

# **Executive Director Tenure and Transition in Southern New England**

## *New England Executive Transitions Partnership*

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## **I. Acknowledgements**

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Finally, we thank the 803 executive directors from around southern New England who took the time to respond to our survey. We are glad to be able to report the story they have to tell.

## **II. Introduction to the Study**

In the fall of 2002, a group of funders in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island formed a collaborative, The New England Executive Transitions Partnership (NEETP), to learn more about what was occurring in the nonprofit field regarding leadership tenure and turnover and to examine the possibility of developing a system of supports for nonprofits undergoing leadership change.

The group's interest was based on two groundbreaking studies, *Leadership Lost* (1999) and *Daring to Lead* (2001), published by CompassPoint Nonprofit Services in San Francisco, as well as the work of Tom Adams of Adams & Associates and the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore, early leaders in the field of executive transition in nonprofit organizations. The CompassPoint and Casey (2001) studies pointed to an increasing rate of executive turnover in the next several years and delineated a number of issues that must be addressed if the nonprofit sector is to assure the leadership necessary to health and vibrancy.

NEETP members are committed to building the capacity of nonprofits and understand the importance of skilled leadership to organizational success. They recognize that, in most cases, organizations benefit from executive director tenure of at least three to five years. Recent studies conducted around the country, however, have shown that: 1) executive tenure is shortening; 2) the retirement of the baby-boomer generation will have a profound impact on the availability of experienced executive directors; and 3) executive turnover is a time of high risk as well as one of significant opportunity for nonprofit organizations.

The group wanted to find out what was happening in regard to executive tenure and transition in their region. If conditions similar to those in other parts of the country were documented in New England, their intent was to initiate an appropriate response. They determined that this would include the development of a delivery system for support services that takes advantage of: 1) the three states' geographic proximity; 2) the common goals of multiple funders in the area; and 3) the fact that consultants commute relatively easily within the region. They intended to utilize existing resources and well-tested models rather than creating a new 501(c)(3) organization.

## **III. Methodology**

Data for this report was gathered through a 57-question electronic survey (see Appendix A). Questions were based on those used in surveys conducted previously by CompassPoint, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations.

Seventeen grantmakers requested that nonprofit executive directors in their service areas complete the electronic survey on the Internet. The executive directors represented diverse organizations of varying missions, organizational sizes and stages of development in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Data was collected using SurveyMonkey and entered and analyzed with SPSS statistical software. Associated Grant Makers (Boston, MA) partnered with NEETP and provided significant support and advice in both creating the survey on SurveyMonkey and analyzing the results. The intent was to get a general sense – a snapshot – of what was happening in the region using a non-scientific, random sample.

The survey request was sent to nearly 5,000 nonprofit organizations. There was a surprisingly large response – 803 leaders participated, 92.8% of whom were the current executive directors of their agencies. An additional 1.6% were serving in an interim executive director role; the remaining 5.6% were board chairs or other leaders within the organization. Even considering that there was overlap among the funders and that some nonprofits were contacted by more than one funder, the return rate was at least 16%. The large number of respondents and the fact that findings are similar to those of other surveys give us confidence that we have developed a reliable picture of conditions in southern New England.

#### IV. Characteristics of the Sample

Most organizations in the three-state region are well-established – 48.7% have been operating for 25 years or more. Another 19.5% have been operating between 16 and 25 years. The following charts and table provide information about organizational staffing levels, operating budgets, areas of activity and geographic location:

Chart 1: Paid Staff (FTE)

