



# Turning Point: Creating sustainable nonprofit leadership

Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations





# ABOUT CCVO

The Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations strengthens the nonprofit sector by developing and sharing resources and knowledge, building connections, leading collaborative work and giving voice to critical issues affecting the sector.

CCVO's vision is of a vital, dynamic nonprofit sector that is recognized and respected as an integral partner in building strong, healthy communities.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared by Geoff Braun and Mike Grogan with support and contributions from Aditya Banerjee, Jackie Coe, Zakiya Kassam, Johanna Schwartz, Christine Showell, and Katrina Waldhauser. The authors wish to thank the hundreds of nonprofit leaders who shared their insights, challenges and stories with us.

Funding for this project was provided by the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Real Estate Foundation.



**Government  
of Alberta** 

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	6
PRIMARY RESEARCH	9
<i>Existing leaders</i>	9
<i>Emerging leaders</i>	15
<i>Perceptions of current state of executive leadership</i>	22
ADVANCING EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP IN ALBERTA'S NONPROFIT SECTOR	23
CONCLUSION	27
APPENDICES	28
<i>Appendix A:</i>	
<i>Academic &amp; Practical Research</i>	28
<i>Appendix B:</i>	
<i>Strategies Employed Across Jurisdictions</i>	35
<i>Works Cited</i>	40

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Within the thousands of nonprofit organizations that serve our communities, and in an untold number of ways, leaders at every level provide their expertise, skill, vision, and passion. A transition in leadership is underway—are we prepared?*

As we prepare for a change in leadership, it is critical for organizations, boards, funders and other stakeholders to understand the current state of leadership in the sector, the aspirations of emerging leaders and the competencies that will be required for success in the future. This knowledge will be critical to informing efforts to support strong, effective executive leadership in the years to come.

As a key step toward both understanding this critical issue and laying a foundation for change, the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO) undertook a multi-stage research project that included a review of literature and promising practices along with surveys of hundreds of existing and emerging leaders.

The results of our research reaffirm many of the well-known notions that tend to define leadership in nonprofit organizations. Current and emerging leaders are clear that the motivation to lead comes from a strong desire to serve and impact our communities. They are equally clear that the complexities associated with leadership and ever-present struggles with wages and funding present significant challenges to both current and aspiring leaders. Access to the appropriate set of professional skills and competencies needed to lead are top of mind for emerging leaders along with opportunities for formal and informal mentoring and coaching.

There is a wide array of skills, structures and systems that need to be in place for leadership to be effective and sustainable. To date, little attention has been paid to taking a systematic approach to leadership development in the nonprofit sector. An opportunity exists to coordinate and

expand efforts to better prepare the Alberta nonprofit sector's future executive leaders. Moving forward with leadership development will require an inter-connected, multidisciplinary approach that addresses individual, organizational and sector-wide aspects. Based on the findings from the literature review, survey and interviews, a framework for leadership development is proposed that includes **improved access to training and development, coaching for emerging leaders, greater emphasis on succession planning, enhanced sector profile and competitive wages and benefits**. Additionally, it is important to cultivate "emerging leaders" across generations and at various stages in their careers.

The changes on the horizon for our organizations and our communities are substantial, if not daunting. Increasing service expectations, unstable funding and changing labour markets are but a few of a multitude of issues that face leaders of organizations. There are no easy answers to the challenges that face organizations, but in accepting our leadership "crisis" as a call to action, there is hope. The actions we take today—intentional, systematic and collaborative—will provide the foundation that will allow organizations to thrive in the future.

# INTRODUCTION

*Across the province, nonprofit organizations provide programs and services to enhance the quality of life of all Albertans. The nonprofit sector is, however, facing a major shift as many organizations prepare themselves for a transition in executive leadership.*

Respondents to a 2011 survey conducted by the Alberta Nonprofit Workforce Council indicated that the upcoming retirement of senior executives is among the most pressing areas of concern for many organizations. As we prepare for this shift, it is critical for agencies, boards, funders and other stakeholders to understand the current state of leadership in the sector, the aspirations of emerging leaders and the leadership competencies that will be required for success in the future. This knowledge can be used to inform efforts to support strong, effective executive leadership in the years to come.

There are more than 24,000 nonprofit organizations in Alberta. They provide health and social services, organize recreational and leisure opportunities, deliver arts programming, strengthen our workforce, and steward our natural environment. The core nonprofit sector employs a paid workforce of more than 100,000 and utilizes the skills of 2.5 million volunteers.

Workforce challenges have for many years been a defining characteristic of the sector. These include an overall inability to pay competitive wages, underinvestment in human resources systems and competition from other sectors. While workforce pressures ebb and flow through economic cycles, the nonprofit sector has continuously identified the challenges of attracting and retaining skilled staff as critical issues. Addressing workforce and organizational development remains an important priority if the sector is to continue to meet the needs of our communities. To be effective and sustainable over the long-term, agencies must be aware of—and deal with—a myriad of factors, including leadership development, retention and succession planning.

As a key step toward addressing these issues, the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO) undertook a multi-stage research project to inform an executive

leadership development framework.

## *Our objectives in this project were to:*

- Gain an understanding of the strategies employed in other jurisdictions aimed at sustaining and enhancing nonprofit executive leadership and preserving organizational integrity through times of transition.
- Review and summarize current literature on nonprofit executive leadership development, retention and organizational continuity.
- Assess the factors that affect satisfaction levels, skill gaps and board support of, and for, executive leaders in Alberta's nonprofit sector.
- Understand the perceptions and aspirations of future leaders within the Alberta nonprofit sector.
- Establish a leadership development framework.

## *Review of Existing Literature*

The foundational stage of this project was comprised of a comprehensive review of key reports and publications on leadership and succession from a nonprofit sector perspective. This report summarizes the key issues identified from surveys, journal articles and reports. We examine the reasons behind the anticipated leadership deficit in Alberta's nonprofit sector. Additionally, this summary outlines initiatives that are currently in practice, and the resources that have been made available to address the leadership deficit.

## *Expected Turnover*

According to the findings of CCVO's 2012 *Alberta Nonprofit Survey* of over 500 organizations, the province's nonprofits and charities are anticipating significant executive turnover in the coming years. Twenty-five percent of respondents

reported that they expect turnover in the CEO/ED position within the next two years. CCVO's 2013 *Alberta Nonprofit Survey* produced similar results. Moreover, 27 percent of respondents to the 2013 survey indicated their organizations had turnover in the CEO/ED position during the past two years, confirming predictions from previous years.

Similar findings are reflected in the most recent *Daring to Lead* survey (2011). *Daring to Lead* is a national study of U.S. nonprofit Executive Directors. The survey found that 67 percent of executives were anticipating leaving their positions within five years, and seven percent had already given their notice (Cornelius, Moyers, & Bell, 2011). During the last economic boom in Alberta, the Calgary Centre for Non-Profit Management found that 36 percent of executives were planning to leave within a two-year timeframe and 82 percent within five years (Boland, Jensen, & Meyers, 2005).

## Causes of Executive Dissatisfaction

According to the Calgary Centre for Non-Profit Management, job dissatisfaction among senior executives can be partially attributed to gaps between expectations and reality in their jobs (Boland, Jensen, & Meyers, 2005). Executives surveyed indicated that they did not expect to be so heavily involved in fundraising and human resource management, and viewed these as preoccupations that impede other meaningful leadership work. This was reinforced in several other reports, including *Imagine Canada's Leadership Perspectives* and *Forefront's Who Are the Leaders and What's on Their Minds?* CCVO's 2012 *Alberta Nonprofit Survey* asked respondents to share their greatest worries and challenges. Overwhelmingly, the CEOs and Executive Directors who completed the survey expressed concern about organizational finances and the funding required to sustain a workforce.

Generally, executives expressed disappointment in the amount of responsibility they were expected to take on with little support from the rest of the organization. Over half of the leaders surveyed said their work/life balance was not one that they could sustain (Cornelius, Moyers, & Bell, 2011).

Another area of concern is the feeling of isolation felt by executives. Seventy percent of those surveyed reported that they felt "lonely" in their roles (Cornelius, Moyers, & Bell, 2011). The findings indicated that having a confidante of some sort, increased engagement from the board, or simply having staff members available for consultation, were all identified as ways to reduce feelings of isolation and increase job satisfaction.

Surveys by the HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector (Canada) and the Vancouver Foundation outline concerns of overburdened and dissatisfied executives, such as high levels of stress, long hours, and unsupportive boards; and suggest how organizations might reduce these anxieties, including by restructuring the leadership position to make it more "doable" and move toward more shared leadership models.

## Limited Access to Professional Development Opportunities

Leaders believe that professional development is directly related to their effectiveness, and note that many opportunities exist. The problem is one of financing access to these opportunities as leadership development often takes a backseat to other priorities. The lack of opportunities for senior leaders to develop and diversify their skill set is a major area of discontent. Many leaders feel they are ill-equipped to deal with the sector's turbulent nature without consistent, sector-specific training. This feeling of unpreparedness can lead to, or add to, anxiety and burnout (Cornelius, Moyers, & Bell, 2011).

## The Role of Boards

The literature indicates that a high proportion of sector leaders are frustrated with their boards of directors. According to *CompassPoint Nonprofit Services* and the *Meyer Foundation*, only 20 percent of leaders surveyed indicated they were "very satisfied" with the overall performance of their board (Cornelius, Moyers, & Bell, 2011). The overwhelming majority of executives indicated that their boards are underperforming. This could be attributed to the limited amount of time executives actually spend with their boards; the *Daring to Lead* 2011 study reported that executive time invested in working with boards of directors was notably low, and executives who spent fewer than five hours per month with their boards had lower levels of job satisfaction.

There is also a significant challenge presented when boards are unfamiliar with the work in which their executives are engaged. Oftentimes, due to limited interaction between boards and executives, board directors do not understand the full extent of an executive's duties. This can prove to be particularly problematic during leadership transitions. An organization can be placed in a precarious position when board members are not fully versed in the expectations of the role for which they are recruiting. When asked, only 33 percent of executives said they were "very confident" that their boards "will hire the right successor" when they leave (Cornelius, Moyers, & Bell, 2011).

## Preparing for Succession

The nonprofit sector is not universally well-prepared for anticipated transitions. In a survey conducted by the Bridgespan Group, respondents singled out succession planning as a major area of organizational weakness (Kramer & Nayak, 2012). Only 17 percent of organizations had a documented succession plan in place; executives and boards of the remaining 83 percent were reluctant to plan for succession (Cornelius, Moyers, & Bell, 2011). Given the high frequency of leadership turnover in the sector, succession planning has become crucial for all organizations. At a minimum, having some sort of transition plan in place allows organizations to continue functioning if their leader leaves.

As outlined in *Public Sector Succession—A Strategic Approach to Sustaining Innovation*, common barriers to dealing with succession include leaders' reluctance to take up the succession task, the assumption that succession issues are beyond the scope of leaders' work, confusion about how the succession task should be framed, or lack of information and knowledge about how to approach the task. Similar barriers exist with respect to succession planning at the board level (Schall, 1997).

## Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders

The recruitment of younger generations is an essential tool in organization survival, yet few organizations have developed an effective strategy. Boland, Jensen, & Meyers (2005), stressed the importance of preparing new leaders and ensuring action is taken to capture the knowledge of outgoing executives.

Many nonprofit organizations have a classic hierarchical organizational design: a pyramid-like structure with the senior executive at the top with descending tiers of staff. Younger generations are less attracted to what some perceive to be outdated organizational structures and working styles. They desire a more flexible organizational structure that will allow them to be valued and active in the organization's formative decision-making (Kunreuther & Corvington, 2007). Generation X (born between 1966 and 1980) for example, values collaborative relationships and mentorship. Generation Y, or Millennials, (born between 1981 and 2000) similarly, prefer environments that are flexible and non-hierarchical (Purden, 2007).

## Summary

The existing literature on this topic reveals that not enough organizations are taking the necessary steps to prepare for an executive leadership transition. However, it also suggests that the future of nonprofit executive leadership is within the nonprofit sector's control; and there are concrete steps that can be taken to avert a leadership crisis.

Nonprofit organizations can:

- Become intentional about planning for successful transitions.
- Find new ways to engage boards.
- Increase collaboration within and across organizations in order to reduce leaders' feelings of isolation and burnout.
- Expand and diversify the professional development options available to executive directors.
- Rebrand the sector (and leadership) in ways that are compelling, attractive and appealing to younger generations; and consider structures and decision-making processes that reflect shifting values.

In order for nonprofit organizations to continue to fulfill their critical roles in our communities, it is crucial that organizations find ways to manage leadership development, retention and transitions in ways that advance long term sustainability and minimize disruptions to core functioning.



# PRIMARY RESEARCH

*The second stage of this project included primary research focused on current and emerging sector leaders in Alberta. This research gathered further information on the experiences, perceptions and intentions of both existing senior executives as well as emerging leaders. It solicited both sets of leaders' views on how to sustain executive leadership in the coming years.*

## SURVEY OF EXISTING EXECUTIVE LEADERS

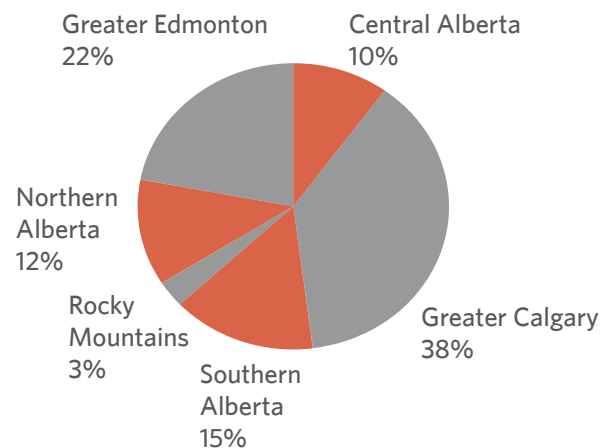
An online survey of current executive leaders' perceptions of leadership in Alberta's Nonprofit Sector was undertaken in February of 2013; it was completed by 82 participants. All respondents indicated they were the sole senior executive of an Alberta nonprofit organization at the time of the survey. The survey was distributed through a variety of nonprofit networks and associations.

The surveys of both populations were not scientific. However, the sample of existing executives was generally representative both geographically and according to subsector. That said, it was somewhat more heavily weighted toward Calgary, and more so toward executive leaders working in the social services realm. The size of respondents' organizations was evenly split between those with revenues in excess of \$1.5 million and those with less than this amount.

