

DOWN EAST PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN (DEPC)

Executive Director EMERGENCY BACKUP SUCCESSION PLAN

Guideline for the Appointment of an Acting Executive Director in the Event of an Unplanned Absence of the Incumbent

1. Rationale

The Executive Director position in a nonprofit organization is a central element in the organization's success. Therefore, ensuring that the functions of the Executive Director are well-understood and shared among the executive officers and senior staff is important to ensure organizational stability and leadership continuity in the event of unplanned and unexpected change. This kind of risk management is equally helpful in facilitating a smooth leadership transition even when it is predictable and planned.

The purpose of this plan is to ensure the continuous coverage of duties critical to the ongoing successful operations of DEPC. The Board of Directors is adopting policies and procedures for the temporary appointment of an Acting Executive Director in the event of an ***unplanned and extended absence of the Executive Director during which the Executive Director is unable to participate in the conduct of the operations of DEPC.*** The Board Chair, or Vice Chair in the absence of the Board Chair, may determine the appropriate time to initiate the implementation of this plan.

While the Board of Directors acknowledges that such an absence is highly improbable and certainly undesirable, they believe that due diligence in exercising executive-level management functions requires that it have an emergency backup succession plan in place. It is expected that this plan will ensure continuity in the administration of the organization's day-to-day programs and operations, management of external relationships and supervision of staff and finances.

2. Priority functions of the Executive Director position at DEPC

The full Executive Director position description is attached. *(See Attachment 2)*

Of the duties listed in the position description, the following are considered to be examples of the key functions of the Executive Director, and therefore, have a corresponding temporary staffing strategy. Functions to be covered by an Acting Executive Director are attached. (See *Attachment 1: Emergency Backup Succession Plan Detail: Executive Director*)

The positions assigned in the Temporary Staffing Strategy are based on DEPC organizational structure as of 2018. In the event this plan is implemented and those assigned are no longer available or positions are vacant, the Board Chair may select other senior staff to support each of the key Executive Director functions. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure that positions have appropriate cross-training to successfully implement the temporary staffing strategy.

3. **Business as Usual**

This emergency backup succession plan and the staffing structure at DEPC are intended to minimize disruption in quality service and maintain business as usual to the extent possible. In the absence of the Executive Director, unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, business as usual includes maintenance of the following (*See Attachment 1*):

- A. Delivery of services
- B. Accounting, billing, payroll, purchasing, payables and contracting
- C. Fundraising
- D. Liaison with the Board of Directors
- E. Facilities and information technology oversight
- F. Facilitating management team
- G. Liaison with State Agencies

4. **Emergency Backup Succession Plan Implementation**

The Board of Directors authorizes the Board Chair to implement the terms of this emergency back-up succession plan. The Vice-Chair of the board is authorized to implement this plan in the event that the Board Chair is unavailable or cannot be reached.

As soon as feasible, following notification of an unplanned temporary or short-term absence, the Board Chair may convene an Executive Committee meeting to affirm the procedures prescribed in this plan, or to modify them if needed.

While this timeline may vary based on circumstances, the suggested steps for implementation are:

- DEPC Management Team informs Board Chair immediately of unplanned absence.
- The Board Chair appoints an Acting Executive Director.
- The Board Chair informs Board of the Acting Executive Director appointment.
- The Board Chair (and potentially other officers) consults with the Acting Executive Director on the circumstances of the absence, organizational situation and related factors.
- After Board Chair and Acting Executive Director consult, stakeholders will be notified following the communications plan outlined below.

5. **Definitions**

- A temporary absence is one in which it is expected that the Executive Director will return to his/her position once the events precipitating the absence are resolved.
- An unplanned absence is one that arises unexpectedly, in contrast to a planned leave, such as a vacation or a sabbatical.
- A short-term absence is three months or less.
- A long-term absence is one that is expected to last more than 3 months.
- A permanent absence is one in which it is firmly determined that the incumbent Executive Director will not be returning to the position.

6. **Emergency Backup plan in event of a temporary, unplanned absence (SHORT-TERM)**

A. Who may appoint the Acting Executive Director?

1. The Board of Directors authorizes the Board Chair to implement the terms of this emergency backup succession plan in the event of the unplanned absence of the Executive Director.
2. In the event of an unplanned absence of the Executive Director, the Executive Director or a member of the management team shall immediately inform the Board Chair of the absence.

