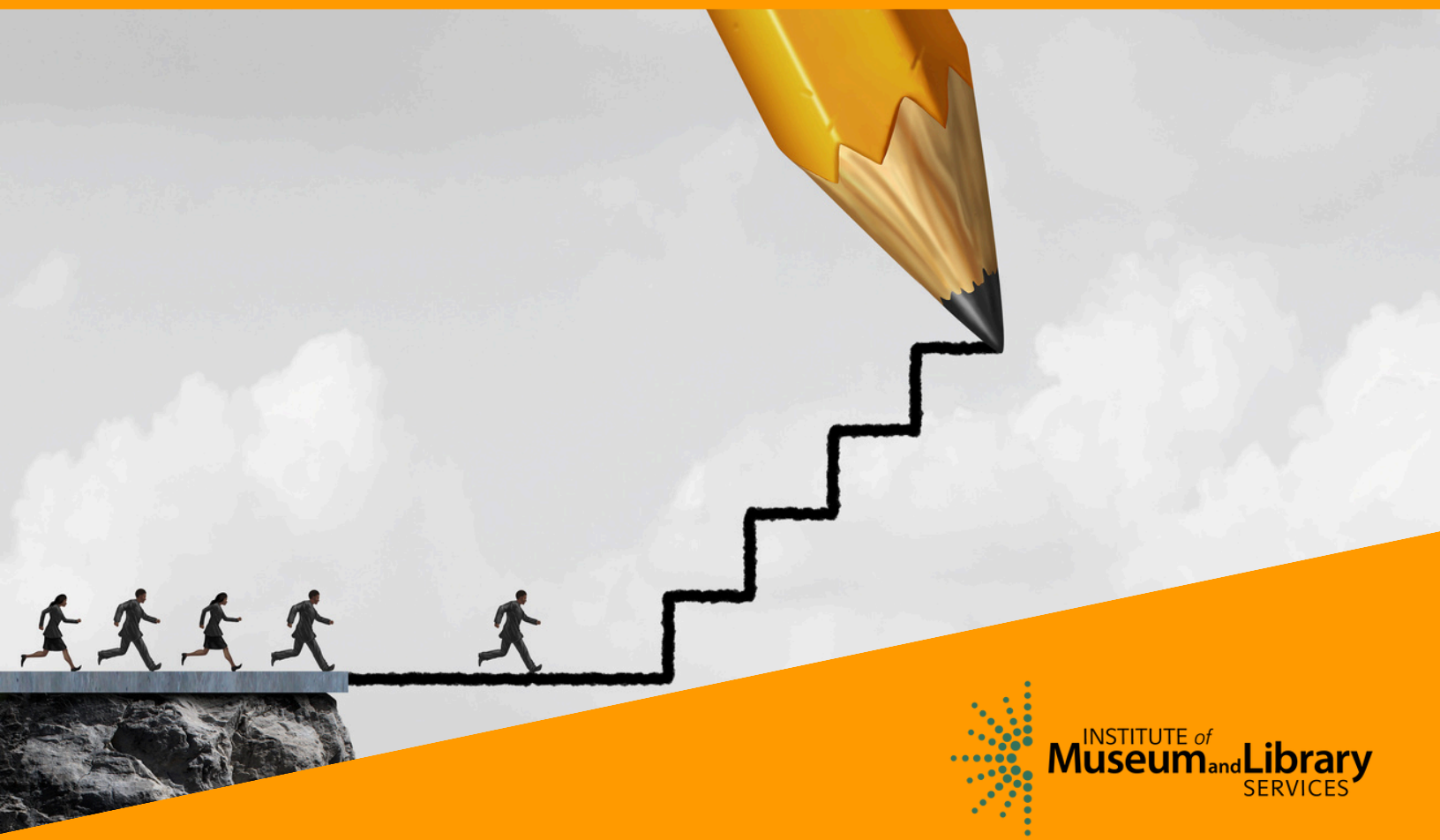


COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP SUCCESSION PLANNING INITIATIVE

SUCCESSION PLANNING ROADMAP

CONSERVATION
CENTER
for Art & Historic Artifacts



THIS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY
THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES



INTRODUCTION

Dream for a moment: **If you won the lottery and left your job, who would be ready to take your place?** Think back – have you ever stepped into a new role and found it hard to locate records, passwords, and other essential information? Do you wish you had more time to devote to succession planning and knowledge transfer?