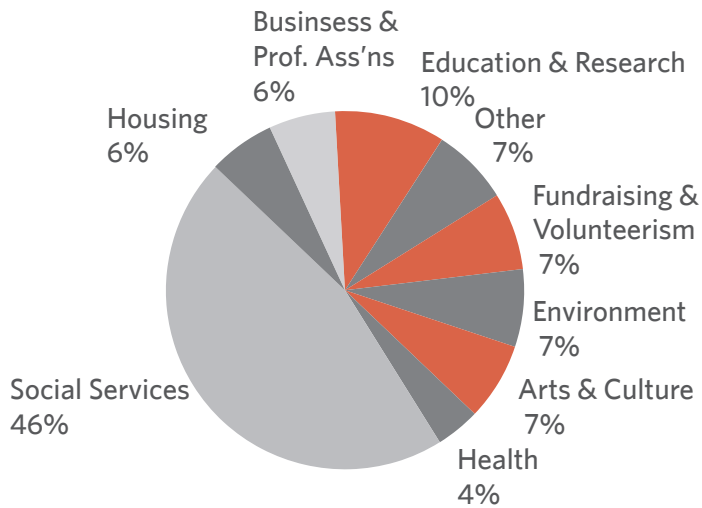
The majority of respondents were full-time and long-term nonprofit employees; over 75 percent have been employed in the sector for more than 10 years.

Consistent with other research on nonprofit employment, approximately 70 percent of the respondents were female.

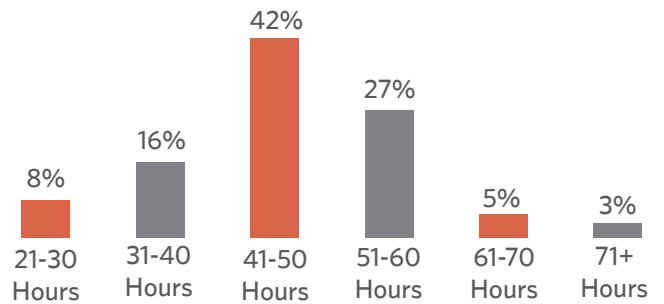
Regional Distribution of Responses



## Organizational Activity

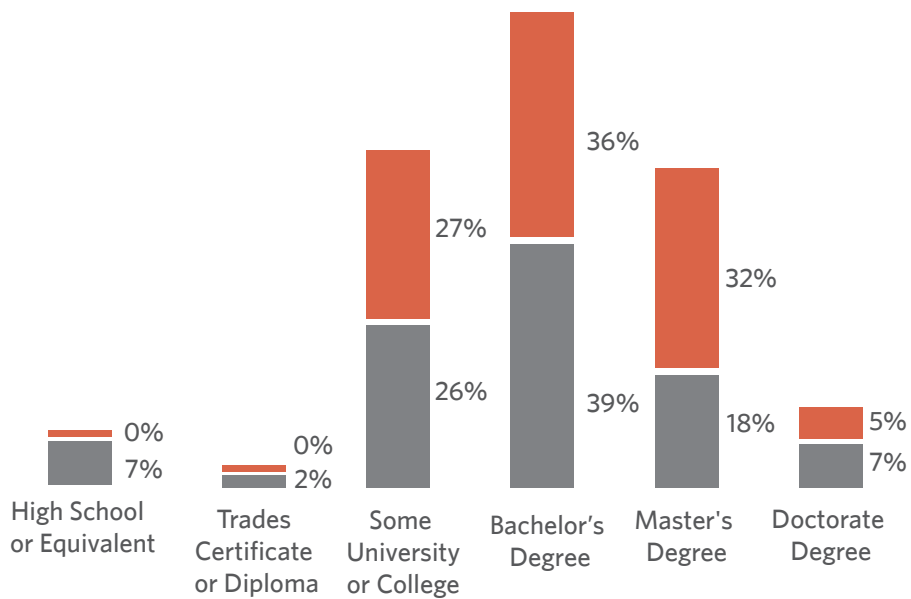


## How many hours do you typically work per week?



## Highest Level of Education

Male Female



## Variables Impacting Satisfaction

The vast majority (89%) reported that they find their work meaningful (the remaining rated their work “somewhat meaningful”). Overwhelmingly, meaning is derived from mission-related aspects of the work. The opportunity to lead staff and the variety of tasks associated with senior leadership were the next most common responses related to meaningful aspects of the work.

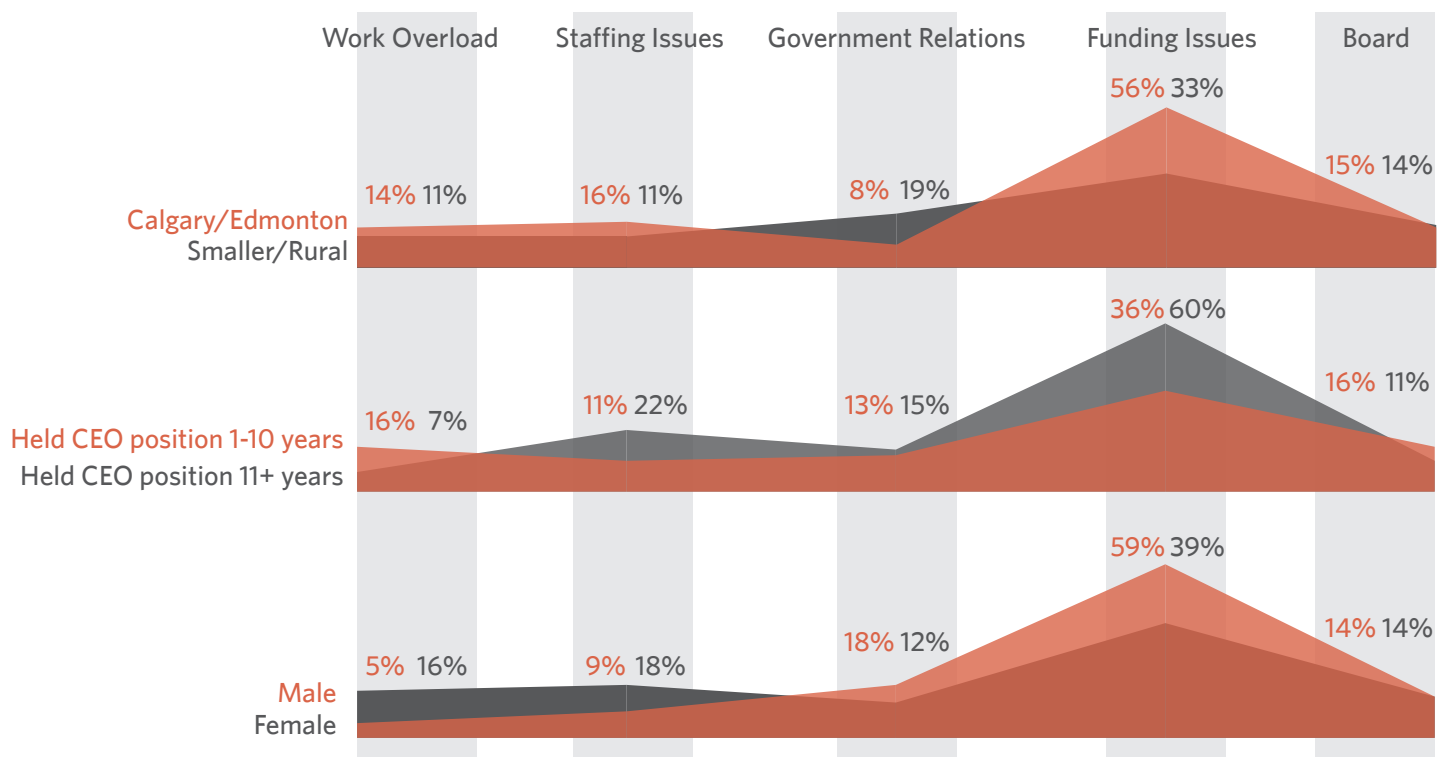
Consistent with findings from CCVO's 2012 *Alberta Nonprofit Survey*, funding issues were named as the most common source of dissatisfaction across all groups, although the degree to which concerns exist varied significantly across demographics:

- As length of tenure in an organization increased, so did the frequency of citing funding and human resource issues.
- Issues regarding work overload were named more often by women and longer-term executives.
- Government relations issues were a greater area of concern for those working in rural and/or smaller centres than those in Calgary and Edmonton.



*Funders are shifting major responsibilities to the organization without providing adequate and fair financial resources.*

With which aspects of your position are you least satisfied?



## Compensation and Funding

When survey participants were asked whether or not they believed they are adequately compensated for the work they do, the results were mixed. Overall, there was a fairly even distribution between positive and negative replies. However, men were much more likely to indicate they believed their compensation was adequate. While tenure did not vary significantly between men and women among our survey participants, the highest level of education attained did and, on average, male respondents had achieved higher levels. Charity Village's 2012 *Canadian Charitable and Nonprofit Sector Salary Survey* found that, in general, higher education translates into higher compensation. Male respondents in our survey also tended to be older, which may have a bearing on their satisfaction with compensation as wages and benefits do tend to increase with age. Despite these factors, it is important to better understand the variance in satisfaction across genders, and the extent to which it is attributable to systemic wage disparity.

Dissatisfaction with the executive role stems from a number of factors, although the most frequently mentioned issue was that of unstable and inconsistent funding. This concern was less dominant in responses from leaders in smaller organizations and rural-based organizations.

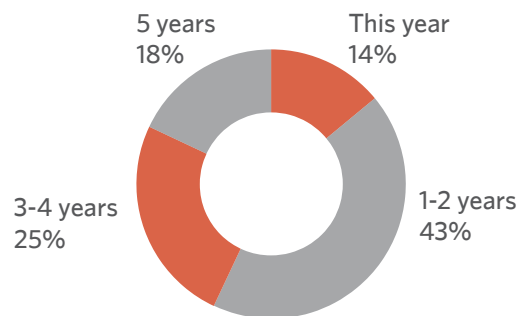
## Board Relations

Relationships with boards continue to be problematic for executives. While board relations were not cited as the primary cause for concern for any group, it consistently placed in the top three or four challenges noted. Younger executives (under 50 years of age) were far more likely to cite board relations as an area of concern than their older counterparts.

When asked where their boards fall short, the most frequent response pertained to fundraising. This was consistent across all demographics with more than 35 percent naming this as an area of concern.

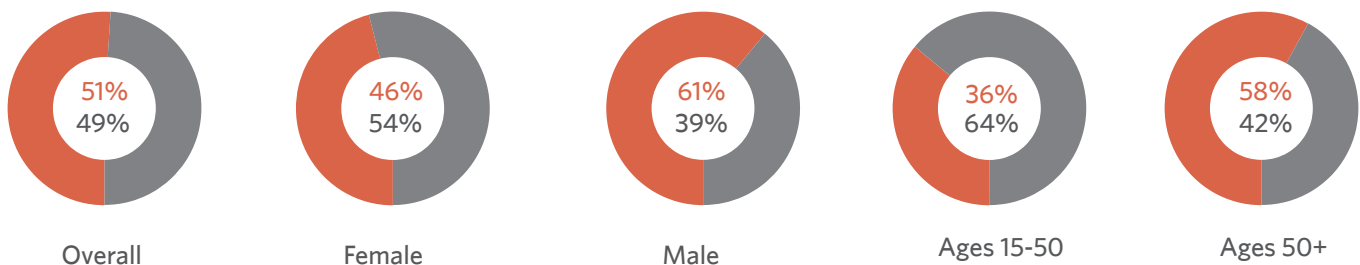
There were however, a number of respondents who replied that their boards did not fall short in any area. Being committed to, and supportive of, the work of the organization were the primary areas where boards were reported to excel.

When do you plan to leave?



Do you believe you are adequately compensated for the work you do?

■ Yes ■ No





## Future Intentions of Current Executives

In 2005, the Calgary Centre for Non-Profit Management released its report, titled *Addressing the Leadership Challenge: Non-Profit Executive Directors' Views on Tenure and Transition in Alberta*. This seminal research report found that 36 percent of the senior executive leaders who responded to the survey planned to leave their position within the following two years and, over a period of five years, 82 percent would be moving on. In 2005, at the height of a labour shortage, this news was framed as presenting a significant challenge for the nonprofit sector throughout Alberta. While tracking employee turnover within the nonprofit sector at any level is problematic, indications are that the exodus of senior executives did not happen at this anticipated rate. The economic downturn of 2008-2010 is often cited as a significant factor that compelled individuals to remain in their roles.

The 2013 CCVO survey of existing nonprofit senior executives aligns well with the 2005 Centre for Non-Profit Management study in terms of regional distribution, subsector and organizational size, and therefore allows for various comparisons.

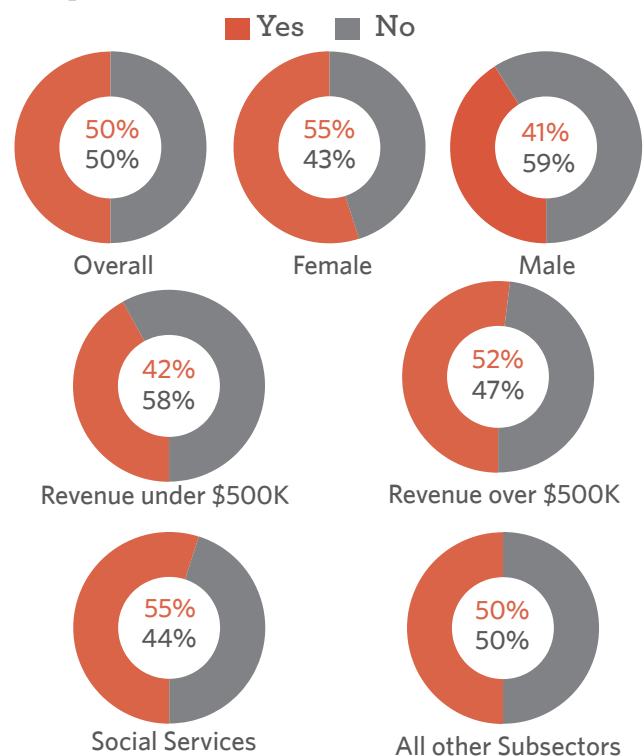
The CCVO survey found that overall, 50 percent of respondents indicated they plan to leave their current position within the short to medium term. There were, however, significant variations in the intentions of men and women with 55 percent of women planning to leave within this timeframe compared to 41 percent of men. (Caution must be used when interpreting the male responses due to the lower sample size). Respondents working in smaller organizations, those with under \$500,000 in revenue, were far less likely to indicate an intention to leave their current position.

