

# Information about Interim Management

Interim management is becoming more widely accepted as an option for nonprofits during times of transition. An Interim Executive Director (IED) can step in for anywhere from three months to a year and provide day-to-day management as well as technical assistance to the board, including advising on and/or managing the search process for a new permanent executive director.

Utilizing an IED is a good step to consider for functional organizations because:

- it gives the board a chance to reflect on and/or assess where the organization is at and what qualities they need in an new executive (often, the needs of the organization have changed somewhat since the last hiring process).
- the Interim can offer advice and staff support to run a good executive search
- a search can take 3-4 months, and this way the organization is running well in the meantime and the ED does not arrive to a major backlog of tasks

This type of interim might serve on a part time or full time basis, for 3-6 months.

For dysfunctional or struggling organizations:

- the IED should come in and conduct an organizational assessment for the board, giving them an independent perspective on the organization's strengths and weaknesses
- work closely with the board to ensure that they are operating properly and understand their role
- an interim can be a change agent, and take the heat for making needed changes
- the organization will be in better shape when the new permanent ED is hired, allowing the organization to attract a better candidate and increasing that person's chances of success

It is generally recognized that this process takes at least six months.

Some consultants charge an hourly rate or negotiate their salary, and some ask for a salary equivalent to what the ED of the organization would make. Many professional IEDs negotiate to work no more than 4 days a week, and most have a minimum salary that they will accept. In order to be protected by Directors & Officers insurance, the IED should be hired on as a temporary employee. The terms of employment should be documented in a written contract.

The skills or abilities that are required for the IED role are:

- ability to get the lay of the land and learn about the organization quickly
- strong management experience in a nonprofit setting
- clarity about board and staff roles and responsibilities
- focus on the organization's mission, and being willing to make unpopular decisions if in the best interest of the clients/mission/organization
- understanding of organizational change

Many IEDs are willing to discuss an organization's situation and provide info that may assist in deciding if interim management makes sense at this time. Also, organizations may contact Carolyn Cunningham at United Way's Volunteer Center, 206-461-3656, for a list of people who do interim work and additional information about interim management

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