The **Cultural Stewardship Succession Planning Initiative** is a two-year project of the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA), in partnership with Lyrasis, created to actively address the need for leadership development and knowledge transfer in the cultural heritage workforce. Funded by a National Leadership Grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the initiative has conducted extensive research and is building professional development resources for museum staff and volunteers. You can read about the project's findings by visiting <http://www.ccaha.org/succession> or by scanning the QR code below.

Below, we share some of the key resources we have identified and developed to support more successful planning for staff transitions:



SO...WHERE TO FROM HERE?

What are the first steps an organization should be considering when they are faced with a staff transition, whether part of standard operations or in an emergency situation? Which activities are the most important as you are involved in updating position descriptions, hiring processes, and onboarding new staff? And, what can we learn from each succession planning experience which could make the next time easier?

From the information we learned in our many listening sessions and interviews, as well as our project survey, we began to be able to put together this roadmap, utilizing suggestions from our participant's experiences and stories.

The following information reflects good practices from the field which can be utilized as you develop and implement succession activities at your organization.

We look at activities that can take place before, during, and after a transition and succession process, and, in some cases, suggest tools from our project which can aid in your planning. The project team continues to develop more resources for this project and will look at key steps below where we can provide further information.



BEFORE

Steps for your organization to consider before the next staff transition occurs

MANAGE YOUR COLLECTIONS

It is important to have policies related to the long-term preservation of mission-based collections as well as the organization's own business records. See the *Essential Written Plans, Policies, and Procedures* for Collections-Holding Institutions document to learn about a variety of planning documents which can provide continuity and order to your collections.

UPDATE JOB DESCRIPTIONS, POLICIES, AND LOGISTICS

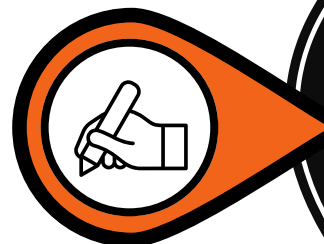
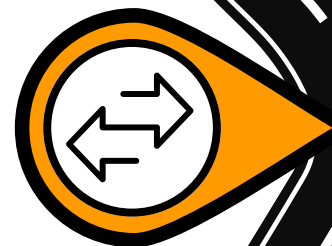
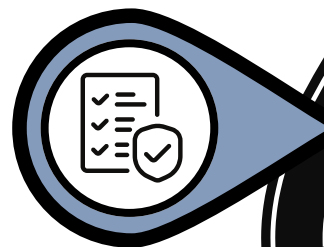
Tools for hiring including a *Job Analysis Template Exercise* and *Responsibilities Assignment Matrix* can help you as you develop these important hiring practices.

DEVELOP A KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PROCESS

Institutionalize practices by which senior and departing staff can share work information and "corporate history" with those continuing at your organization. See the *Cultural Succession Planning Bibliography*, particularly the "Arts Organizations at a Crossroads Toolkit: Managing Transitions and Preserving Assets," for more information.

DOCUMENT YOUR PROCESSES

Start taking notes now to document how decisions are made at your organization. This can help those who follow in your footsteps learn about the choices your organization has made.



DETERMINE THE RISKS IF YOU DON'T DO SUCCESSION PLANNING

See the *Succession Risk Advocacy Matrix* to help determine the impact of staff transition on your organization's mission, revenue, expenses, and staff time. These can aid you in making the case to organizational leadership for planning to address staff changes.

WORK WITH YOUR BOARD TO GET THEIR SUPPORT FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING AND SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS

Use the *5 Key Questions Board Members Should Ask About Staff Succession Planning* at a Board Meeting or Retreat to get your most important stakeholders to begin considering avenues for successful transitions.

INCREASE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS WITH AND COMMITMENT TO YOUR PART-TIME AND VOLUNTEER STAFF

Since 2020, many arts and cultural organizations have noted that the level of volunteer and part-time participation in their work efforts has dropped due to retirements, illness, and other reasons. Develop a regular program of communication with these important representatives and resources for your organization.

DEVELOP DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY GOALS AND POLICIES FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

As you institute or refine these policies, there is an opportunity to look at pay equity issues within your field and institution.