Of respondents who indicated they plan to leave within the short to medium term, almost 50 percent plan to leave within the next two years, far exceeding the 36 percent for the same timeframe reported in the 2005 Centre for Non-Profit Management study. While caution must be used when interpreting this result due to the smaller sample size, the rate of turnover that was suggested in 2005 may now be upon us. This turnover figure is consistent with CCVO's 2012 *Alberta Nonprofit Survey* and a 2012 report from the HR Council which found that approximately 27 percent of organizations expect turnover in the senior executive position in the two years following the reports. Preliminary results from CCVO's 2013 *Alberta Nonprofit Survey* suggest these forecasts are consistent with what is currently occurring.

Another way to look at these numbers is that, were this level of attrition to remain constant, organizations would, on average, need to replace their ED or CEO every eight years. If it were this simple, this may in fact be very healthy for the sector. However, the frequency of CEO turnover is not consistent across the sector. Some organizations have long serving senior executives (measured in decades), while others struggle to stabilize these positions. Moreover, with an aging population, more and more senior executives will, in the coming years, be "lost" to retirement. The two studies referenced above confirm this trend.

In 2005, just one third of executives planned to retire upon leaving their organization. In 2013, figures for those intending to retire have risen to almost 45 percent although, again, there are significant differences by gender. Women are more than twice as likely to retire upon leaving their current positions. For those that plan to remain working, the nonprofit sector appears to be a less appealing option, particularly among women.

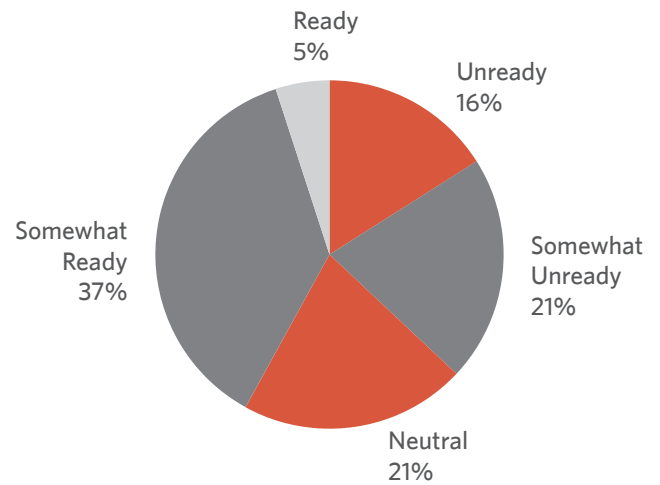
Do you anticipate you will leave your current position in the short to medium term?



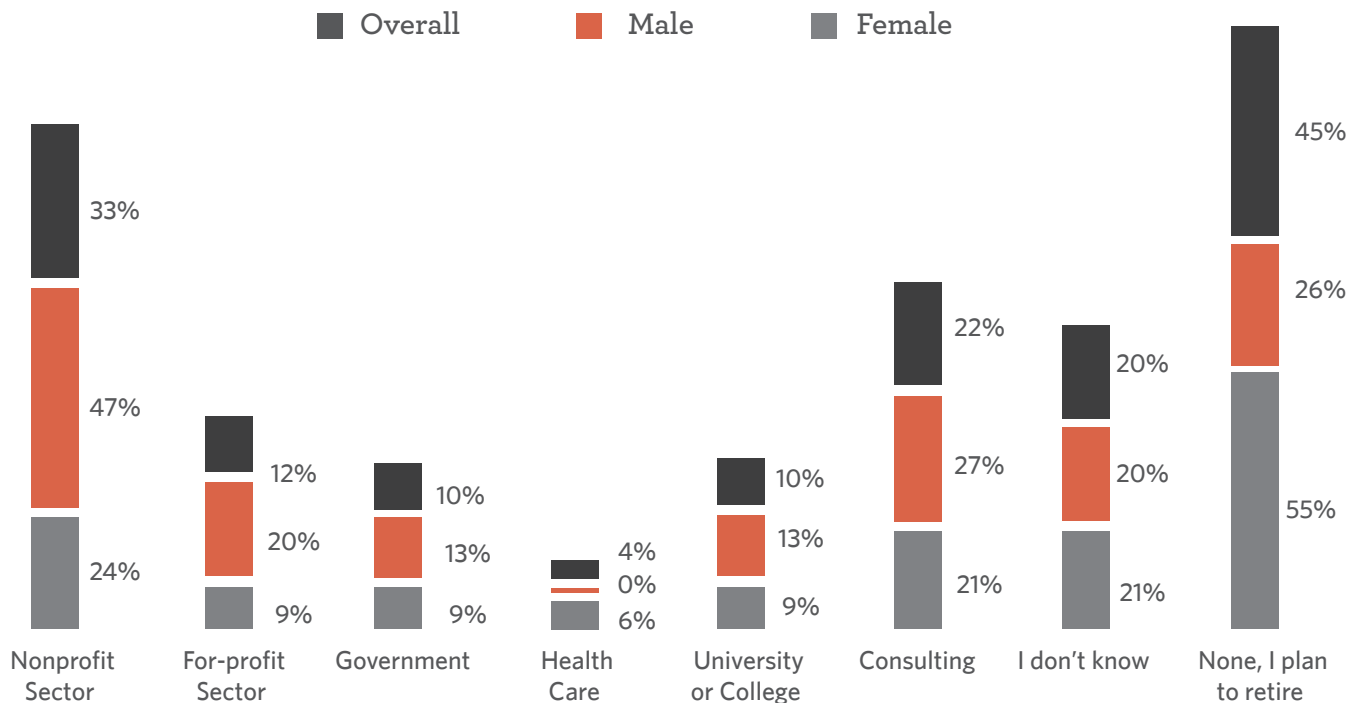
## Readiness for Succession

In the 2013 CCVO survey of existing leaders, when asked to rate their organization's readiness for transition, the results were mixed. Overall, more than one third of executives indicated their organization is either unready or somewhat unready for succession. Almost half of leaders in organizations with budgets under \$500,000 indicated they were either unready or somewhat unready for a transition. Notably, executives who plan to leave their current position within the short to medium term indicated they are only marginally better prepared for a change than the overall sample. Rural organizations appear to be less ready for transition, with only 21 percent of respondents indicating they are either "ready" or "somewhat ready" for transition.

Please rate your organizations' readiness for an executive leadership transition



If you are planning on leaving your current position, to what area do you think you will transition?



## SURVEY OF EMERGING LEADERS

*CCVO undertook an online survey of emerging leaders within Alberta's nonprofit sector between November 19th and December 14th, 2012. It was completed by 404 respondents. The survey targeted individuals who self-identified as aspiring to an executive level role, as well as those identified by others—primarily current executives—as having potential to fulfill such a role in the future.*

The survey sought to gain an understanding of respondents' career aspirations, their perceptions of the current state of executive leadership, their feelings toward assuming such a role in the future and their recommendations around supporting executive leadership development. The majority of respondents (92 percent) occupied some form of leadership role, ranging from team leaders and coordinators to individuals with acting executive director experience. Approximately eight percent were front line staff.

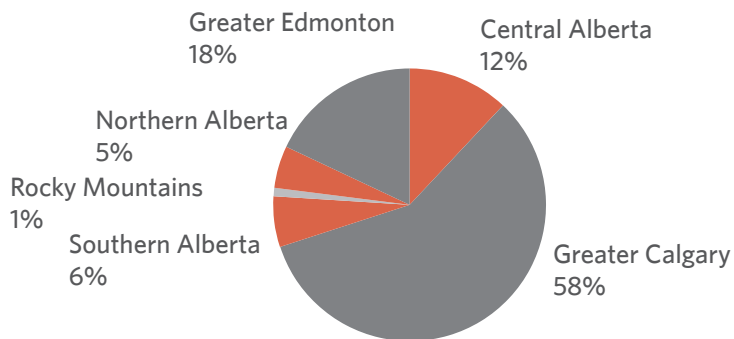
Of the two major cities, our sample was more heavily weighted toward Calgary, although we did not observe a notable difference in overall responses from Calgary and Edmonton. As with the survey of existing executive leaders, this sample is more heavily weighted toward social services. With the exception of religious organizations, we received responses from individuals in all major subsectors. The gender breakdown is representative of the composition of Alberta's nonprofit sector.

Finally, the sample is more heavily weighted toward larger organizations, likely because smaller organizations have fewer paid staff – people who would be identified as “emerging leaders.” Moreover, smaller organizations tend to have much flatter organizational structures and, therefore, fewer individuals occupying managerial roles.

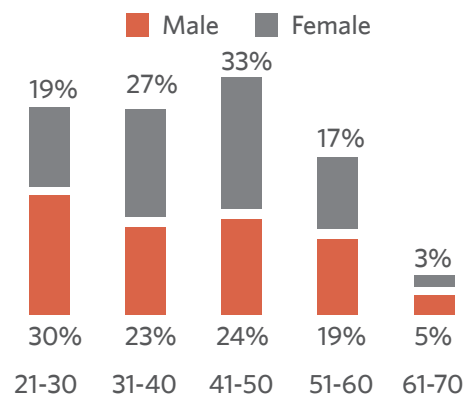


*Overall there seems to be a culture of people looking down upon those who choose to take care of themselves, as well as contribute to the organization. Thus, burnout occurs in many organizations.*

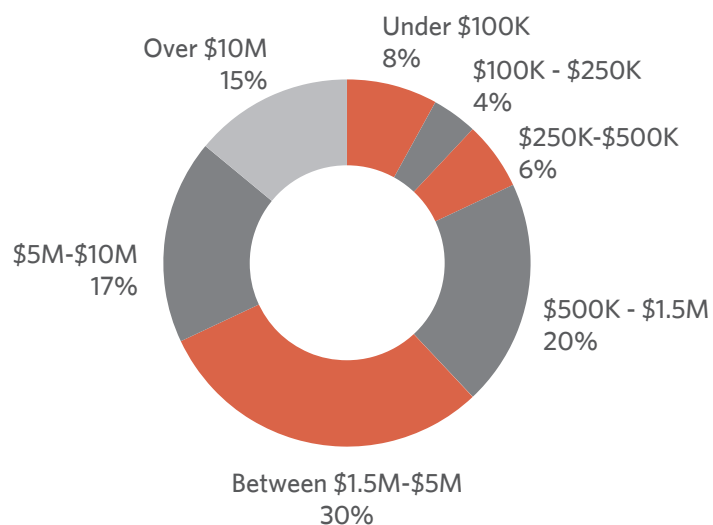
## Regional Distribution of Responses



## Age of Respondents



## Organization Operating Budget





## Aspirations of Emerging Leaders

Approximately half of the emerging leaders surveyed identified that they aspire to an executive-level position, a quarter were unsure if they aspire to a leadership role and a quarter indicated they do not.

At a fundamental level, we asked “What distinguishes those who aspire to an executive leadership role from those who don’t?”

### Age

The most notable trend was related to the age. More than half of respondents aged 50 or below, including 60 percent of those in their 30s, aspire to executive leadership. However, those 50 and under are also more likely to be undecided. Once respondents enter into their 50s, there is a steady drop in the number that aspire to lead or are undecided, and a sharp rise in those that do not aspire to executive leadership positions. This raises several questions:

- Are there better ways to support decision-making earlier on in one’s nonprofit career?
- Do we need to better expose people to leadership opportunities and training in their 20s and 30s?
- Are there ways we could make leadership positions more attractive to those who are further on in their careers?

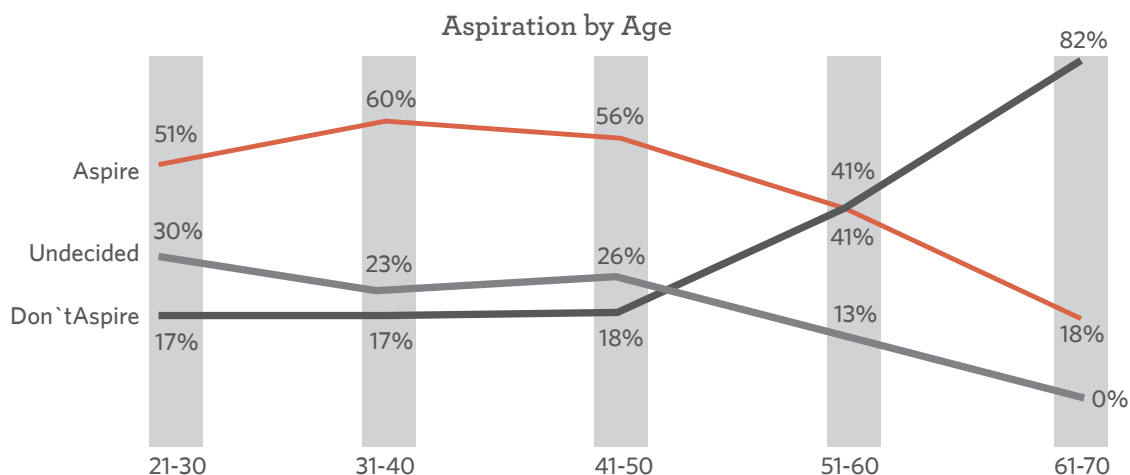
### Education

Another notable factor is education. Among survey respondents, 71 percent of those who aspired to a senior executive role possessed a university degree and 26 percent possessed a graduate degree. Of those who did not aspire to such a role, 51 percent had university degrees and nine percent had graduate degrees. While such an association is to be expected, several respondents expressed concern regarding a lack of time and financial resources to pursue formal education and training opportunities.

Choosing an appropriate program to support career advancement can be a daunting task. Among the considerations are the applicability of curriculum, cost, location, format, time requirements and the overall ability to balance work, ongoing study and personal obligations.

### Concerns about Work/Life Balance

Those who aspire to executive-level positions are more likely to work longer hours and less likely to express concerns over work/life balance than those who are undecided. Put another way, they are more willing to make sacrifices in other areas of their lives.



## Emerging Leaders' Concerns About Assuming an Executive Leadership Role

The emerging leader survey respondents who aspire to leadership positions or are undecided were asked what concerns they have about assuming an executive leadership position.

