



THE NONPROFIT  
ASSOCIATION OF  
OREGON

# Navigating Transition

## Interim Executive Director Services

*Are you a board member of a nonprofit where the executive director just announced she's leaving?  
Are you a senior manager of an organization where you sense the executive director is burned out?  
Are you an executive director who's ready to move on to the next challenge or take that long-planned sabbatical?*

If the answer to any of the above is “yes” then an interim executive director may be just the thing to keep your organization humming along during an executive transition, sabbatical, or unplanned absence. Whatever the reason, an interim can help your organization not just survive, but thrive.

### **Finding Opportunity in Transition**

Losing an executive director can be trying even for organizations that consider themselves to be healthy and sustainable. Despite strong board leadership, staff cohesion, and good communication, it's common for staff and board members to feel anxious about the transition. Some organizations are relieved to see their EDs go, but that usually means that the organization is in disarray—whether due to low morale or structural problems, or both. In addition, it requires a significant amount of time and energy to properly conduct an executive search. So there's no denying it can be hard.

But that doesn't mean that the transition can't be positive. In fact, it's an excellent time to take stock, make necessary changes, re-energize the board and staff, and reaffirm the organization's value to the community. NAO's Executive Transition Associates have the skills and experience to help an organization work through transition calmly and constructively, pointing out opportunities that might better position the organization to recruit a strong ED and implement changes that will better enable the new ED to be successful.

### **But Doesn't an Interim ED Create Even More Transition?**

Yes it does, and not all organizations experiencing executive transition should hire someone on an interim basis for that very reason. For many organizations, however, having an interim typically leads to less transition angst overall. If an organization in search of a new ED faces significant challenges, qualified candidates may choose not to apply for the position, resulting in a lengthy and unsuccessful search, or they may not stay once hired. Interims can help an organization work through those challenges—do the “dirty work,” if you will. By facilitating strategic discussions and decision-making, interim executive directors lead organizations to a place of stability—and beyond, to possibility. This can result in longer tenure for the new ED, but also more staying power for staff members, board members, volunteers, and donors.

### **Planned and Unplanned Executive Absences**

Perhaps your ED would benefit from a sabbatical or perhaps some extended leave to care for himself or a family member. Of course, not all longer-term absences can be planned. Either way, interim EDs are ready to step in and partner with your board and staff to ensure the organization performs to the best of its ability while the ED is away. Whether your organization is thriving or struggling, interim EDs bring a fresh perspective, new energy, and positive leadership. Transitions may be stressful; but they can be opportunities for organizations to shore up their infrastructure, empower staff and volunteers, and engage stakeholders in innovative ways.

## NAO's Values

NAO brings with it a positive approach to change, as we believe an executive leadership transition offers a powerful moment to take stock, identify future-focused leadership needs, and set the foundation for a strategic recruitment. Since 2001, NAO's Leadership Transition Services program has supported hundreds of Oregon's nonprofits through transition. We offer a team of consultants who have worked as executive directors, served on boards, and served in various consulting roles for organizations.

## The Process

After an initial intake with NAO's Consulting Programs Director, we will assess who on our team will be a good fit for your specific needs. When looking for a match, we take into consideration factors such as technical skills, subsector experience, mission-alignment, and organization culture. We will then connect the client, the potential interim, and NAO's program director for a meeting to assess the fit, and discussed proposed scope of work. Upon acceptance of the proposal, NAO will then submit a contract for signature.

The Interim Executive Director will be a temporary employee of the Client, and the Client will be responsible for withholding Social Security, Medicare Taxes and such other taxes as required by law, and comply with all Federal, State and local rules regarding leave and benefits. As a temporary contract employee, the Interim Executive Director will be paid monthly through the client's payroll. They will not receive any paid holidays or benefits, and will not exceed 40 hours in a work week. In addition, the client will be billed monthly for NAO program fees which are 15 percent of the Interim Executive Director's monthly gross pay.

Typically an Interim Executive Director works an average of 25 hours per week. Their hourly rate varies and is dependent on organizational budget, the previous Executive Director's salary, and the proposed scope of work. Based off an average of 25 hours per week plus NAO's program fee, the Client can estimate a monthly total between \$6,000 and \$9,000 for Interim Executive Director Services.

## Need Leadership Transition Services?

If you would like more information on any of the above services, or to find out if your organization could benefit from our Leadership Transition Services, please contact the following individuals at the Nonprofit Association of Oregon.

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## About the Nonprofit Association of Oregon

The Nonprofit Association of Oregon (NAO) is the statewide membership organization providing a unique vehicle for nonprofit sector expression and support. The mission of the NAO is to strengthen the collective voice, leadership, and capacity of nonprofits to enrich the lives of all Oregonians.