

Interim Leadership

The State of Interim Leadership—
and the Shared Knowledge Moving
the Profession Forward

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Commissioned by

 **ThirdSectorCompany**
Taking Nonprofit Organizations to Higher Ground In Their Service to Others®



Our Agenda

Moderated by Nancy Bacon

Welcome and introductions with Jeffrey Wilcox

Introducing the *Interim Leadership in the Nonprofit Sector* report and its findings

- **What's Changing: The 2025 Landscape** with David Harris
- **Defining Interim Leadership Today** with Katie Weeks
- **The Interim Ecosystem** with Jan Cohen
- **Strengthening the Profession** with Joan Brown

Dr. Sara Hudson, Interim CEO and Editor-in-Chief, *Nonprofit Quarterly*

Next steps with Jeffrey Wilcox

1. What Changing: The 2025 Landscape

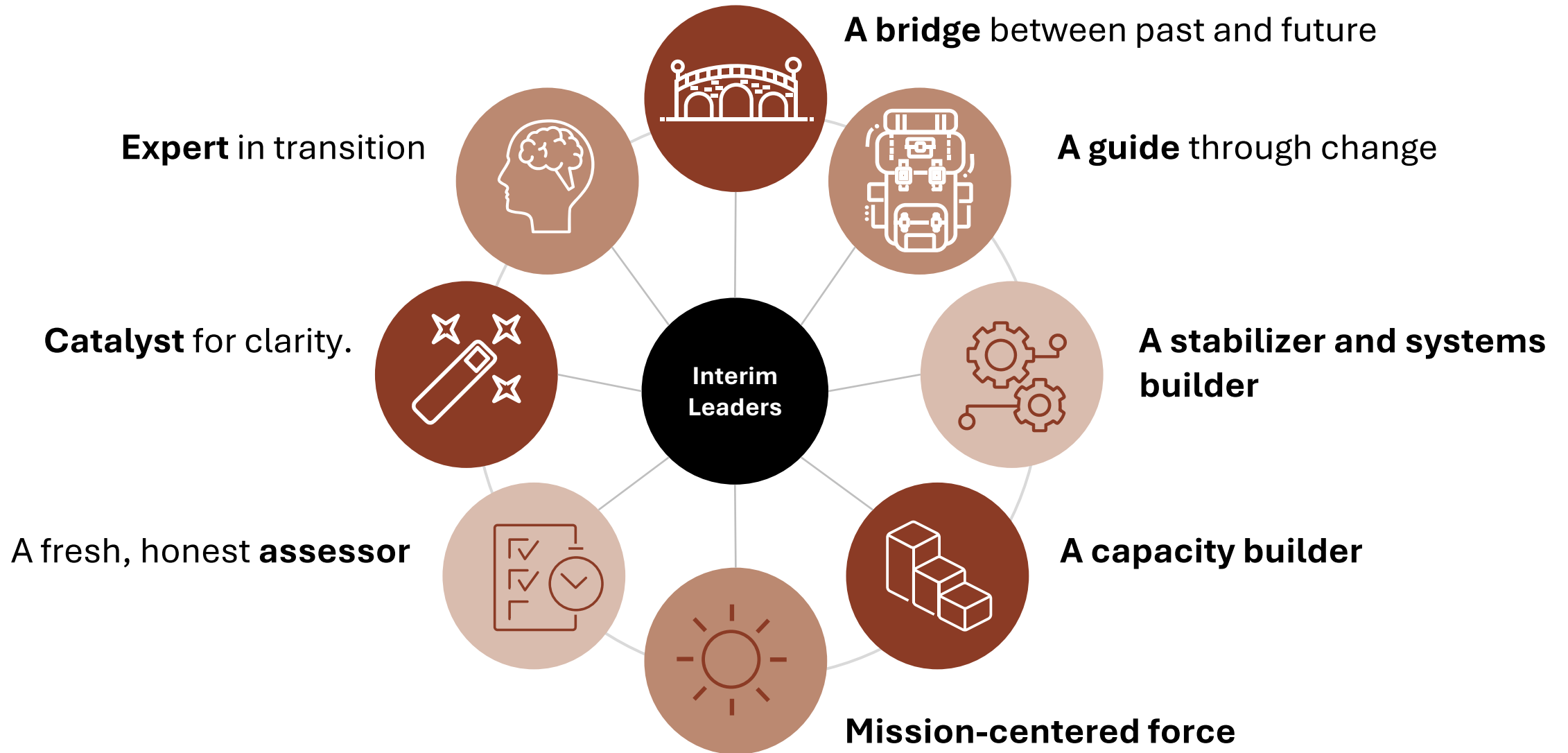
Theme	Status
The Nonprofit Workplace DEI and Funding	● Worse
The Roles and Values of Equity and Diverse Lived Experiences	● Worse
Board Readiness for Leadership Transition	● The Same
Appreciation of Interim Leadership	● Better ● The Same
Acknowledgement of the Transformational Impact of Interim Leadership	● Better
Partnerships with Funders, Associations, and Search Firms	● Better ● The Same
Well-being and Community among Interims	● Better
Workforce Access and Sustainability	● The Same
Professional Growth and Development	● Better ● The Same
Overall Direction of the Field	● Better

2. Defining Interim Leadership Today

An interim leader is a temporary, mission-centered executive who enters an organization at a pivotal moment to stabilize operations, guide people through change, and prepare the conditions for the next leader to thrive.