Most of the issues raised relate to work/life balance, the level of responsibility, the individuals' lack of readiness, and the effort required to sustain organizations financially. Additionally, concerns were raised about governance.

### Work/Life Balance

Those undecided about moving into an executive leadership role were particularly concerned about work/life balance. Nearly 50 percent identified this as a concern, compared to 22 percent of those who aspire to such a role. Similarly, when asked what would make the role more attractive, one-third of those who were undecided identified better work/life balance, compared to 12 percent of those who aspire to an executive role.

### Level of Responsibility/Lack of Readiness

Most respondents framed their lack of readiness in terms of their level of experience, training and/or competencies. Some felt they required formal credentials, such as a graduate level degree. Of those that described specific areas where they feel lacking, most cited financial management skills (Likewise, this is the top skill that current executive leaders identified when asked what skill they wished they possessed when they moved into their role, but didn't).

Women were more likely to cite concerns regarding the level of responsibility and their readiness for executive positions. They were also more likely to express concerns about the level of support offered from boards. When considering "readiness" for leadership roles one might expect that male respondents would be more likely to express concerns than women. The women in our sample were, on average, older and had been working in the sector longer. However, men who responded occupied more senior roles than women and had attained higher levels of education. Further research could explore questions around the extent to which women are encouraged to pursue senior executive roles and are being provided with the same opportunities as men.

### Financial Sustainability

The ability to sustain organizations financially was also of particular concern. Many individuals perceive financing the work of organizations to be an ongoing struggle and to consume a disproportionate amount of senior executives' time. This is consistent with the reality described by the current executives cohort.

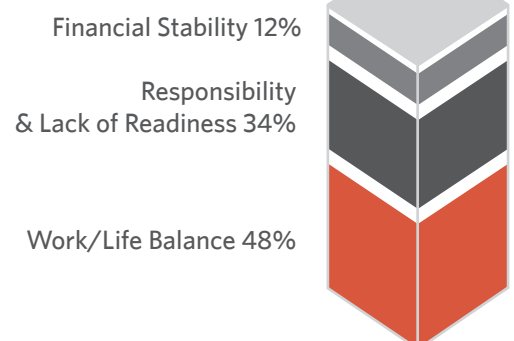
### Governance

Finally, respondents expressed concerns about working with boards. Some concerns related to respondents' lack of experience working with boards and their limited knowledge in the area of governance. However, more of the concerns had to do with boards being out of touch or disengaged, the level of support executives could expect from their boards, and whether boards held realistic expectations.

### Concerns about assuming an Executive Leadership position



### Those Who Are Undecided



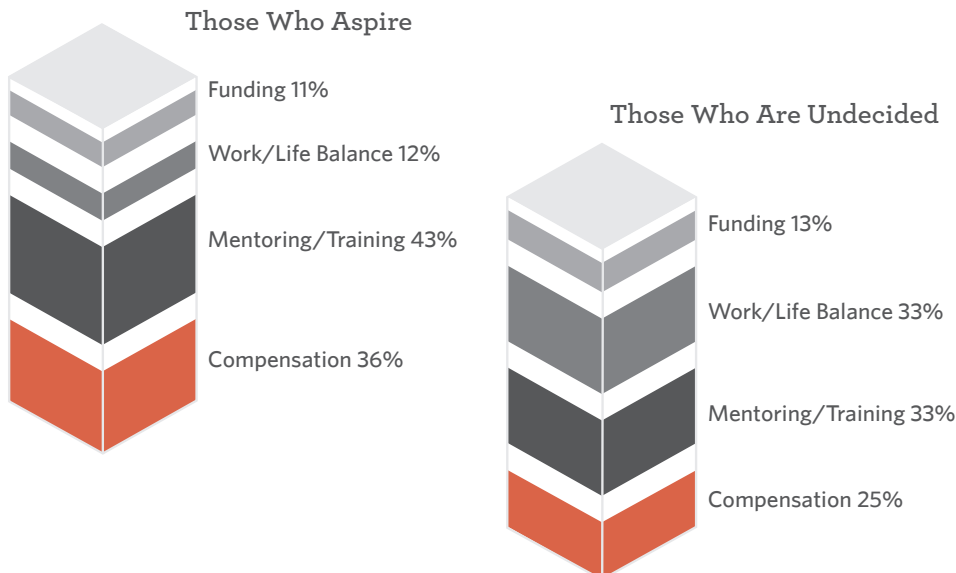
## Factors That Would Make an Executive Position More Attractive to Emerging Leaders

Survey respondents indicated enhanced mentoring and training, increased compensation, better work/life balance and more stable organizational funding as the top factors that would make pursuing a senior executive position more attractive.

Emerging leaders clearly indicated they want to be equipped with the appropriate skills and provided with the experience and support to succeed in executive leadership positions. Compensation is a greater concern for those who aspire to such positions, while work/life balance is of primary importance for those who are undecided.

*I'll be blunt. Higher salary and actually having benefits such as a drug plan [would make an executive position more attractive]. I have too many other things to worry about when I don't make enough to survive and cover my family's needs to be able to do a good job at the level required as an executive.*

Factors that would make an Executive Position more attractive



## Current Leadership Development Activities

Emerging leaders were asked what steps they had taken to equip themselves for an executive role. The majority of respondents identified some form of professional development such as courses, workshops and external training. The next two most frequently referenced measures were independent learning and on-site coaching/mentoring. Only 30 percent of respondents identified that their organization provides structured mentorship or coaching opportunities. Perhaps as would be expected, those nonprofit organizations that are larger and have achieved a certain degree of scale are far more likely to offer in-house training.

Of those respondents who identified forms of independent or self-initiated learning, there were many references to reading pertinent literature and participation in various leadership courses. Some individuals had pursued specialized training in order to expand or enhance their knowledge and skill base in areas such as fund development and human resources. A number of individuals reported they were pursuing—or had completed—graduate studies.

Some respondents commented about taking on lead roles. These varied from project-based opportunities to securing positions with greater levels of responsibility.

A very small minority reported they are working with professional coaches.

## Strengthening Nonprofit Leadership

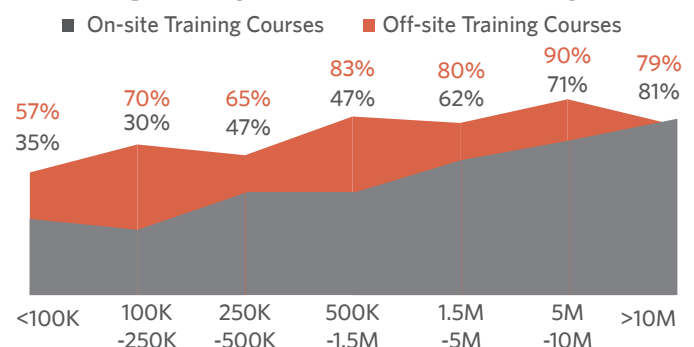
Emerging leaders were asked for their advice regarding strengthening and expanding leadership within the sector. They were also invited to comment on issues that must be addressed to support the future of executive leadership. A number of themes emerged:

- There is a strong desire for structured mentorship opportunities including those that fall outside the formal supervisory relationship and outside of one's own organization. Emerging leaders seek exposure to varied approaches, philosophies, cultures, and accumulated wisdom from throughout the sector and across other sectors.
- Emerging leaders see the value in more peer learning and networking opportunities. They do not want to

learn in isolation; they desire forums or communities of practice in which they can compare notes and learn alongside other aspiring leaders.

- Respondents commented about formal training and educational opportunities. Some feel there is a need for more programs, academic or otherwise, that specifically address nonprofit executive leadership. Others made less of a distinction between the leadership and management skills that are required in the nonprofit and other sectors. Consistently, respondents stressed the importance of eliminating financial barriers to education.
- Respondents noted the importance of retaining emerging leaders, who will go elsewhere (other sectors) in the absence of competitive wages.
- Respondents suggested compensation for executives needs to reflect scope and level of responsibility.
- As earlier mentioned, emerging leaders are concerned about preserving work/life balance and refute the notion that leadership should equate to sacrifice.
- Respondents feel the nonprofit sector needs to be cast in a new light as a viable career choice.

Percentage of organizations by operational budget providing on-site and off-site training





## Skills and Competencies Required

Respondents were asked to identify the top skills and competencies an executive must have for success in the nonprofit sector today, as well as those they view as increasingly important to have in the future. With respect to the former, the majority of comments from emerging leaders highlighted leadership capacity: strategic thinking/vision, communication, leading and delegating, and collaboration.

When asked to consider skills required for the future, communication and collaboration were the most frequently cited, followed by technical skills such as the use of technology and social media, fundraising, and human resource management.

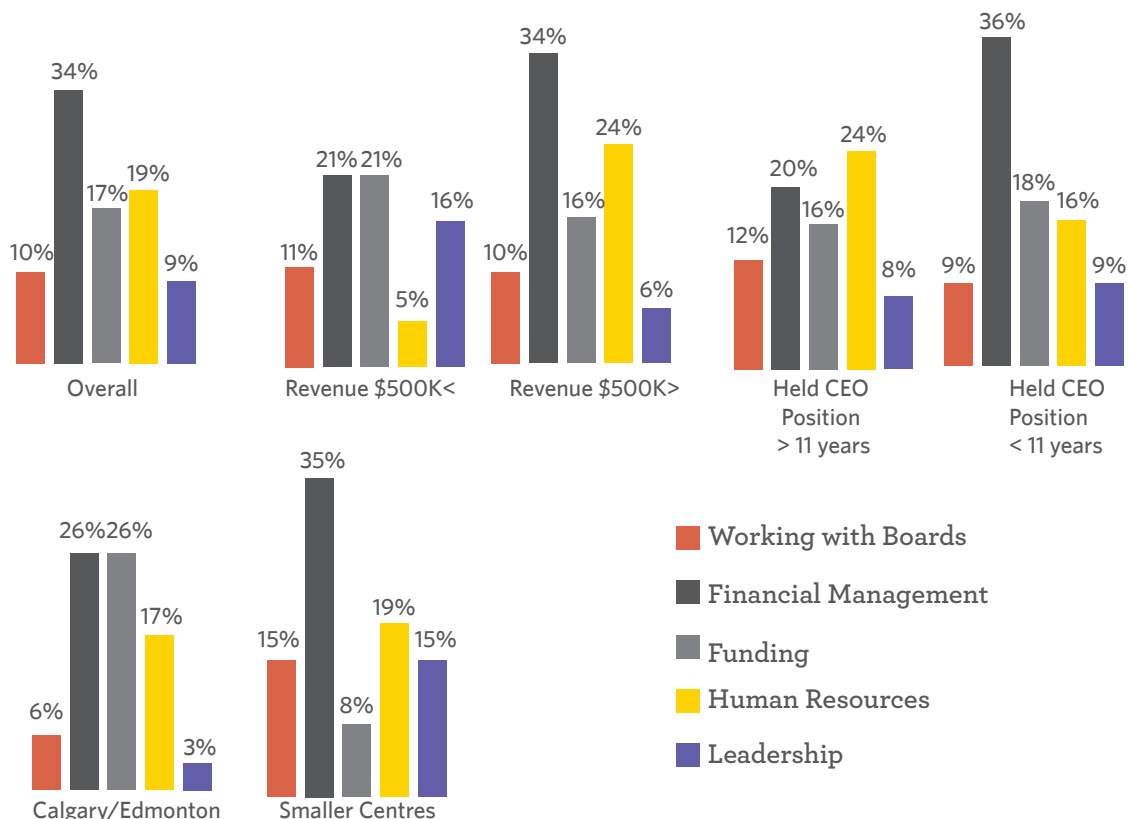
The majority of current executive respondents indicated that it would have been beneficial to have acquired a better understanding of financial management and financial systems prior to assuming an executive leadership position. For executives who have held their position for more than 10 years, skills and experience

in human resources were rated as more important. Those in larger and rural organizations also rated human resource development higher.

Respondents were asked to describe the skills and competencies needed in the future. The range of abilities, skills and attributes was extensive and were fairly evenly split between management and leadership competencies. The management skills noted align fairly well with the skills cited in response to the previous question and include skills in functional areas such as finance, human resource management, fundraising and communications.

Leadership skills cited as critical in the future included building effective collaborations and partnership. Relationship building with both internal and external stakeholders was highlighted by many as a vital skill. Respondents also stressed the importance of the ability to inspire, motivate and develop staff through a compelling vision.

What skills and competencies do you wish you possessed when you moved into an Executive Leadership position, but didn't?



# PERCEPTIONS OF THE CURRENT STATE OF EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Within both surveys the responses to questions on the current state of executive leadership ranged from “strong, but aging,” to “inconsistent” and “out of touch.”

Some respondents characterized leaders as overworked. The majority of comments described the current state of executive leadership within the nonprofit sector negatively or indicated mixed opinions. Approximately one in five respondents described the current state of leadership positively.

Emerging leaders generally spoke more favourably of their own superiors, and more critically of executive leadership as a whole. Emerging leaders who do not aspire to executive positions were more likely to describe the state of leadership in positive terms.

Many respondents’ comments described the current state of leadership in the sector as tenuous, due to the level of

anticipated turnover. Many emerging leaders expressed concerns about the sector’s lack of attention to mentoring and succession planning.

The following are among the factors used by respondents to assess the “state” of executive leadership:

- The level of attention paid by current executives to mentoring and succession planning in their organization.
- The extent to which leadership in the sector has been professionalized and leaders possess “business acumen.”
- The extent to which leaders possess subject matter expertise.
- The number of experienced leaders in the field.
- The level of innovation demonstrated by leaders.
- The level of stress associated with executive leaders’ roles and their ability to preserve a work/life balance.