BEGIN TALKING WITH FUNDERS AND DONORS ABOUT SUPPORT FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING AND SMOOTH TRANSITIONS AT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Listening session and survey participants noted that succession planning is an area that is difficult to budget for, and is not often considered in grant-funded organizations and projects. Discuss your plans for building a strong succession planning program with those who support you via grants and financial gifts.



DURING

Considerations for activity during a time period where staff transition and succession is taking place

COMMUNICATE ABOUT PROCESS

Talk with Staff, Board Members, Stakeholders, Partner Organizations, and your Community about the changes that are taking place at your organization. Transparency about leadership changes can garner goodwill from the community, and in many cases has helped organizations gain more information on potential future leaders.



KEEP COMMUNICATIONS OPEN

The departure of a leader, particularly in smaller organizations, can often be traumatic for the staff that remain. Keeping staff informed about changes, timelines for change, and other succession planning activities is important in continuing organizational trust.

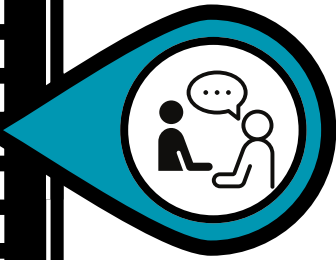


PLAN CHECK-INS WITH STAFF THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS

Another realization from the listening session and survey responses is that staff transitions and succession are much more successful if departing staff and leaders are open to taking questions from and communicating with those replacing them in a position after they leave the organization. One organization talked about a policy where the outgoing staff member would leave a personal letter for the incoming staffer.



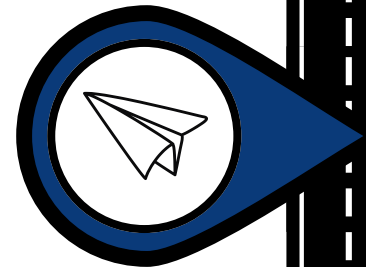
CONSIDER DOING ORAL HISTORIES WITH SENIOR AND DEPARTING STAFF



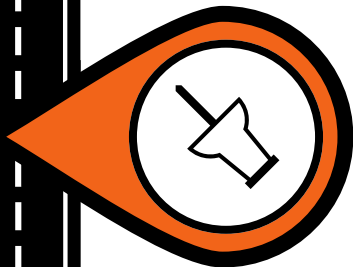
Recording information about the history of your organization through interviews with senior staff or those that are moving on from the company can serve a number of purposes, including capturing information on projects and practices; organizations have also found that audio and video histories can be utilized in external communications campaigns with their community. See the project resource ***Conducting Oral Histories for Succession Planning*** for information on this concept, and technical pointers to help start this type of program.

SUPPORT OUTGOING LEADERSHIP

Support outgoing leadership: Organizations that have helped departing leaders leave a respected legacy report that the succession planning/staff transition process has been much easier and better accepted. We often support the incoming leaders to our organizations; consider spotlighting the work of leaders who are moving on.



PROVIDE A WAY TO FIND IMPORTANT INFORMATION



There were many comments about difficulties in finding organizational information in paper files and on computers. Setting up and following a File Naming Protocol at your organization is an excellent step in avoiding loss of information; see the document ***File Naming Strategies to Aid in Succession Planning*** for tips on instituting naming protocols across your organization.

AFTER

What you learn from your most recent staff transition can help you smooth the process in the future

HIT THE GROUND RUNNING SMART

New staff can consider initial activities dealing with people, policies, and priorities at your organization. See the **30-60-90 Days chart** on the project website.

REACH OUT TO PARTNERS

Listening session participants emphasized the importance of reaching out to partner organizations to set up introductory meetings as soon as possible after a new staff member begins in a position. Partnerships are built “at the speed of trust,” and continuing the trust through open communication is very important.

PLUG IN

Consider how new technology can assist your organization in future staff transitions and succession planning. Are there ways you can develop databases, spreadsheets, and tools to assist in these activities?

REVIEW YOUR WORK

If you utilize some of these project tools, and document your procedures in succession planning, be sure to review documentation after each new hire and succession process.

SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS

One of the most oft-repeated pieces of advice that we heard during the research phase of this project was to make Succession Planning and Knowledge Transfer not just a one-time event, but a way of operating for your organization, to ensure smooth transitions and continued success.

