

# **Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council**

## **Executive Director Succession Plan**

### **Introduction**

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

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

To that end, the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC) is adopting this succession plan for purposes of:

- Establishing principles, role clarity and plans to support positive leadership transitions 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 overseeing the implementation of this plan and any related plans, and for ensuring that the plan is reviewed at least annually and updated as needed.

In the event of a planned or unplanned leadership transition, the Council shall immediately appoint a special Transition Committee which shall plan and manage the transition, including the search for a new Executive Director.

### **Guiding Principles**

- The Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council is open to and will consider both internal and external candidates when filling the Executive Director position.
- In organizations such as Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, 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 Arizona Developmental Disabilities' Planning Council mission-related work and current strategic plan.
- In conducting the executive search and hiring process for the Executive Director position, the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council has agreed to follow the job posting and recruitment procedure of the Councils' designated state agency, as applicable to this specific situation. Those procedures may include training of the interview team on recruitment and interview process.

## **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 senior management within the organization who are qualified to meet future leadership needs.
3. The current Executive Director has the responsibility to plan for the orderly transition of all ADDPC staff.

## **Emergency Backup Plan**

1. Related to the position of Executive Director: To be prepared at all times for a leadership transition, the organization shall maintain an up-to-date Emergency Backup Plan with guidelines for the planned or unplanned, short-term and long-term absence of the Executive Director. This plan is approved by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Council and should be reviewed annually.

## **Council Board Action in the Event of Vacancy in the Executive Director Position**

1. Organizational Assessment: The Council shall take time to fairly 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 future directions and the current Executive Director position description. 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. The Transition Committee or Council will also determine an appropriate outreach strategy to recruit qualified applicants with skills necessary to carry out the organization's mission, vision, values, goals and objectives.
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 Executive Committee may determine to appoint an Acting Executive Director from among ADDPC 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, grant and contract obligations, financial monitoring and reporting, program reports, speaking engagements, coordination and support for meetings of the Council and Committees, ensuring progress of the annual work plan and 5-year plan, fulfilling the duties of the Executive Order, and other obligations to funders and other stakeholders.
4. Simultaneous transitions for the Executive Director and ADDPC Staff Positions: Should the Transition Committee determine to appoint an Acting or Interim Executive Director from within, the Council may make other temporary appointments from among other

staff, external hires, or whatever combination of those options best assures continuity in leadership and program success through the transition period and afterwards.

### **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 six 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-related activities such as 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 make recommendations to the Executive Committee for the membership of a Transition Committee. The Executive Committee shall make the final determination of membership of the Transition Committee and the appointment of that committee's chair. The Transition Committee shall be comprised of at least three Executive Committee members and three council members and two ADDPC staff.
2. The Transition Committee shall be responsible for implementing this transition plan and further developing the plan based on state processes as needed. The responsibilities of this committee include:
  - Plan and oversee the executive director transition process including determining the need for, contracting with and supervising the work of any external search or transition consultant(s).
  - Work with the Executive Committee to review and revise the executive director job description and qualifications to ensure they reflect ADDPC's current and future leadership needs, including:
    - Minimum knowledge, skills and abilities required for the position.
    - Education and experience requirements.
  - Ensure that a robust pool of candidates is developed for the Executive Director position.
  - Coordinate or conduct the interview and selection process and, in a timely fashion, bring a recommended candidate to the Council for ratification.
  - Provide support and counsel to the Acting or Interim Executive Director; the Acting or Interim Executive Director reports to the Council Chair, but receives advice and counsel from the Transition Committee as it relates to the transition process and preparing the organization to work effectively with the next Executive Director.

- Determine the role and substantive involvement of staff in the transition planning process and how they may be consulted in the selection process.

The Transition Committee may also be given additional direction by the Executive Committee.

The Transition Committee will sunset upon completion of the onboarding process of the new Executive Director, expected to be on or before 90 days after the new Executive Director's start date.

3. The Transition Committee, or a subset of its members, will serve as the Interview Panel in accordance with Arizona's DES procedures. Composition of the Interview Panel shall include, at a minimum, the Council Chair as the hiring manager and at least two other council members or staff. The Interview Panel's responsibilities include:
  - Developing the job posting and determining the length of posting.
  - Developing the interview questions, application screening matrix, and job simulation exercise as appropriate.
4. The Open Meeting Laws of Arizona allows discussions concerning certain personnel matters, including discussions to deliberate the appointment or employment of employees, to be held in an executive session.
5. Pursuant to federal statutes establishing ADDPC and Council bylaws the Council shall be responsible to recruit and hire the Executive Director, when the position becomes vacant. Council recruitment and hiring shall be conducted in a manner consistent with Federal and State nondiscrimination laws, and consistent with State personnel policies.
6. The Transition Committee coordinate with DES Human Resources concerning training on job posting and recruitment plans and an orientation for the entire selection team.
7. The Interview Panel will identify a recommended finalist who will be considered for appointment to the Executive Director position by majority vote of the full Council and shall be in conformity with the laws of the State of Arizona [DD Act, Section 125 (b)(9)].

**Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council's Commitment Regarding Diverse Candidates**

1. In order to provide career advancement for staff, the organization shall encourage the professional development of current ADDPC employees.
2. In order to support the Council's due diligence and ensure that the best possible candidate is hired, the ADDPC shall implement a search and selection process that is open to internal and external candidates.
3. In order to develop a finalist pool that is reflective of the Arizona community, the organization shall work proactively to develop a diverse pool of candidates for the Executive Director position.
4. The Council shall fully comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations.

Adopted by the Executive Committee on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2021.

Revised and adopted by the Council on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

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Melissa Van Hook, Council Chair