## Emerging Leader

### Existing Leader

*“I would say there are two states of leadership: those who have been in their position forever and need to move on and those who are new and young with little to no experience.”*

*“Stretched to the limit with the vast array of tasks and demands. Pushed to justify existence with metrics that don’t make sense or a difference.”*

*“It is a mess. There is a real lack of training for people in executive positions... and it results in poor practices that prevent issues from getting full traction.”*

*“In trouble. Many of the current EDs are moving on via retirement or to other career for higher pay and less stress. We have to encourage the brightest to stay in the sector, offer competitive salaries, and better benefits for those beyond the management level.”*

*“Under qualified, under educated, under paid.”*

*“It appears stable but not strong.”*

*“Getting stronger and more skilled.”*

*“Dismal. I see the amount of pressure/time that our CEO puts in and wonder if I would want that and how it would impact my family. Agencies are competing for funding against each other so that you cannot look to other CEOs for support either.”*

*“I do not see a lot of knowledge transfer or succession planning.”*

*“I see many skilled leaders emerging, but also leaving due to the frustration with the current system in Alberta.”*

*“Dedicated, stressed.”*

*“Very strong, although at risk of changing as the demographics change.”*

*“Strong and engaged.”*

*“Spotty, inconsistent. Many smaller nonprofit organizations appear to need support in building professional management capacity.”*

# ADVANCING EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR

*Any process or framework for developing leadership within Alberta's nonprofit sector must consider the motivations, values and skill requirements of those who aspire to such a role as well as the complex and changing needs of organizations.*

## A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE NONPROFIT SECTOR

Both current and emerging leaders are clear that the motivation to lead comes from the desire to have an impact on our communities. They are equally clear that there are a wide array of skills, structures and systems that need to be in place for leadership to be effective and sustainable.

A review of existing literature and surveys of current and emerging leaders confirm that attention to nonprofit leadership development is critical to the continued health and viability of the sector. There are, and will continue to be, numerous and varied programs, resources, tools and publications focused on developing high quality leaders (see Appendix B for examples of leadership development activities). However, isolated activities undertaken

outside the context of a structured and connected framework will continue to yield less than optimal results. To date, little attention has been paid to a systematic approach to leadership development in the nonprofit sector. An opportunity exists to coordinate and expand efforts to better prepare the Alberta nonprofit sector's future executive leaders.

The following framework reflects a connected, multidisciplinary approach to leadership development in the nonprofit sector that addresses individual, organizational and sector-wide aspects. It builds upon a solid research base as well as promising practices both regionally and from other jurisdictions.



## Individual Development

For many individuals, career progression is not a linear process. Career paths may take planned or unexpected turns and individuals' interests and aspirations may change over time. Given the sector's projected turnover in the coming years, a leadership development framework should define "emerging leader" broadly and include strategies to support skills development and decision-making across generations and at various stages within individuals' careers.

Over the course of this research, it has become apparent that the use of the term "emerging leader," while increasingly prevalent, is also problematic, as for many it is defined narrowly as "youth" and does not necessarily encompass mid or later career individuals who are well-positioned to transition into executive roles.

### Professional Training and Development

Both the current literature and the findings from the CCVO surveys reinforce the need for a continued focus on training and development opportunities. Financial management and relationship building were most often cited as the areas in which executives needed skills training. The range and depth of skills needed is primarily determined by size, focus, and working style of the organization, entailing both technical skills—such as financial and human resource management—as well as soft skills like systems thinking, relationship building and advocacy. In order to equip both current executives and the next generation of leaders, training and development opportunities need be affordable, relevant and flexible in terms of delivery options.

To advance professional development within the sector, a number of factors will have to be addressed:

- Funders will need to make leadership development a higher priority in the coming years.
- Organizations need to resist the temptation to treat professional development as discretionary when developing operating budgets, and advocate along these lines with funders.
- Mechanisms will need to be developed that will allow for collaboration between organizations in order for more employees to gain access to a broader range of professional development opportunities.
- Capacity building organizations need to remain abreast of shifting needs, develop relevant training opportunities, and liaise with training institutions to ensure offerings remain timely, effective and relevant.

### Coaching and Mentoring

It is clear there is a need for a heightened emphasis on mentoring and coaching within the sector. Emerging leaders have a strong desire to capitalize on and capture the accumulated wisdom of experienced leaders. They see the potential for mentorship in broad terms, extending beyond their own organizations and perhaps, even beyond the nonprofit sector. Mentorship may take many forms, utilizing both existing relationships with superiors as well as those that fall outside of existing power relationships.

As a growing number of leaders from across all sectors move into semi-retirement and retirement, the potential exists to engage them as volunteers or as paid consultants for the purpose of mentoring emerging leaders.

There is however, no existing organization, program or structure that has the capacity or the mandate to match available mentors to mentees on a significant scale. While this process may, on the surface, sound simple to create, and literature on best practices is abundant, the coordination function must be adequately resourced.

### Networking and Peer Learning Opportunities

There is a strong desire for more peer networking opportunities as a part of leadership development. Leading an organization is a complex, challenging and, all too often, isolating endeavour. Platforms need to be established that allow current and emerging leaders to share common experiences, learn about new ideas, give and receive support, and to network with others in similar positions. These could range from semi-structured opportunities to sharing experiences with peers from across the sector and forming leadership councils, all the way to the creation of professional associations.

## Organizational Development

### Adaptive and Responsive Organizational Structures and Working Styles

Current organizational structures and operating styles require examination and may benefit from changes if the sector is to maintain its ability to attract and retain competent leadership. Hierarchical structures that place an inordinate amount of responsibility and power in the senior executive role may need to give way to flatter



organizational structures that adopt shared decision-making processes and a greater emphasis on the role of functional teams.

Issues such as work/life balance must be taken seriously and may require organizations to make significant changes to the ways they deliver services, acquire funds and manage staff. Organizations will need to make concerted efforts to incorporate generation-specific values and working styles into their cultures, such as wellness and ongoing education. Additionally, they must be proficient at managing a diverse workforce.

A critical element in creating healthy and dynamic organizations is well-defined governance structures and practices. Sustainable organizations require strong boards that have appropriate training and skill makeup, strong human resource practices, strong strategy, and clarity of purpose to guide performance and performance evaluation. One respondent stressed the need to educate boards, describing them as one of the biggest sources of stress for leaders.

### *Intentional and Robust Succession Planning*

Succession planning within nonprofit organizations needs to become far more intentional and focused and committed to a true executive development mindset. While some organizations have robust succession planning systems in place, for many organizations these processes are lacking. Succession planning encompasses far more than replacing an outgoing leader with a qualified replacement, or the act of training and preparing high-performing employees for executive careers within the organization. Rather, a succession plan must be viewed as part of a broader organizational strategy, including knowledge management, to ensure the organization has a fully-prepared workforce in the present and the future. While there is no “one size fits all” style for succession planning, as factors such as organizational size, subsector and mandate all need to be factored in, there are a number of fundamental steps that all organizations need to undertake. Succession planning needs to be strategic and long term, with ongoing attention from both boards and executives. It must recognize both current and future leadership needs, continuously cultivate leaders from within and position the organization as an attractive employment option.

### *Competitive Wages and Benefits*

For many years, the sector has stressed the non-monetary benefits of working for a nonprofit or charity, such as the ability to make a difference within the community,



*I think what the sector needs is the one thing most executive leaders cannot afford: The time and money to undertake top quality skill development. Most often one of those two essential factors deters participation.*

personal fulfilment and the opportunity for challenging work. While still valid elements, these benefits can no longer be regarded as sufficient rationale to provide inadequate compensation at any level of employment. The outdated and misguided notion that employees should somehow be subject to a wage penalty because their work furthers the public good presents as a threat to the sustainability of our community organizations.

Compensation remains a perennial issue within the nonprofit sector. Employees at all levels have called for adjusting compensation levels to be more in line with comparable work in government and private sectors. Unfortunately, there is little definition or agreement around the highly subjective notions of “appropriate” or “fair” wages. What one person might deem to be fair or appropriate, another might reject as unfair or inappropriate.

Compounding this issue is the lack of comparable information on sector compensation. There is a need for a much better understanding of the wage levels and structures within the nonprofit sector. Consistent, reliable and accessible information on wages and benefits within the sector is a critical issue. Though limited data is available through public and private sources, it is far from sufficient in terms of understanding the compensation dynamics in the sector. Both nonprofit organizations and governments at all levels have a vested interest in, and a responsibility for, the creation of relevant and credible compensation information.

## Sector-Wide Development

### Sharing of Promising Practices and Resources

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the potential for fuller collaboration across the sector; and too, the challenges associated with various forms of “partnership” and collaboration. Several of the opportunities for strengthening leadership through collaboration have already been referenced:

- In order to address the need for expanded professional development opportunities, funders, capacity building organizations, and nonprofits can consider ways to finance access to in-house training offered by larger, and/or well-resourced organizations. Similarly, smaller organizations can look at collaborating to develop or access programs that support common needs.
- Organizations can collaborate to develop mentoring relationships across the sector and for the purpose of peer networking for senior executives and/or emerging leaders.

The need and benefits of collaboration, alliances and partnerships among nonprofits and between sectors, was identified by both existing and emerging leaders. Opportunities can be explored for shared service roles where nonprofit organizations might share and leverage the strengths and resources of other agencies.

### Sustainable Funding

As indicated within this report, the financing of organizations is a preoccupation of its leaders. Many leaders are discouraged with the amount of time they spend in their roles fundraising. This is frequently a source of tension between senior executives and boards of directors. Organizations within the nonprofit sector vary in the level to which they rely on sources such as fundraising, project funding, and earned income. The survey revealed that many executives and emerging leaders are growing weary of the lack of dedicated, stable and predictable funding to support their work.

While recommendations for how to finance the work of community organizations falls outside the scope of this research, there is a growing awareness that the current model is not sustainable. It is important to recognise that just as programs and services are dependent on sustainable funding, so too is the future of nonprofit leadership.

*“There is an expectation that because you work in the nonprofit sector that you work for nothing and you work nonstop until [you] burn out. This is not realistic and perpetuates the stereotype associated with nonprofit employment.”*

### Sector Profile

In order to continue to attract and retain highly skilled and dedicated leaders, the nonprofit sector, and the organizations within it, need to be seen as competent, professional and sustainable. In an era of increasing demands for service, flat revenues and a decreasing supply of labour, individual organizations and the nonprofit sector as a whole will need to be far more intentional in promoting the advantages of work within the sector. The sector must find ways to become attractive to young people as a place of meaningful, rewarding and potentially long-term evolving employment. Initial areas of activity may include:

- Improved branding and communication in support of the sector as a viable career choice, and of the value of its work.
- A reconsideration of the narrative of the sector.
- Advocacy for increased political engagement in the area of nonprofit policy.
- Mechanisms to recognize and profile well-run nonprofits and exceptional nonprofit leaders.

*“Retention of middle management is where it needs to start and this includes competitive pay as well as strong mentoring and coaching.”*

## ADVICE FROM EXECUTIVE PLACEMENT PROFESSIONALS

*We asked executive placement professionals to share their thoughts and advice on nonprofit executive leadership. Here's what we heard:*



*The old days of taking the best program person and throwing them off the dock are over*

*Boards that think that superman is going to arrive should forget it.*

*More E.D.'s are leaving their boards – life is too short.*

*Show me a good chair and I'll show you a good board*

*Boards are often caught off guard. 'We never expected Mary to leave'. In time they recognize the opportunity to rejuvenate the organization. It opens up the organization for change.*

- There is an overall trend toward professionalization of executive management as nonprofits become increasingly complex.
- Executive candidates are becoming pickier and are asking the right questions. They want to know what level of support they can expect from boards. They want to know who is going to run the board.
- It is becoming difficult to recruit from other regions and provinces into some Alberta centres. Salaries might be higher but the cost of housing presents as a barrier.
- There tends not to be strong succession planning. Many organizations feel they cannot afford to have someone waiting in the wings.
- Too often the volume, scope, and complexity of the work is not recognized by boards, whose expectations can be unrealistic. This results in burnout and resignations. On the other hand, some boards exhibit a "generosity of spirit" around executives' shortcomings, realising they are not paying for top talent.
- New leaders need to be much more cognizant of social media.
- Executives need to be able to think big picture – beyond their individual organizations.
- Boards are getting frustrated with the E.D. that doesn't know how to collaborate.
- The ability to do the necessary outreach work is often lacking.
- There is tremendous pressure for E.D.'s to perform fund development.
- The ability to work with boards of directors is often lacking.

# CONCLUSION

*A number of reports have framed the future of leadership in the nonprofit sector as one of “crisis.” The complexity and challenge of organizational leadership, coupled with anticipated changes in our labour force demographics, aptly fits the common understanding of a crisis as “a time in which things are difficult and uncertain.”*

From much of the literature, and indeed the findings of our research, it would be easy to make an assessment that this can be, at times, a complex sector in which to work. While these notions are valid and need to be top-of-mind, there are other nuances of the “crisis” concept that are perhaps more accurate. In medicine, a crisis is a turning point: a point in time when the patient begins to get better or worse. It is that critical moment when future health is determined by the action-or inaction-of today. In this context, the concept of crisis as turning point is rightfully the appropriate descriptor of the state of nonprofit leadership.

The changes on the horizon for our organizations and communities are substantial. Increasing expectations of service and demonstrable impact, unstable funding and changing labour markets are but a few of a multitude of issues that face leaders of organizations.

There are, however, reasons to be optimistic for the future despite changing demographics and labour market realities. The nonprofit sector remains one in which many individuals aspire to hold leadership positions, and as the pages within this report demonstrate, they have no shortage of ideas on how to improve it. The nearly 500 respondents to these surveys have provided a road map for the way ahead. A deliberate and proactive approach that addresses issues of compensation, professional development, work/life balance and governance would improve work conditions and job satisfaction and make the nonprofit sector an even more desirable and rewarding place to work.

“In a time of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists.

*- Eric Hoffer*

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: ACADEMIC & PRACTICAL RESEARCH

### Daring to Lead 2011: A National Survey of Executive Director Leadership

Cornelius, M., Moyers, R., & Bell, J. (2011). *Daring to lead 2011: A national survey of executive director leadership*. Retrieved from CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and the Meyer Foundation website: <http://www.daringtolead.org/wp-content/uploads/Daring-to-Lead-2011-Main-Report-online.pdf>

Produced in partnership by CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and the Meyer Foundation, *Daring to Lead 2011* was a national survey of 3,000 U.S. nonprofit executive directors and the third in a series following reports in 2001 and 2006. Respondents reported dissatisfaction with their boards and believed they were inadequately equipped to succeed in their positions. Challenges faced included feelings of loneliness at the top, as well as a general lack of executive training, human resource management, or board engagement.

Key lessons from the survey revealed the need for organizations to acknowledge and prepare for successful leadership transitions. Few organizations reported having a documented succession plan, and most seemed to avoid thinking about the inevitable departures of their senior executives.