3. As soon as is feasible, the Board Chair may convene a meeting of the Executive Management Team to affirm the procedures prescribed in this plan or to make modifications the Board Chair and team deems appropriate.

B. Standing appointee to the position of Acting Executive Director

The Board Chair may designate the Operations Director (OD) to the position of Acting Executive Director. The position description will specify that the OD may serve as Acting Executive Director in the absence of the Executive Director unless otherwise decided by the Board Chair. The OD will have an emergency backup succession plan with designated appointees if he/she becomes Acting Executive Director or is otherwise unable to serve as Operations Director.

C. Cross-training plan for appointees

The Executive Director, in collaboration with the Board Chair, will develop a plan for training the potential appointee in the priority functions of the Executive Director which are listed in section 2 above.

E. Authority and restrictions of the appointee

The person appointed as Acting Executive Director may have the same authority for day-to-day decision making and independent action as the Executive Director except as further defined by the Board Chair. Decisions that will be made in consultation with the Board Chair or other appropriate committee include senior management staff hiring and terminations, financial issues, taking on a new project, and taking public policy positions on behalf of the organization.

F. Board Chair responsibility for oversight and support to the Acting Executive Director

As with the Executive Director, the Board Chair and Executive Committee will have the responsibility for monitoring the work of the Acting Executive Director. The Acting Executive Director will provide regular updates and meet with the Board Chair as so determined. The Board Chair will also be alert to the special support needs of the Acting Executive Director serving in this temporary leadership role and act to address them.

G. Communications plan

Within eight (8) hours after an Acting Executive Director is appointed, the Board Chair and the Acting Executive Director will meet to implement an external communications plan to announce the organization's temporary leadership structure, including the kind of information that will be shared and with whom (e.g. major donors, civic leaders, government officials). *(See Attachment 2)*

7. **Emergency Backup plan in event of a temporary, unplanned absence (LONG-TERM)**

The procedures and conditions to be followed will be the same as for a short-term absence with one addition: The Board Chair will give immediate consideration, in consultation with the executive management team, to temporarily back-filling the position left vacant by the Acting Executive Director. This is in recognition of the fact that, for a term of more than three months, it may not be reasonable to expect the Acting Executive Director to carry the duties of both positions. The position description of a temporary appointment would focus on covering the priority areas in which the Acting Executive Director needs assistance.

8. Emergency Backup plan in event of a PERMANENT unplanned absence

The procedures and conditions will be the same as for a long-term temporary absence with one addition: The Board Chair may appoint a Transition and Search Committee of no less than five members in accordance with the terms of DEPC Succession Policy and follow the procedures set forth in the Policy.

9. Approvals and maintenance of record

A. Emergency Backup plan approval

This emergency backup plan will be approved by the Executive Committee and reviewed periodically by the Executive Committee to make any needed changes in the standing appointees or backups.

B. Signatories

This plan will be signed by the Board Chair, Vice-Chair, the Executive Director and the standing appointee designated in this plan.

C. Maintenance of record

Copies of this plan will be maintained in the DEPC Board book of records and the Executive Director’s personnel file.

Approved by DEPC Board of Directors on _____.

DEPC Board Chair

Executive Director

I acknowledge that I have reviewed this plan:

DEPC Vice-Chair

Operations Director

Emergency Backup Succession Plan Detail

Name: Henrietta Zalkind, Executive Director

Standing Appointee: Carol Crocker, Operations Director

Short-Term Staffing of Key Functions

Key functions	Short term staffing strategies <i>(Under 3 months)</i>
1. Planning	Operations Director with Board
2. Financial Stewardship	Operations Director with Board
3. Fund Raising	R&D Director with Board
4. Community Relationships	R&D Director with Board
5. Programmatic Effectiveness	Operations Director with R&D Director/Program Development Manager
6. Board Support and Leadership	NCPC, Third Space Studio (Meredith Emmett)

Notifications

Notify: Temporary Leadership Change	Accountability: Person to Send Notification	Timeline: Notification to be Made
Board	Current or Acting ED/Board Chair	Within 24 hours
Funders	Controller/Current or Acting ED/Board Chair	Within 48 hours to funders greater than \$100,000