As a knowledgeable outsider with “fresh eyes,” they bridge the space between a storied past and a sustainable future—managing today’s needs while advancing longer-term priorities. Their work is not about holding space for themselves, but about building clarity, capacity, and confidence for what comes next.

2. What is an interim leader?



2. Tensions interim leaders hold

Interim leaders hold several tensions at once:

- **Maintaining day-to-day operations** while **adapting systems for a stronger future**
- **Building trust with staff** while sometimes **reshaping or strengthening the team**
- **Collaborating with the board** while supporting **board education and development**
- **Honoring an organization's history** while helping it **prepare for its next chapter**
- **Providing stability** in uncertainty while **guiding needed change**



3. The Interim Ecosystem

Regional Network Across North America

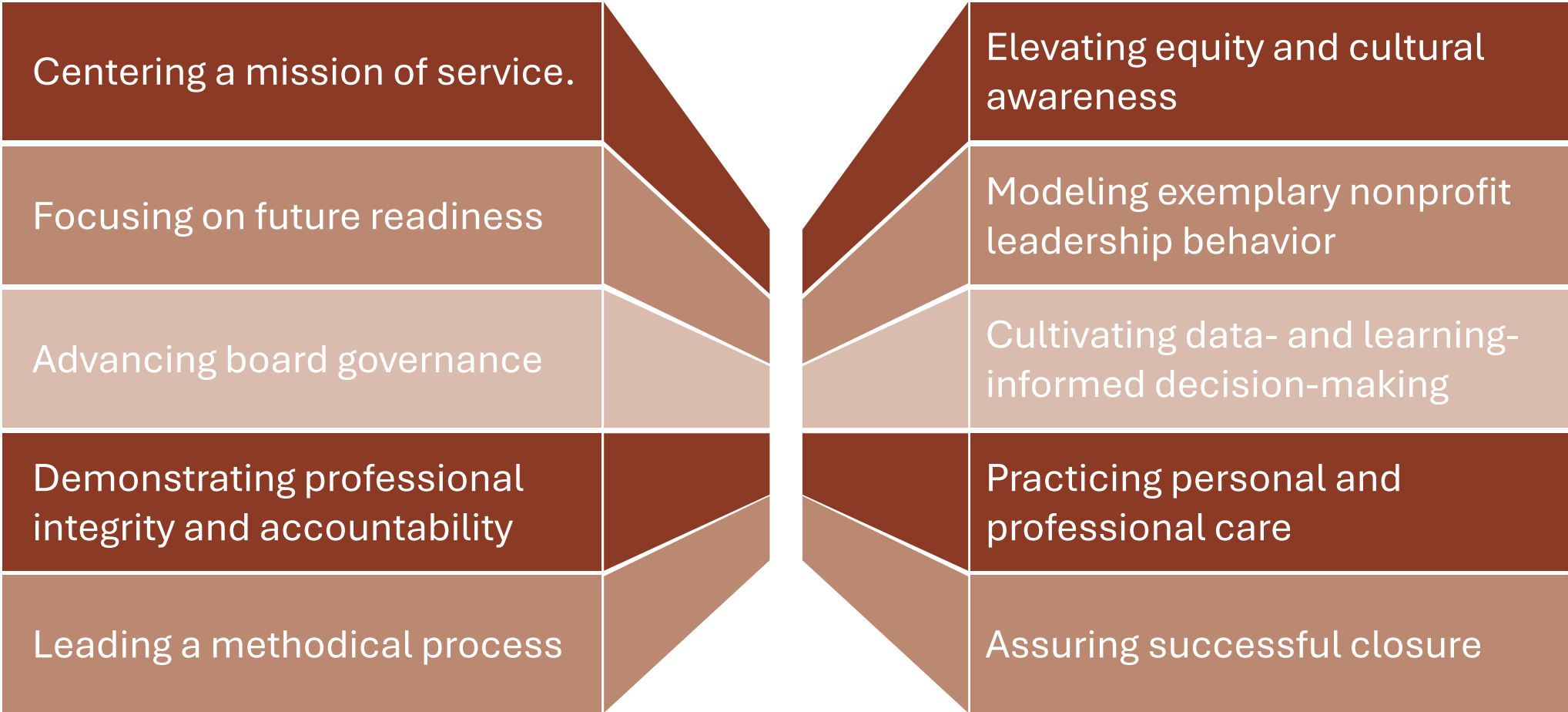


Activities the support interim leadership

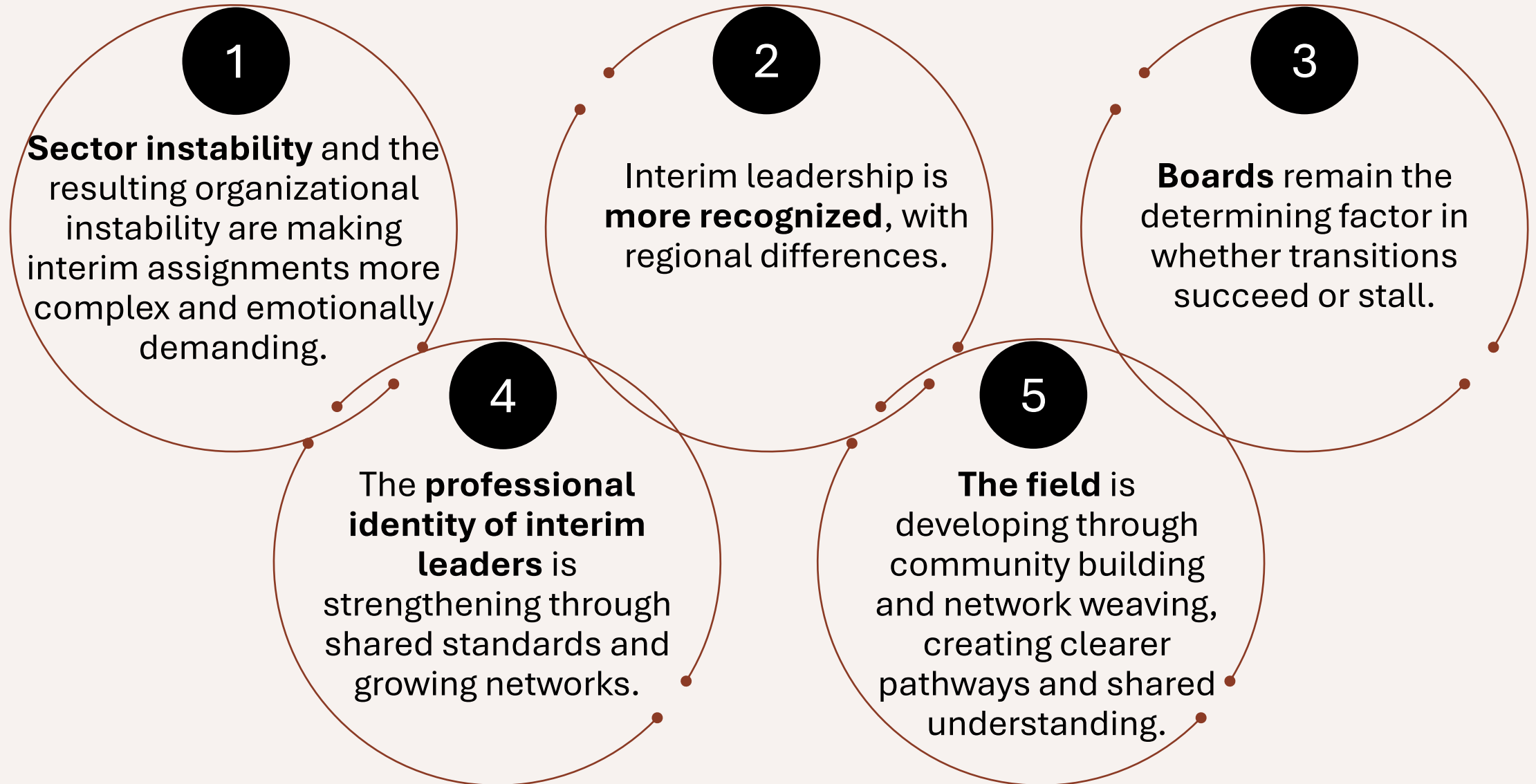
- Training and job preparation
- Network meet-ups
- Peer learning
- Topical conversations
- Knowledge sharing forums
- One-on-one coaching
- Placement and referral
- Board development
- Staff support

4. Strengthening the Profession

Standards for Interim Nonprofit Leadership



Five Insights: the Interim Leadership Profession



Recommendations and Opportunities

1. **Educate** boards and nonprofits about the value of interim leadership through consistent communication across the country
2. **Position** interim leadership as a strategic organizational development opportunity for organizations advancing community impact missions
3. **Strengthen** the ecosystem supporting and advancing interim professionals
4. **Center** equity and cultural awareness in transition work