Other lessons for boards included the need for greater understanding of the CEO role, better preparation for the integration of new hires, and ongoing support and development for executives. In addition, executives reported frustration with government funding and stress over the financial sustainability of their organizations. Executive coaching, peer networks, leadership programs, and expanded and diverse professional development options were a few of the recommendations that could be made available to EDs.

### Calgary Centre for Non-Profit Management: Addressing the Leadership Challenge

Boland, P. T., Jensen, C., & Meyers, B. (2005). *Addressing the leadership challenge: Non-profit executive directors' views on tenure and transition in Alberta*. Calgary Centre for Non-Profit Management and Peter T. Boland and Associates.

This 2005 report was a seminal body of work in understanding the nature of leadership in Alberta's nonprofit sector. Survey respondents, comprised of CEOs and EDs of Alberta nonprofits who were enthusiastic toward their jobs and satisfied with their pay, yet 36 percent still anticipated leaving their positions within two years. The themes that surfaced included feelings of loneliness and isolation, financial anxiety, disengaged board members, and unclear performance goals.

Respondents who reported that their jobs met their expectations "very well" did so because of supportive boards, accurate representation of the organization prior to accepting the ED position, and working with competent and committed staff.

Respondents who reported that their jobs did not meet their expectations attributed this to over-involvement in fundraising activities, lack of infrastructure and HR management, and workload responsibilities that exceeded compensation levels. Executives indicated that they were not made fully aware of the scope and responsibility they were taking on, as well as the issues facing their agencies, before they took on their positions.

### HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector: The State of Leadership Development

HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector (n.d.). *Skills and leadership development in Canada's nonprofit sector*. Retrieved April 27, 2013, from <http://www.hrcouncil.ca/projects/leadership.cfm#A2>

HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector (n.d.). *Stewarding*



change: Leadership and change management in the nonprofit sector. Retrieved April 27, 2013, from <http://www.hrcouncil.ca/about/news-details.cfm?nid=435>

Commissioned by the Muttart Foundation, the HR Council set out to gain insights into the state of leadership and leadership development in the nonprofit sector over a six-month period in 2009 and 2010. The research comprised of two parts: 13 focus groups totaling 146 senior executives of small and mid-sized social service charities in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and three interviews with educators at institutions offering academic programs in nonprofit management/leadership.

The themes explored included characteristics of leaders, challenges in recognizing leadership potential, providing mentorship to young leaders, and problems with formal training. For the latter, problems included an emphasis on courses rather than degrees in nonprofit leadership, and low enrollment for existing programs.

Suggestions to help attract and prepare younger generations of nonprofit leaders included more career guidance and mentorship opportunities, more support for peer learning and networking, secondment opportunities, team leadership, increasing collaboration within the sector and with other sectors, increasing work flexibility, keeping current with new technology, hiring recent immigrants, and cross-training existing employees for different roles.

## Imagine Canada: Leadership Perspectives

Zarinpoush, F., & Hall, M. H. (2007). *Leadership perspectives: Interviews with leaders of Canada's charities and nonprofit organizations*. Retrieved from Imagine Canada website: [http://www.imaginecanada.ca/files/www/en/library/other\\_research/leadership\\_perspectives\\_080108.pdf](http://www.imaginecanada.ca/files/www/en/library/other_research/leadership_perspectives_080108.pdf)

Interviews reflected in this report revealed a great deal of concern about the future of nonprofit leadership in Canada. Current leaders indicated that more emphasis needed to be put on developing training opportunities for incoming leaders earlier on to ease the transition process. Current training programs are inadequate because they are short, expensive and do not do the complexity of the sector justice. Respondents also said that they do not have the time to train and mentor their colleagues.

The same turnover concerns apply with respect to board members.

The vast majority of leaders were concerned about government priorities and policies. Respondents held

positive opinions of collaboration between nonprofits and businesses, but thought poorly of collaboration with government. They also reported challenges with securing general and core funding.

Leaders discussed the increasing demand for more sophisticated activities, more professional staff, improved business skills and more advanced technology. They noted that they must look for more creative and innovative ways to do their work because many of the previous initiatives have ceased to be effective in the sector. Many leaders report being involved in strategic planning, organizational restructuring, branding, and redesigning (or creating) programs. One third of leaders believe that the public does not have a good understanding of work in the nonprofit sector.

## United Way Toronto: Leadership Solutions

Gibson, S., & Macklem, K. (2008). *Leadership solutions: Building leadership in Toronto's nonprofit and voluntary sector*. Retrieved from United Way Toronto website: <http://www.unitedwaytoronto.com/downloads/whatWeDo/reports/LeadershipSolutionsFullReport.pdf>

United Way Toronto commissioned this feasibility study in 2008 to better understand the issues surrounding nonprofit leadership and leadership development, especially pertaining to community-inspired and community-focused programming.

Consultations with leaders of Toronto-based organizations brought forth recommendations around partnerships between private and nonprofit sector stakeholders and investors in the following areas:

- Program development: expanding succession planning, leadership self-assessment, partnership-building workshops, and making programs more accessible to the community.
- Peer-to-peer learning: undertaking more mentoring and networking in the sector.
- Evaluation: incorporating progressive evaluation approaches, methodology and tools.
- Two new strategic initiatives: *Leadership for a Positive Change*, and an *Executive Support and Transition Management Services Program*.

*Leadership for a Positive Change*—a partner-led pilot project—is a collective, cross-sectoral, city-wide initiative that will focus on leadership development in specific communities. If successful on a smaller scale, the initiative can be scaled up.



*The Executive Support and Transition Management Services Program* will help Toronto-based social services agencies work through leadership transitions and succession issues.

Additionally, all participants were encouraged to contribute to an online database (a “leadership learning wiki”) by posting relevant articles, reports and briefs, as well as experiences about their own leadership development initiatives.

### The Annie E. Casey Foundation: Building Leaderful Organizations: Succession Planning for Nonprofits

Wolfred, T. (2008). *Building leaderful organizations: Succession planning for nonprofits*. Retrieved from Annie E. Casey Foundation website: <http://www.aecf.org/~media/Pubs/Other/B/BuildingLeaderfulOrganizationsSuccessionPlann/Building%20Leaderful%20Organizations.pdf>

This is the sixth volume of a monograph series on executive transitions and executive transition management, funded in part by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund. *Building Leaderful Organizations* focuses on three approaches to succession planning:

- Strategic Leader Development: an ongoing practice based on identifying an agency’s leadership and managerial needs and recruiting and maintaining individuals who have, or can develop, skills based on these needs.
- Emergency Succession Planning: ensuring that key leadership functions and agency services can continue without disruption in the temporary absence of an administrator.
- Departure-defined Succession Planning: when a long-term leader has announced his or her departure date well in advance.

The report consists of several practical steps for boards and organizations, case studies, and a “Succession Readiness Checklist.”

### The Annie E. Casey Foundation: Next Shift: Beyond the Nonprofit Leadership Crisis

Kunreuther, F., & Corvington, P. (2007). *Next shift: Beyond the nonprofit leadership crisis*. Retrieved from Annie E. Casey Foundation website: <http://www.aecf.org/~media/Pubs/Other/N/NextShiftBeyondtheNonprofitLeadershipCrisis/Next%20Shift.pdf>

This is the second monograph in a series on executive transitions in the nonprofit sector. The authors challenge the current “crisis framework” used by organizations around executive transitions and argue that the crisis frame “uncritically accepts the sector and its leadership as is and looks past broader structural issues, failing to raise questions about where the sector could or should go in the future.” There are rich opportunities ahead for nonprofits.

The report outlined three main themes related to the leadership transition, along with calls to action for each one:

- Concerns about organizational structures available in the sector: young leaders are not attracted to the traditional models that most organizations operate under. A more flexible structure, including co-directorships, flattened hierarchies, networked organizations, and participatory approaches would suit younger leaders.
- The role of the CEO or ED: even current leaders are expressing dissatisfaction and frustration in their roles. The sector is finding it harder to sustain its reputation for being innovative and creative, making it less attractive to young leaders. Young people want a job with excitement, challenge, creativity and innovation, and without the pressures of being responsible for an organization’s success or failure.
- The need to develop more deliberate ways of identifying and supporting younger staff members; baby boomers must better recognize the contributions of the younger generation.

### The Bridgespan Group: The Nonprofit Sector’s Leadership Deficit

Tierney, T. (2006). *The nonprofit sector’s leadership deficit*. Retrieved from The Bridgespan Group website: <http://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/96be2563-f182-44db-bc18-797c493eb6f9/Leadership-Deficit-White-Paper-pdf.pdf.aspx>

The Bridgespan Group carried out this study in 2006 of the leadership requirements of nonprofits with revenues greater than \$250,000, excluding hospitals and post-secondary institutions. Key findings highlighted that the U.S. nonprofit sector will need to hire nearly two-and-a-half times the number of senior managers employed in 2006 by 2016.

Constrained supply and increased demand will contribute to the projected leadership deficit, as will the growth in

the number and size of organizations, the retirement of baby-boomer managers, movement of existing nonprofit managers into different roles within or outside the sector, and the sector's lack of intermediaries to help recruit and develop managers.

The report outlined the need to address the following imperatives that nonprofits must do:

- Invest in building leadership capacity (even at a greater ratio of funding to overhead).
- Offer "rewards" (that can be non-monetary) to prospective managers.
- Expand recruitment efforts to new pools of potential leadership management (including baby boomers who would like to keep working, mid-life career changers, and the young).

## Odgers Berndtson: Successful Leaders in the Non Profit Sector

Robertson, R., & Naufal, M. (2006). *Successful leaders in the non profit sector*. Retrieved from Odgers Berndtson website: <http://www.odgersberndtson.ca/fileadmin/uploads/canada/Documents/PDFs/SuccessfulLeadersNFP.pdf>

The purpose of this survey, conducted in 2005, of board chairs and nonprofit leaders from across Canada, was to determine and define the success factors of nonprofit leaders. Survey respondents identified core responsibilities of nonprofit leaders as:

- Building a sense of community within the organization.
- Participating with the development and implementation of a strategy.
- Managing resources to deliver value to stakeholders.
- Establishing a credible and respected presence for the organization.

As well, participants in the study identified ten factors contributing to general success for leaders:

- Vision and action: communicating a vision to others, overcoming resistance to change, mobilizing resources and managing their own ambitions.
- Sound judgment: the ability to know where and how the organization fits within a setting that is, in fact, more dynamic than static.
- Integrity, conviction and the passion to inspire
- Strong communication skills: winning over a variety of audiences and listening to the concerns of stakeholders, the board and staff.
- Resourcefulness: finding creative ways to help funders achieve their objectives and simultaneously ensuring

the organization resolves its financial challenges.

- Effective relationship management: building bonds between staff, volunteers, stakeholders, external partners in government and business, the general public, and between the Board and subcommittees.
- Influential leadership: including charisma and a good sense of humour.
- Empathy and inclusiveness: displaying qualities of sensitivity, responsiveness, and diplomacy; rewarding staff for jobs well done.
- Transparency and confidence.
- Patience and flexibility.

## The Philanthropist: Exploring the Looming Deficit in the Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector

Toupin, L., & Plewes, B. (2009). *Exploring the looming leadership deficit in the voluntary and nonprofit sector*. Retrieved from <http://www.thephilanthropist.ca/index.php/phil/article/download/10/10>

Published in The Philanthropist in 2007, this article outlines the leadership deficit challenge as two-fold: the need to simultaneously encourage and support people who are currently in leadership positions while seeking ways to promote the sector as a viable career destination to a new generation of diverse leaders.

Notable calls to action include promoting the sharing of administrative services as a way to help organizations focus on mission-directed activity, providing space for more peer support, ensuring greater portability of skills and experience within the sector in order to keep younger employees engaged and connected, expanding leadership development programs for younger people with attention paid to diversity, connecting young people in university programs with community organizations and issues, and creating spaces where younger people and older leaders can explore their different perspectives on organizational leadership and development.

## NYUWagner: Recruiting and Retaining the Next Generation of Nonprofit Sector Leadership

Cryer, S. (2004). *Recruiting and retaining the next generation of nonprofit sector leadership*. Retrieved from [http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/files/AR\\_NextGenofNPSECTORLeadership\\_2006\\_Scryer.pdf](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/files/AR_NextGenofNPSECTORLeadership_2006_Scryer.pdf)

Combining qualitative data drawn from three focus groups with senior staff members from small, mid-sized, and large nonprofit organizations in Pittsburgh and quantitative data from a mail survey of local nonprofits. This report concluded that nonprofits must understand

what recruitment and retention areas they can be more competitive in and what factors are out of their hands. The report recommends that organizations conduct a careful assessment of the structure and responsibilities of various job functions, work environments, salaries and benefits, and organizational culture. Organizations should also build relationships with faculty and career services departments at local universities.

## The Nonprofit Sector and the Will to Change

Eisenberg, P. (2005). *The nonprofit sector and the will to change*. New England Journal of Public Policy, 20(1), 137-176. Retrieved from <http://www.community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/article-eisenberg.pdf>

This article, published in the New England Journal of Public Policy, argued that providing services is not enough and outlined seven challenges that nonprofits need to address: promoting democracy, strengthening government, assuring public accountability, redefining the nonprofit sector, reforming philanthropy, developing new leadership, and engaging institutions of higher learning in promoting democracies and communities. Nonprofit leaders need to have vision, competence, and courage. Organizations should look into being subsidized by foundation-sponsored leadership development programs in order to have sufficient funds to hire and offer young people attractive opportunities.

## Executive Transitions: Nonprofit and Grantmaker Opportunities

Crocker, D. (n.d.). *Executive transitions: Nonprofit and grantmaker opportunities*. Retrieved from Support Center for Nonprofit Management website: [http://www.supportcenteronline.org/images/pdf/executive\\_transitions.pdf](http://www.supportcenteronline.org/images/pdf/executive_transitions.pdf)

This brief thought piece identifies executive transitions as "pivotal moments" for organizations and urges grantmakers to seize these pivotal moments by supporting executive transition services for their grantees. The article outlines the risks of doing nothing, as well as the opportunities presented.

## Successful Successions: A Boardwalk Guide

BoardWalk Consulting (2007). *Successful successions: A BoardWalk guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.boardwalkconsulting.com/>

This guide, compiled from a review of relevant literature

and Boardwalk's in-house expertise, is designed as a 12-step walkthrough to guide nonprofit trustees and senior staff through the stages of a "successful succession," from impetus and reality check, to follow up and transition.

