term of service
- Outlines pay, benefits, evaluation
- Specifies termination and severance terms
- Provides stability and protections
- Clarifies expectations for both parties

Compensation

- More than salary – includes benefits and relevant fringe benefits
- Compensation should be “reasonable and not excessive”
- IRS Form 990 requires a description of the process used to approve executive compensation
- Managing for allowability
- Managing conflicts of interest (real or perceived)
- Document, document, document... and then maybe document some more...
- Changes from prior compensation may be needed to fit the new market



Where to Advertise Position?

- CAA's website
- NCAP and State Association websites
- LinkedIn
 - CAA's and NCAP's LinkedIn
- State Association of Nonprofits
- National Council of Nonprofits
- Idealist
- Indeed
- State Department of Labor
- Chamber of Commerce
- Leadership Foundations



Resume Review, Screening and Candidate Interviewing

Initial resume review-consultant/search firm or Search Committee

First Interview with top 3-5 candidates-Search Committee

Second Interview with top 2-3 candidates-Search Committee

If needed, third interview with Board

Materials to Have At the Ready



FINANCIALS/AUDIT



STRATEGIC PLAN



BENEFITS PACKAGE



BYLAWS

About Interviews...

Depending on Committee size, may not engage the entire Committee

Virtual vs In-Person, may vary between 1st and 2nd for instance

Engaging staff support (including current ED)

Use standardized questions that assess alignment with needed qualities

- And keep notes/scores for responses by interviewer

Use open ended questions

Ensure the candidate is the one talking, not the committee

Beyond Interview Questions

- Writing Samples
- Projects or Presentations
- Online Vetting (and it's cautions and pitfalls)



Going Back to the Full Board

- *The work of the Full Board is not to re-do the work of the Search Committee.*
- May go back with the “top two” candidates for interview; or only with the top recommendation for hire
 - May depend on your candidate pool; may depend on board expectations
- Ultimately, the full board needs to approve the hiring of the New ED & the ED’s compensation

From Hiring to Onboarding

- The work of the board does not end with hiring – the Executive Director will need your support as they get started
- Considerations:



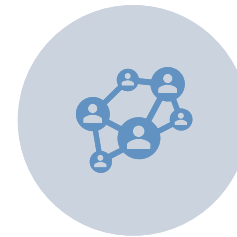
DIRECTION



CHECK INS



FORMAL TRAINING



CONNECTIONS



COMMUNICATION
CHANNELS

Connections and Formal Training

- Key funder and community contacts
- Community Action State Association
- State CSBG and WAP Offices
- NCAP New Executive Directors Institute
- NCAP, NCAF, CAPLAW, NHSA, etc. conferences and events
- OMB Uniform Guidance training



Join Us For National
Community Action Partnership's

New Executive Directors Institute

Supporting leaders through education and
collaboration for future success

The New Executive Director's Institute offers new leaders a solid foundation in the Community Action model and leadership skills. Explore topics like board governance, financial leadership, and organizational culture through expert advice, networking with peers, and accessing tailored tools and resources.



Communications Channels

- Clarity of expectations
- Relationship with Board Chair
 - Dynamic Duo
- Board Reports
- Shifting from Interim (if applicable)
- If current ED/CEO still engaged in some way



Considerations



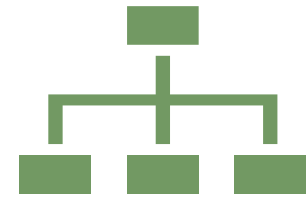
COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN THE SEARCH
COMMITTEE & BOARD



THE ROLE OF THE
OUTGOING CEO/ED



MANAGING
CONFLICTS OF
INTEREST



BALANCING BOARD
AND STAFF NEEDS

Resources



A Guide to Enhancing the Board & Executive Director Partnership



Dynamic Duo (NCAP & CAPLAW): https://www.capl原因.org/wp-content/uploads/resource-lib/CAPLAW_DynamicDuo.pdf



Executive Compensation Resources

- Dynamic Duo (NCAP & CAPLAW): https://www.caplaw.org/wp-content/uploads/resource-lib/CAPLAW_DynamicDuo.pdf
- Executive Compensation (National Council of Nonprofits): <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/running-nonprofit/governance-leadership/executive-compensation>
- IRS FAQs on Executive Compensation: <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/form-990-filing-tips-reporting-executive-compensation-part-vii-and-schedule-j>
- CEO Compensation Checklist (BoardSource): <https://boardsource.org/ceo-compensation-checklist/>

Questions?

Need assistance with a search?

Want to have a conversation on where to start?

csbg@communityactionpartnership.com

