

Ready Reference for New Executive Directors

There are a number of books and references about how to be successful in a new position of leadership. Establishing trusting relationships with staff and board tops the list for new executive directors. With that as a given and addressed in other resources, what is it you need to **know** in order to do your job effectively?

The list below is designed to help you get started on some of the common concerns likely to arise. Get acquainted with the files, bookshelves and other storage places in your agency. Try to locate these materials. If the agency has been well managed, they all should be readily available.

READ:

- Constitution and by-laws
- Articles of Incorporation
- 501-C-3 status and all correspondence and reports to/from IRS and state/local government
- Program Agreements (if any) with United Way/ National Association/ Governmental entities
- Contracts – programs, facilities, leases of space/equipment
- Agency History
- Strategic Plan
- Insurance policies
- Technology plan
- Emergency Management Plan

As you read look for significant dates, elections, fiscal year, annual meeting, expiration of corporate charter, statements of responsibility and accountability. Look for evidence that documents are in good order or that revisions are pending. Is the agency protected from risks?

- Current organization chart and/or description
- Personnel Policies – are they current and in compliance with the law?
- Personnel files – are they in order and is there evidence of recent performance appraisals?
- Minutes of staff meetings
- Affirmative Action Plan

Look for relationships and accountability of staff. Look for indications of work in progress, assignments made and still to be completed and clues as to which people will be ready to give what help.

- Minutes of board meetings for past year
- Standing and special committees
- Annual report
- Report of annual meeting or other special meetings
- Advisory committee minutes
- Terms for board members and when they expire
- Board manual – does one exist?
- Official board record book – minutes, agendas, policy decisions

Does the board clearly understand its policy and oversight role, or have they been involved in administrative duties?

- Present budget and past 2 or 3 years – actual income/expenditures
- Current financial statements
- Most recent audit
- Last auditor's report and management letter
- Minutes of Finance Committee
- Minutes of Financial Development Committee
- Financial policies and procedures including internal controls
- Grants pending/grant program requirements/vouchering process
- 990's
- Investment portfolio

Look for evidence of where the agency stands in relation to the budget projections for the current year. What has been promised programmatically through contracts?

Misc. sources of organizational information

- Scrapbooks
- Annual reports from previous years
- Organizational newsletters and promotional materials