## Forefront: Who are the Leaders and What's on their Minds?

Hartford, L. (2007). *Who are the Leaders and What's on their Minds?* Forefront.

An Imagine Canada survey of 32 nonprofit leaders identified human capital, collaboration, organizational development, fundraising, relations with corporations, government policies and priorities, and the public's understanding of the sector as their biggest considerations.

## Watson Wyatt Worldwide: Effective Succession Planning for the Public Sector

Wilkerson, B. (2007). *Effective succession planning in the public sector*. Retrieved from Watson Wyatt Worldwide website: <http://www.4cleanair.org/chicago/EffectiveSuccessionPlanningforPublic.pdf>

This report emphasizes the need for coherent succession planning in the public sector. While there is plenty of preparation being done by the private sector, research shows that the public sector is lacking in the area of transition planning.

Key strategies to sustaining innovation include:

- Ensuring that staff is prepared for change.
- Documenting administration successes and retaining the staff involved in those successes so that incoming leaders will have resources to draw upon.
- Designating a lead for each program.
- Preparing people in lower levels to assume higher-level responsibility.
- Finding a successor who will embrace and sustain the innovations set in place by their predecessor.

## Wiley-Blackwell: Public Sector Succession-A Strategic Approach to Sustaining Innovation

Schall, E. (1997). *Public-sector succession: A strategic approach to sustaining innovation*. Public Administration Review, 57(1), 4-10. Retrieved from [http://www.accenture.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/January\\_2011\\_Wagner\\_Thought\\_Leadership.pdf](http://www.accenture.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/January_2011_Wagner_Thought_Leadership.pdf)

This paper concludes that succession planning is a key element of an effective strategy for managing talent

and ensuring that an organization achieves its future goals. Through a literature review of succession planning best practices in the public and private sectors, the author argues that public sector organizations benefit when successful transition approaches are linked to the organization's strategy and integrated with other HR processes. At the center of these programs is strong leadership support, focusing on developing a pool of future leaders and a strong focus on performance. Succession planning is becoming an imperative and, with the right focus and expertise, the public sector can meet its talent challenges.

## YNPN Stepping Up or Stepping Out: A Report on the Readiness of Next Generation Nonprofit Leaders

Solomon, J., & Sendahl, Y. (2007). *Stepping up or stepping out: A report on the readiness of next generation nonprofit leaders*. Retrieved from Young Nonprofit Professionals Network website: [http://ynpn.org/wp-content/uploads/stepping\\_up.pdf](http://ynpn.org/wp-content/uploads/stepping_up.pdf)

The report questions why qualified people are leaving the sector and attributes it to burnout, low salary and wages, lack of career advancement and job-related stress. Current EDs are encouraged to mentor their successors and help potential leaders take on leadership responsibilities now; funders are urged to fund for career path and leadership development. Regional associations and community foundations are encouraged to create a "talent bank" of young nonprofit professionals, and the entire sector is told to work on its image, particularly as a career choice for young professionals.

## GEO: The Departing: Exiting Nonprofit Leaders as Resources for Social Change

Masaoka, J. (2007). *The departing: Exiting nonprofit leaders as resources for social change*. Retrieved from [http://docs.geofunders.org/?filename=the\\_departing.pdf](http://docs.geofunders.org/?filename=the_departing.pdf)

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations commissioned this exploratory study, drawn from interviews with twenty former and current nonprofit executives nearing retirement, eleven grantmakers, and eight others to discover how departing nonprofit executives are thinking about their futures and are continuing to work for community good. The conclusions are presented as options to explore rather than as a set of proven practices, in part due to the small sample size and because the authors observed that situations that worked well were influenced so much by the individual and the specifics of the relationships that it was difficult to generalize for other executives.

The report explored options for departing executives, such as staying with the organization in a different role, taking a similar position in a different organization, staying involved in the field, etc. The report also looked at ways grantmakers can support CEOs: provide funding allotted to sabbaticals so that executives can rest, reflect, and return to their work refreshed; hold workshops for executives and board members; and fund the development of tools for succession planning.

## University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons: The Nonprofit Sector: Examining the Paths and Pathways to Leadership Development

Jiang, L. (2008). *The nonprofit sector: Examining the paths and pathways to leadership development*. Wharton Research Scholars Journal. Retrieved from [http://repository.upenn.edu/wharton\\_research\\_scholars/51/](http://repository.upenn.edu/wharton_research_scholars/51/)

This paper discussed the challenges of transitioning from a for-profit to a nonprofit executive position, the demand (by donors) for nonprofits to be more business-oriented, and the subsequent greater demand for leaders who possess business management skills. Systems need to be put in place to connect aspiring leaders with nonprofit organizations.

Other suggestions for nonprofits include: creating a culture of mentorship, starting early and focusing on retention, increasing board involvement, and encouraging knowledge sharing and innovation.

## Forefront: The Nonprofit Sector's Looming HR Crisis

Purden, C. (2007). *The nonprofit sector's looming HR crisis*. Forefront.

This is a report on the implications of contrasting styles and expectations across generations, and what organizations must do to attract and retain these workers. The independent and resourceful members of Generation X require collaborative relationships that include mentorship, coaching and training. They need to be offered a variety of tasks and responsibilities—so that they can build their skills portfolios—they need feedback, and also demand work/life balance.

Generation Y is confident, educated and multitasks. This group gravitates to a work environment that is flexible, not hierarchal, and will offer them skills that they can

later apply to other life opportunities.

### Community Disability Services-Leadership Development and Sustainability Research

MacFarlane, C. (2009). *Leadership Development and Sustainability*. Retrieved from Alberta Council of Disabilities Services website: [http://workforceconnect.ca/resources/cat\\_view/35-leadership-development?start=5](http://workforceconnect.ca/resources/cat_view/35-leadership-development?start=5)

A joint project between several organizations, the intent of this study was to identify issues and possible solutions to leadership development and sustainability in the disability sector. Eighteen member organizations of the Community Rehabilitation Service Provider Council of Calgary completed a questionnaire describing their current workforce and fifty-five interviewees from twenty-six organizations shared their views, as did 12 men and women with disabilities, on what constitutes a good leader and their role in leadership development.

The interviewees identified a number of issues including: the current salary ranges and lack of a professional association, the administrative workload placed on agencies, their limited resources, the need for inter-agency cooperation, the Alberta human resource crisis, a perceived presence of co-dependent relationships between the funder and some providers, the existence of fragmented and outdated training materials, and the limited mobility of senior personnel. Their suggestions focused on increasing funding for wages and training, modifying current training materials and mediums and offering cross-sector strategies, developing a formalized mentoring program and developing shared services through a dedicated resource centre or by developing a leadership development.



# APPENDIX B: STRATEGIES EMPLOYED ACROSS JURISDICTIONS

## Alberta-based Programs

### Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families Leadership Bursary

The purpose of the Leadership Bursary is to foster future leadership capacity by enabling senior organizational leaders to participate in formal education and professional development programs that enhance their ability to lead their organization and the field. The focus is on developing and enhancing leadership skills and innovation in service delivery and development, human resource management, organizational excellence and fiscal management.

Bursary amounts range up to \$10,000 per year for up to two years and vary depending on the education level sought and the amount of money available for disbursement. Applicants must currently work as a senior staff member in a supervisory leadership role; be employed by an agency that is contracted to provide services in the Human Services Sector through Alberta Children & Youth Support Services, Senior's and Community Services, or AADAC; and demonstrate a prior interest in undertaking credentialed or professional leadership training.

[http://www.aascf.com/pdf/Bursary\\_Application\\_Form\\_Accredited\\_June20123.pdf](http://www.aascf.com/pdf/Bursary_Application_Form_Accredited_June20123.pdf)

### Alberta Museums Association Professional Development

The AMA has an extensive professional development program that consists of:

- A Certificate in Museum Studies.
- Skills-based learning opportunities (learning labs, grant workshops, pre-conference).
- An annual conference.
- Workshops and online learning opportunities in collaboration with other organizations.

The Certificate in Museum Studies provides entry-level museum professionals with an understanding of current theories and standards in museum practice and is designed for those with no formal training and those looking to further their skills. Courses in the Certificate in Museum Studies Program build a strong foundation in

museum practices and standards and offer an opportunity to network with peers. The courses are delivered throughout the province in a two-day format, and are hosted by museums and other heritage organizations. The program is open to any individual, AMA membership is not required, and does not have any pre-requisites. Participants have up to eight years to complete the program's eight courses, and can also attend courses without obtaining credit.

<http://www.museums.ab.ca/what-we-do/professional-development.aspx>

### The Banff Centre Leadership Development Certificate

The Banff Centre offers two certificates, a Certificate in Authentic Leadership (four programs to be completed within three years) and a Certificate in Strategic Leadership (three programs to be completed within two years). The former consists of one required program, Building Personal Leadership, and three others: Leading Teams for High Performance, Leading Through Change, Leading in the Middle. The latter requires a course called Leading Strategically and two of the three courses above.

The Banff Centre is currently updating its programs and will be adding new program options for completing these certificates in 2013. Personal coaching options are also available to enhance any Certificate program.

<http://www.banffcentre.ca/leadership/certificate/>

### Developing Emerging Leaders: An Organizational Approach Framework

This program, developed by the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, is a strategic framework designed to:

- Build the infrastructure that will allow the nonprofit sector to address leadership development in a structured and targeted manner.
- Develop a common understanding of leadership development.
- Establish a common language when discussing, strategizing and collaborating for leadership development.



- Approach leadership development through an organizational lens and identify the organizational practices that effectively support the development of leaders.

The principles and practices identified in the framework are indicators of organizational success in supporting and cultivating leadership.

The Developing Emerging Leaders Framework includes an organizational assessment tool to help organizations learn how well they are employing effective leadership development practices.

<http://developleaders.ca/fw/>

### Executive Directions

Executive Directions (XD) is a two-year capacity building program and peer network for EDs, presidents, and general managers of charities and nonprofits. Participants are placed in cohorts of 15 EDs and two leadership coaches. Where XD is a bit unique is in the practical application of the learning and the cohort support to integrate the learning into each other's day-to-day leadership approach. XD challenges leaders to have fierce conversations, to not shy away from making tough decisions, and to be transformative in their community. Program elements include a monthly full-day roundtable with other leaders and a face-to-face session with a coach to create a professional, personalized growth plan.

[http://www.executivedirections.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=53](http://www.executivedirections.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=53)

### Naslund Consulting Group and Focused Leadership Group The Leader Within

Through the use of activities, nine core competencies are identified and practiced in this four-day workshop held in Westeros, Alberta, that provides leadership training for aspiring leaders. The core competencies are: understanding leadership, core values, visioning, group and process leadership, team development, team building, knowledge application, action planning, and mental creativity. Sessions cover topics such as exploring the qualities of effective leadership, understanding the purpose and method for creating a personal and organizational vision statement, and experiencing the "art" of public speaking. Participants are also involved in outdoor teamwork and trust-building activities.

[http://www.theleaderwithin.info/course\\_details.html](http://www.theleaderwithin.info/course_details.html)

### Propellus Leadership Calgary

Administered by Propellus (formerly Volunteer Calgary), the program is rare for focusing on community leadership and transformational leadership, rather than on organization leadership. Through learning circles and other formats over a nine-month period, 20-30 participants from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors each year are encouraged to take personal inquiry and peer learning opportunities that prepare them for the challenges of solving complex problems. The program ends with a closing retreat.

In Leadership Calgary, participants map out the frontiers and dynamics of human progress across disciplines, sectors, cultures and periods of history. Participants search for common patterns that can be assessed, integrated, and applied in meeting adaptive challenges at every level of social integration—individual, organization, community, society and culture.

[http://www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca/programs/leadership\\_calgary.html](http://www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca/programs/leadership_calgary.html)

### Mount Royal University, Institute for Nonprofit Studies Nonprofit Career Path Project

Led by the Executive in Residence, this two year-pilot utilizes individual coaching and mentoring, peer learning, and assignments in other agencies to prepare high potential leaders within the nonprofit sector for senior executive roles. From this initial pilot, three models have emerged relative to experience in other agencies:

- Two managers from different organizations switching roles for a set period of time.
- Two managers from two different organizations shadowing each other for a set period of time.
- An individual arranging for a time-limited placement in another organization.

A special emphasis is placed on financial management and leadership skills as these are viewed as comprising a significant aspect of the "gap" between mid-management and senior executive skill sets.

## Other Canadian Initiatives

### Conference Board of Canada Leadership Matters 2012: Building Leadership Capacity

The Conference Board of Canada organized a conference on leadership and governance, *Leadership Matters 2012*:

*Building Leadership Capacity*, in May 2012. Sessions examined:

- The skills and competencies needed by leaders today and tomorrow.
- How organizations are investing in leadership development, and insights about where they should be investing.
- The views of top 40 under 40 leaders on what worked and what did not in their development.
- How to expedite key talent development.
- The advantages and pitfalls of using new technologies in leadership development, from those with experience.
- The advantages of building a leadership culture—a CEO’s perspective.
- How to ensure high potential talent is not excluded from the C-suite because of gender.

Ontario

<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/conf/12-0077/default.aspx>

## Erhard Associates Leading and Managing in the Non-Profit Sector

A workshop for EDs and senior managers of nonprofits nationally that is updated yearly through the *Non-Profit Management Development Needs survey*, which identifies the needs of the actual program participants. The program is ever evolving in response to the changing needs of the nonprofit community. Participants and their leaders will complete a comprehensive Leadership Development Needs Survey to determine their needs for development. The survey is completed by the actual participant, as well as the participant’s leader to gain both views on what is important to their work and where they need development.

Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northwestern Ontario

<http://www.erhardassociates.com/documents/MNPO-Erhard-Brochure-Blue.pdf>

## HR Council Stewarding Change: Leadership and Change Management in the Nonprofit Sector

This project, ran in early 2011, responded to sector concerns and speculation about how to manage the large turnover of executive directors that is anticipated to happen as baby boomers retire. Through a two-pronged survey, one for recently hired executive directors and one for their boards of directors, the research captured a 360-degree perspective on the recruitment and change

management processes. The research supported the sector’s response to upcoming transitions and provided stakeholders with evidence-based information about recruiting and retaining senior positions.

