

Legal Aid of Arkansas  
**SUCCESSION PLAN**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**I. Unanticipated/Temporary**

A. Determination: The Chairperson of the Board, in consultation with at least two Executive Committee members, will determine that there is a vacancy in the Executive Director position, whether for reason of illness, death, incapacity, resignation or other unanticipated or temporary reason.

B. Acting Executive Director: The Chairperson will request that the Deputy Director become the Acting Executive Director. If the Deputy Director is unwilling or unable to assume the duties, or if that position is vacant, the Chairperson will request in turn the Litigation Director and then the Senior Regional Manager in the program.

C. Transition Team: The Chairperson, with the help of the Administrative Assistant, will form and convene a Transition Team.

1. Composition: The Transition Team will consist of the following members and any other Board, staff or consultants the Chairperson chooses:

- a. Chairperson, Board of Directors;
- b. Treasurer, Board of Directors;
- c. Litigation Director;
- d. Deputy Director (or Senior Regional Manager);
- e. Fiscal Officer;

f. One client eligible board member, if not already serving as the Chairperson or Treasurer.

If and when any of the people named in a.-f., above, or any other member of the Transition Team, becomes either Acting Executive Director or a candidate for Executive Director, then that person shall no longer be a member of the Transition Team and the Chairperson of the Board may appoint a replacement. If the Chairperson is unable to serve, then the Vice Chairperson will assume that roll.

2. Staff: The Administrative Assistant will staff the Transition Team.

3. Function: The Transition Team will advise the Acting Executive Director and the Chairperson and assist with transition and management issues, including communicating about the transition.

D. Immediate Management Issues: The Acting Executive Director with any assistance from the Transition Team or others will

- 1. Tend to any security issues, including signature authorizations, locks, codes, passwords, credit cards, technology;
- 2. Identify major deadlines;
- 3. Assess financial obligations and contracts; request a special audit if indicated;

4. Conduct an organizational analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges; review any business or strategic plan;

5. Develop an internal message regarding the transition; develop an external message;

6. Inform Board, staff, and share transition plans.

E. Search Committee: If the vacancy in the Executive Director position is not temporary, the Chairperson shall appoint a Special Search Committee to hire and orient a new Executive Director (see III. below).

## **II. Anticipated or Permanent Change**

A. Determination: When the Executive Director anticipates a resignation or retirement, that anticipation and the anticipated date should be discussed first with the Chairperson of the Board. In consultation with other members of the Executive Committee, the Chairperson and Executive Director will set the anticipated date. The Chairperson and the departing Executive Director will announce the departure to the staff, Board, and the public.

B. Transition Team: The Chairperson, with the help of the Administrative Assistant, will form and convene a Transition Team.

1. Composition: The Transition Team will consist of the following members and any other Board, staff or consultants the Chairperson chooses:

a. Chairperson, Board of Directors;

b. Treasurer, Board of Directors;

c. Litigation Director;

d. Deputy Director (or Senior Regional Manager);

e. Fiscal Officer;

f. Director, Arkansas Legal Services Partnership;

g. One client eligible board member, if not already serving as the Chairperson or Treasurer.

If and when any of the people named in a.-g., above, or any other member of the Transition Team, becomes either Acting Executive Director or a candidate for Executive Director, then that person shall no longer be a member of the Transition Team and the Chairperson of the Board may appoint a replacement.

2. Staff: The Administrative Assistant will staff the Transition Team.

3. Function: The Transition Team will coordinate the transition, including the transfer of responsibilities and interim administrative matters. The departing Executive Director and the Transition Team will agree on a list of management issues for the transition and assign responsibilities. The Transition Team, in consultation with the Search Committee, will determine whether or not an Interim Executive Director should be appointed and the timing for doing so.

C. Interim Executive Director: If the Transition Team determines that an Interim Executive Director should be appointed, the Chairperson shall request that the Deputy Director become the

Interim Executive Director for such time as needed. If the Deputy Director is unwilling or unable to serve, the Chairperson will request in turn the Litigation Director and the Senior Regional Manager in the program.

### **III. Search Committee**

A. Appointment: If the departure of the Executive Director will be permanent, the Chairperson shall appoint a Search Committee consisting of members of the Board, staff, Director of the Arkansas Legal Services Partnership, and any consultants. The Search Committee shall consist of at least one-third staff and at least one-third Board members, including at least one client eligible board member. If a member of the Search Committee becomes Acting Executive Director or a candidate for Executive Director, then that person shall no longer be a member of the Search Committee.

B. Duties:

1. Conduct organizational analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges; review any available business or strategic plan (“What type of leader is needed to take us into the future?”);
2. Consult with the Center for Nonprofit Management, the Management Information Exchange, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, or any other appropriate organization in preparing for and conducting the search;
3. Review and update the Executive Director job description and qualifications in light of B.1. and B.2., above;
4. Advertise the position;

5. Make selections for interviews;
6. Conduct interviews;
7. Select a candidate to recommend to the Board of Directors;
8. Coordinate the training and orientation of the new Executive Director;
9. Identify and make formal introductions;
10. Engage departing Executive Director for consultation, as appropriate.

### **IV. Things to be done to make any transition better when it happens:**

- A. Update job description and qualifications as needed;
- B. Review organization’s salary structure and compare with similar organizations;
- C. Regular evaluation of Executive Director;
- D. Develop administrative calendar with major deadlines;
- E. Keep policies current: Personnel Policies; Board Policies; Written Standards of Practice for Legal Advocates; Priorities and Case Acceptance Policies; Financial Eligibility Guidelines; and any others identified.
- F. Have double check in place for all codes, passwords, keys, etc.;
- G. Update develop business/strategic plan.