

Why an Interim Executive Director Is Your Best First Step in a Nonprofit Leadership Transition



Your ED just gave notice. What now?

Whether an executive director is leaving due to retirement, burnout, resignation, or removal, the question for the board of directors of a nonprofit organization isn't just **"What do we want in our next leader?"** but **"What does our community need from our organization and its future leader?"**

That's why for hundreds of charitable organizations, associations and congregations of all sizes, the answer is clear: **Start with an interim executive director.**

What Is an Interim Executive Director?

An [interim executive director](#) is an experienced nonprofit leader who steps into your organization temporarily to provide stability, guide staff and help the board assess short-term and long-term goals.

But it's more than just filling a seat.

Choosing an interim executive as part of an intentional succession plan and is a strategic opportunity to ensure methodical, purposeful, profound and transformational management as the organization prepares for its next chapter.

A Proven Process

Founded in 2002, [Interim Executives Academy](#) (formerly Third Sector Company) helps nonprofit boards of directors in their **search for an interim executive director (including Development Officers).**

We've supported over **900 nonprofits** and trained **700+ interim leaders** across the U.S. and Canada.

Here's how our process works:

1. **Initial Intake & Agreement** – A dedicated interim solutions strategist discusses your needs, and outlines our process and fees. We get started with a signed agreement.
2. **Candidate Presentation** – We present Academy graduates along with their biographies able to engage with a set of identified deliverables we've helped you create.
3. **Interim Leader Selection** – You manage the temporary employee selection process with access to tools and protocols developed by the Academy.
4. **Engagement Begins** – Delivery on mission is priority one. The interim provides methodical and transformative leadership using models and protocols taught by the Academy.

Why Start with an Interim?

Hiring a permanent executive director during a period of instability can lead to costly missteps. Engaging an interim leader will ensure an organization avoids jumping into an ill-prepared search and hiring too quickly or hurriedly promoting from within to fill the position.

With an experienced interim, the organization has time to **be thoughtful and intentional in considering internal candidates or moving into a well-informed search process.**

An interim gives you time and space to:

- Guide the board and staff to confident decisions that impact the future of the organization
- Review the current health of the organization's programs and policies to set benchmarks for success in the interim period and beyond
- Support and retain key staff
- Embody the organization's values and courageously call out hard truths to meet the community's stated purpose and goals
- Define the organization's needs and what to search for in a permanent hire. Welcome the new executive with a working knowledge of the organization and a roadmap to success from Day One

What Do Our Interim Executive Directors Provide?

Interim Executives Academy trains aspiring and experienced nonprofit professionals through a methodical and purposeful interim management science.

Recruiting exclusively from our Academy alumni, each graduate is trained to advance a standard in quality interim leadership, guiding organizations through [6 defined phases and 13 protocols](#). They are trained for:

- Organizational assessment and strategic planning
- Staff support and leadership alignment
- Operational excellence and mission continuity
- Board collaboration and training
- Preparing the runway for the next permanent leader

When to Consider an Interim Executive Director

We commonly support nonprofits during:

- Sudden resignations or retirements
- Parental or medical leaves
- Founder transitions
- Mergers and organizational restructuring
- Lengthy or delayed permanent search processes

Set the Next Leader Up for Success

An experienced, trained interim brings unique skills needed to be incremental change leaders, knowing the critical decisions made during a relatively short-term leadership vacancy can have lasting effects on the organization's reputation and purpose in the community.

A [nonprofit interim executive director](#) is a strategic way to provide continuity for day-to-day operations and prepare the next permanent leader for success from Day One.

Ready to Start?

We're here to help your board or search committee take the **best first step** in a successful transition.

Third Sector Company supports **search committees and boards** of nonprofit organizations for interim executive recruitment and placement. The graduates of our Interim Executives Academy offer nonprofit organizations proven methods to ensure staff support, operational best practices, and continued mission impact during an executive search and transition.



Third Sector Company is a nationally recognized pioneer in leadership continuity solutions for community impact organizations including charitable causes, professional associations, congregations and foundations. The organization offers interim executive training, placement, coaching, support services, and job advertising and counsel.

www.thirdsectorcompany.com