Canada

[www.hrcouncil.ca/about/news-details.cfm?nid=435](http://www.hrcouncil.ca/about/news-details.cfm?nid=435)

## HR Council Driving Change: Understanding Executive Directors

To offset a lack of empirical evidence and research focused specifically on individuals who occupy the position of a nonprofit executive director, the HR Council fielded a national survey in the fall of 2011 in an effort to explore and better understand the characteristics, motivations and challenges of EDs. The survey aimed to help build a comprehensive profile of the types of people who occupy the role and contained questionnaires for CEOs/EDs and those who sit on nonprofit boards to provide feedback and input from their own perspectives on the ED role and perceptions of the recruitment process.

Canada

[http://www.hrcouncil.ca/documents/driving\\_change.pdf](http://www.hrcouncil.ca/documents/driving_change.pdf)

## HR Council Skills and Leadership Development in Canada’s Nonprofit Sector

After capturing secondary research on skills development strategies employed by the sector in Canada and internationally in a background paper, a survey was conducted in May and June of 2011 to provide a sector-wide overview of professional development and training initiatives of nonprofits across Canada. The survey, *Understanding the State of Professional Development in the Nonprofit Sector*, identified strengths, gaps and future professional development and training needs. These findings were then incorporated into the *Current State Report*, which examined some of the key pressures and challenges facing the nonprofit sector.

Canada

[http://www.hrcouncil.ca/documents/current\\_state\\_report.pdf](http://www.hrcouncil.ca/documents/current_state_report.pdf)

## Making Things Happen Ltd. Exit Right - Emergency Leadership Planning for Nonprofit Corporations

Designed to be attended by a board member and the senior executive, the *Exit Right* program is a half-day

workshop that helps organizations create an emergency leadership succession plan for CEOs or EDs to minimize disruption to the organization and ensure leadership continuity. The program is designed for foundations, nonprofits and charities and their boards of directors, senior executives and succession planning committees. Participants receive a turnkey toolkit to put together an action plan for an unexpected, short-term succession plan and get the resources they need to develop policies and procedures for unexpected long-term and permanent situations.

### Ontario

[www.makethingshappen.net](http://www.makethingshappen.net)

#### Nonprofit Sector Employers' Council Early Learning—Executive Career Development Program Design

The Federation of Community Social Services of BC (FCSSBC) was contracted to design an executive career development program for community social service employees that provides a roadmap for current and potential nonprofit sector management and leaders. The project used an evidence-informed, co-creative and generative curriculum design approach that brought together emergent and legacy leaders. Hence, participants utilized the learning and tools identified and available, and also contributed to the design process through their participation.

### British Columbia

[http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/documents/ExecutiveCareerDevelopmentupdate\\_Dec2011.pdf](http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/documents/ExecutiveCareerDevelopmentupdate_Dec2011.pdf)

#### Nonprofit Sector Employers' Council Shared HR Services Pilots

Based on a Feasibility Study conducted by the United Way of Northern BC in 2010, the Employers' Council tested two models for shared HR services in northern and rural communities. The first pilot was conducted by the United Way of Northern BC and employed an HR professional to provide advice and guidance to EDs and agency managers in eleven small nonprofits serving a large geographic area operating out of Prince George. The second pilot was conducted by the South Okanagan Similkameen Volunteer Centre and tested a "train-the-trainer" model in very small communities that did not have a critical mass of agencies in a single location to warrant a shared HR professional.

### British Columbia

<http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/documents/SharedHRupdate-Dec2011.pdf>

#### United Way Toronto and Partners CITY Leaders (Creative Institute for Toronto's Young Leaders)

CITY Leaders is a training and mentorship program for young people in the social services sector, put together by a partnership of youth-led groups, academics, funders and nonprofits, including United Way Toronto. It connects individuals aged 18 to 33 currently working in or aspiring to work in the Toronto social service sector with experts in the profession. The program consists of thirteen modules delivered over five months supported by a web presence that allows the group to stay connected through group discussions, chats and information sharing. The program also pairs participants with experienced mentors. Post-training, all participants are supported through alumni networking activities. Participants were chosen from small and large organizations across Toronto and bring a diverse range of experience and roles that include frontline workers, program coordinators, managers and executive staff.

### Toronto, Ontario

[www.unitedwaytoronto.com/whatWeDo/OCB.php](http://www.unitedwaytoronto.com/whatWeDo/OCB.php)

#### United Way Lanark County Planning for Leadership Succession to Protect Your Organization's Future

This day-long interactive training session presents board members, CEOs and EDs, and senior staff with strategies for talent development and succession planning that prepares nonprofits for planned and unplanned leadership transitions. The course description makes reference to how paying "ongoing attention to building the staff bench behind key leadership positions enables an organization to successfully take on unexpected challenges, including the departure of a key leader." This workshop will help participants explore topics such as Strategic Leader Development, Emergency Succession Planning, Departure-Defined Succession Planning, sabbaticals as a succession planning tool, a "Succession Readiness Checklist" for assessing how well prepared an organization is for a leadership turnover, and a self-reflection tool, "Am I still the leader this agency needs?" for discerning when it's time to go.

### Ontario

<http://unitedwayottawa.ca/agencies/investment-opportunities-and-information/training-and-information-sessions/succession>

## U.S.-based Programs

### Americans for the Arts Creative Conversations

In 2011, Americans for the Arts convened 52 Creative Conversations, with 1,800 individual participants. Creative Conversations are local gatherings of engaged citizens in communities across the U.S. and are part of a grassroots movement to elevate the profile of arts in America. Started in 2004 as a program of The Emerging Leaders Network, Americans for the Arts recently expanded the scope of the event to invite all arts leaders and interested individuals to participate. Some of these local gatherings have grown into cohesive, organized emerging leader networks, been the catalyst for the development of community-wide cultural plans, and helped to shape local arts advocacy by connecting the cultural sector with the business community and political leadership. This local tool empowers arts administrators to take a leadership role in their own community by designing programs and connecting professionally with their peers.

United States

[http://www.artsusa.org/networks/emerging\\_leaders/events/creative\\_conversations/default.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/networks/emerging_leaders/events/creative_conversations/default.asp)

### Stanford Graduate School of Business Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders

Leaders from social and human services, health care, community development, and education organizations participate in the Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders (EPNL), a two-week residential program designed to further the professional development of current and future leaders in the nonprofit sector. The program integrates conceptual knowledge with participants' own experience to generate powerful and practical insights about leadership and management, including how to integrate organizational mission with economic strategy, and developing a strong network of relationships with a diverse array of other nonprofit leaders. The learning stems from a variety of activities including classes, small group discussions, and individual study.

California

[www.gsb.stanford.edu/exed/epnl/](http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/exed/epnl/)

### The Young Nonprofit Professionals Network (YNPN)

The YNPN is a professional network with over 20 chapters and 20,000 members across the United States that engages and supports future nonprofit and community leaders. A 2008 strategic review outlined three priorities: strengthening career support and professional development for members to increase talent retention and impact on organizations, advocating on behalf of young professionals to build a more inclusive sector that develops and retains talent from all backgrounds, and building organizational capacity.

United States

<http://ynpn.org/about-young-nonprofit-professionals-network/mission-and-impact/>

## WORKS CITED

Bell, J. (2011). *Daring to lead 2011: Brief 1: Leading through a recession*. Retrieved from CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and the Meyer Foundation website: <http://daringtolead.org/wp-content/uploads/Daring-Brief-1-D9.pdf>

BoardWalk Consulting (2007). *Successful successions: A BoardWalk guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.boardwalkconsulting.com/>

Boland, P. T., Jensen, C., & Meyers, B. (2005). *Addressing the leadership challenge: Non-profit executive directors' views on tenure and transition in Alberta*. Calgary Centre for Non-Profit Management and Peter T. Boland and Associates.

Braun, G., & Banerjee, A. (2012). *2012 Alberta Nonprofit Survey*. Retrieved from Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations website: <http://www.calgarycvo.org>

Canada School of Public Service (n.d.). *Living leadership: The executive excellence program*. Retrieved April 27, 2013, from <http://www.cspc-efpc.gc.ca/forlearners/coursesandprograms/programs/g108-eng.aspx>

Cornelius, M., Moyers, R., & Bell, J. (2011). *Daring to lead 2011: A national survey of executive director leadership*. Retrieved from CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and the Meyer Foundation website: <http://www.daringtolead.org/wp-content/uploads/Daring-to-Lead-2011-Main-Report-online.pdf>

Crocker, D. (n.d.). *Executive transitions: Nonprofit and grantmaker opportunities*. Retrieved from Support Center for Nonprofit Management website: [http://www.supportcenteronline.org/images/pdf/executive\\_transitions.pdf](http://www.supportcenteronline.org/images/pdf/executive_transitions.pdf)

*Early learning - Executive career development program design*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Non-Profit Sector Employers' Council website: [http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/documents/ExecutiveCareerDevelopmentupdate\\_Dec2011.pdf](http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/documents/ExecutiveCareerDevelopmentupdate_Dec2011.pdf)

*Early learning - Shared HR services pilots*. (2011). Retrieved from Non-Profit Sector Employers' Council website: <http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/documents/SharedHRupdate-Dec2011.pdf>

Eisenberg, P. (2005). *The nonprofit sector and the will to change*. New England Journal of Public Policy, 20(1), 137-176. Retrieved from <http://www.community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/article-eisenberg.pdf>

Erhard Associates (2012). *Managing and leading in the nonprofit sector: Strategies for the 21st century (workshop)*. Retrieved from <http://www.erhardassociates.com/documents/MNPO-Erhard-Brochure-Blue.pdf>

Executive Directions (n.d.). *Growth and effectiveness - The XD approach*. Retrieved April 27, 2013, from [http://www.executivedirections.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=53](http://www.executivedirections.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=53)

Gibson, S., & Macklem, K. (2008). *Leadership solutions: Building leadership in Toronto's nonprofit and voluntary sector*. Retrieved from United Way Toronto website: <http://www.unitedwaytoronto.com/downloads/whatWeDo/reports/LeadershipSolutionsFullReport.pdf>

HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector (n.d.). *Skills and leadership development in Canada's nonprofit sector*. Retrieved April 27, 2013, from <http://www.hrcouncil.ca/projects/leadership.cfm#A2>

HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector (n.d.). *Stewarding change: Leadership and change management in the nonprofit sector*. Retrieved April 27, 2013, from <http://www.hrcouncil.ca/about/news-details.cfm?nid=435>

HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector (n.d.). *Succession planning*. Retrieved April 27, 2013, from <http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/planning-succession.cfm>

Kramer, K., & Nayak, P. (2012). *Plan A: How successful nonprofits develop their future leaders*. Retrieved from The Bridgespan Group website: <http://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/c6b6b3f0-b098-4bce-a39f-05d9156d4dec/PlanAHowSuccessfulNonprofitsDevelopFutureLeaders.pdf.aspx>

Kunreuther, F., & Corvington, P. (2007). *Next shift: Beyond the nonprofit leadership crisis*. Retrieved from Annie E. Casey Foundation website: <http://www.aecf.org/~media/Pubs/Other/N/NextShiftBeyondtheNonprofitLeadershipCrisis/Next%20Shift.pdf>

## Works Cited

Lanark United Way (n.d.). *Planning for leadership succession to protect your organization's future*. Retrieved from <http://lanarkunitedway.com>

Make Things Happen Limited (n.d.). *Exit right: Emergency leadership planning for nonprofit corporations*. Retrieved from <http://www.makethingshappen.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/MTH-ELP-copy.pdf>

Naslund Consulting Group (n.d.). *Leading on... Succession training for non-profit organizations*. Retrieved from <http://www.naslundconsultinggroup.ca/>

Purden, C. (2007). *The nonprofit sector's looming HR crisis*. Forefront.

Schall, E. (1997). Public-sector succession: A strategic approach to sustaining innovation. *Public Administration Review*, 57(1), 4-10. Retrieved from [http://www.accenture.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/January\\_2011\\_Wagner\\_Thought\\_Leadership.pdf](http://www.accenture.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/PDF/January_2011_Wagner_Thought_Leadership.pdf)

Solomon, J., & Sendahl, Y. (2007). *Stepping up or stepping out: A report on the readiness of next generation nonprofit leaders*. Retrieved from Young Nonprofit Professionals Network website: [http://ynpn.org/wp-content/uploads/stepping\\_up.pdf](http://ynpn.org/wp-content/uploads/stepping_up.pdf)

Stanford Graduate School of Business (n.d.). *Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders*. Retrieved April 27, 2013, from <http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/gipr/epnl>

Tierney, T. (2006). *The nonprofit sector's leadership deficit*. Retrieved from The Bridgespan Group website: <http://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/96be2563-f182-44db-bc18-797c493eb6f9/Leadership-Deficit-White-Paper-pdf.pdf.aspx>

Toupin, L., & Plewes, B. (2009). *Exploring the looming leadership deficit in the voluntary and nonprofit sector*. Retrieved from <http://www.thephilanthropist.ca/index.php/phil/article/download/10/10>

United Way Toronto (n.d.). *Creative Institute for Toronto's Young (CITY) Leaders*. Retrieved from <http://www.unitedwaytoronto.com/whatWeDo/OCB.php>

Wilkerson, B. (2007). *Effective succession planning in the public sector*. Retrieved from Watson Wyatt Worldwide website: <http://www.4cleanair.org/chicago/EffectiveSuccessionPlanningforPublic.pdf>

Wolfred, T. (2008). *Building leaderful organizations: Succession planning for nonprofits*. Retrieved from Annie E. Casey Foundation website: <http://www.aecf.org/~media/Pubs/Other/B/BuildingLeaderfulOrganizationsSuccessionPlann/Building%20Leaderful%20Organizations.pdf>

The Young Nonprofit Professionals Network (YNPN) (n.d.). *Vision & Mission*. Retrieved April 27, 2013, from <http://ynpn.org/about-young-nonprofit-professionals-network/mission-and-impact/>

Zarinpoush, F., & Hall, M. H. (2007). *Leadership perspectives: Interviews with leaders of Canada's charities and nonprofit organizations*. Imagine Canada.



This project is made possible through a grant from the Alberta Real Estate Foundation and the Government of Alberta.

The Alberta Real Estate Foundation supports real estate related initiatives that enhance the industry and benefit the people of Alberta. The Foundation's revenues come from the interest earned on public money deposited in real estate brokers' pooled trust accounts. Learn more at [www.aref.ab.ca](http://www.aref.ab.ca).



CCVO

Calgary Chamber of  
Voluntary Organizations