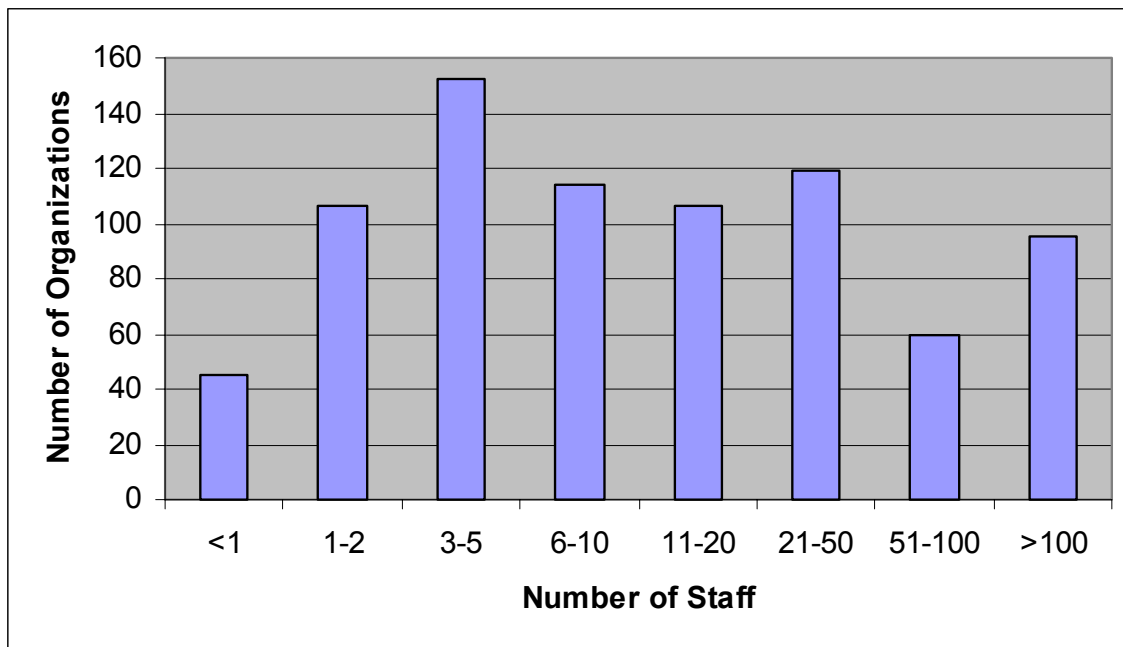


Chart 2: Annual Operating Budgets

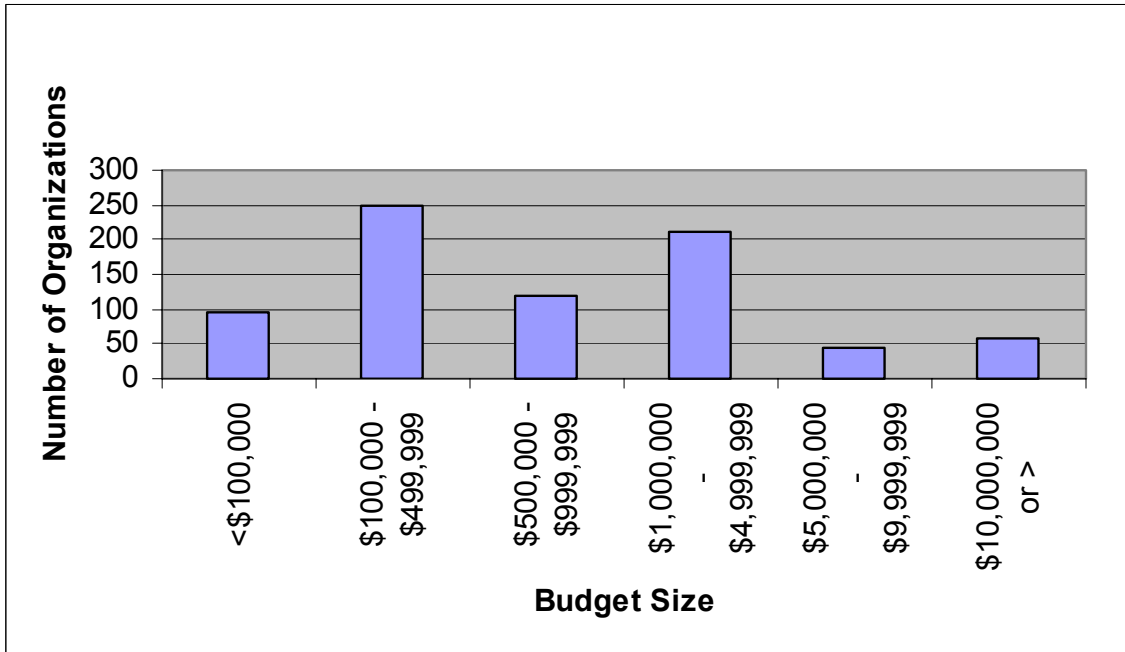


Chart 3: Primary Activity of the Nonprofit Organization

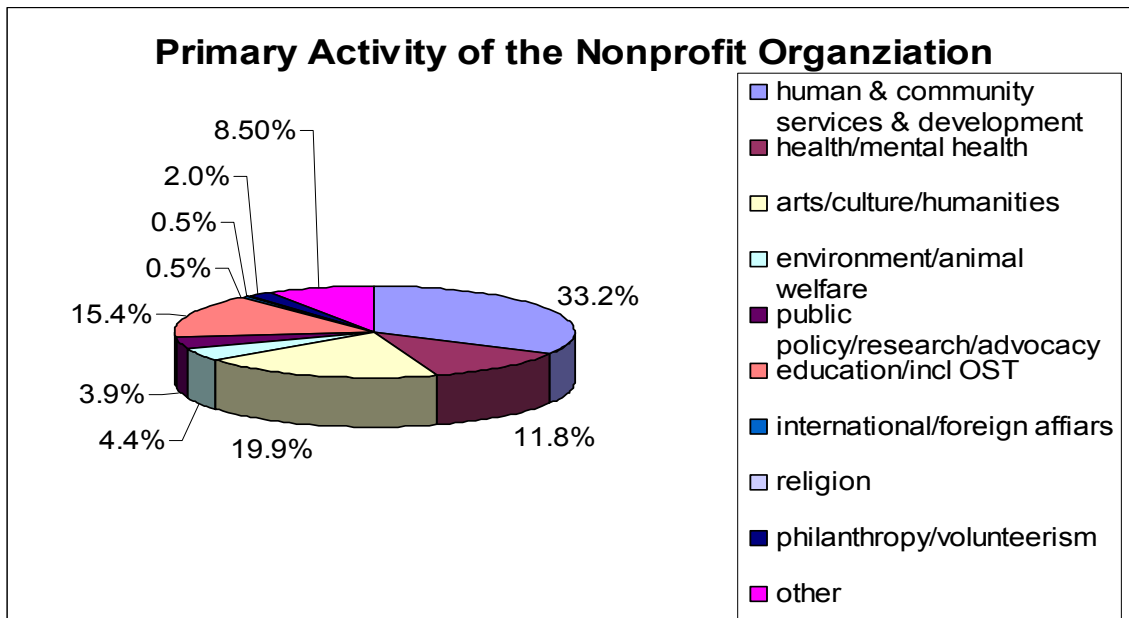


Table 1. Respondents by Region

Region	No. of respondents
Greater Hartford	106
Greater New Haven/Waterbury	45
Greater Bridgeport/Fairfield County	55
Rhode Island	114
Western MA, except Hampshire and Hampden Counties	50
Hampshire/Hampden Counties	108
Central MA	77
495 Outer Ring	144
Metro Boston	82
Other	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>803</b>

## V. Findings

Findings are divided into four sections: 1) Key Characteristics of Executive Directors; 2) Tenure and Career Path of Executive Directors; 3) Job Satisfaction and Sources of Support for Executive Directors; and 4) Executive Turnover and Transition.

### 1. Key Characteristics of Executive Directors

The survey identified four key characteristics of nonprofit leaders in southern New England:

- Women outnumber men among nonprofit executive directors – 58.9% of executives are female.
- The majority of executives (57.4%) are over 50 years of age. 30.2 % are between the ages of 41 and 50.
- Executive directors in this region are very well educated – 65.1% have advanced degrees. 52.7% hold Master’s degrees and 12.4 % have earned Doctorates.
- There is little racial diversity among executives in the three states – 89.7% identify themselves as White/Anglo. Only 3.9% of directors are African American, 2.2% Latino/a, .8% Asian, and .4% Native American.

(See Appendix B for graphic comparisons of these statistics to the CompassPoint and Annie E. Casey Foundation studies.)



## ***2. Tenure and Career Path of Executive Directors***

This section explores the professional history and motivations of executive directors in the region.

- A majority of executive directors – 55.9% – have 16 or more years of paid experience in the nonprofit sector; 26% have more than 25 years’ experience.
- 40.3% have been in their current positions at least eight years. Of this group, 18.4% have tenure of more than fifteen years.
- When asked how many previous executive director positions they had held, 65% of the sample responded. (It is important to note that “none” was not provided as an option for answering this question.) Of those responding, 71% said they had been an executive director at least one time previously and close to 23% had been an acting or interim executive director before.
- 22% are founding executive directors. Of this group, 20.8% lead organizations that have been operating for 25 years or more.
- 69.4% were working outside their current organizations when hired as executive director. Those that came from within the organization had previously held such positions as associate director (20%), development director (5%), program director (19%) or director of finance and administration (4.5%).
- More than one-quarter of respondents *who were working at their agencies before* becoming executive director – 26.2% – have held management positions in the for-profit sector and 12.6% have held management positions in the government sector. Of those *who came from outside the agency* to become the executive director, 36% had held a management position in the for-profit sector and 25% had held a management position in the government sector.

### ***Factors Influencing the Decision to Accept an Executive Director Position***

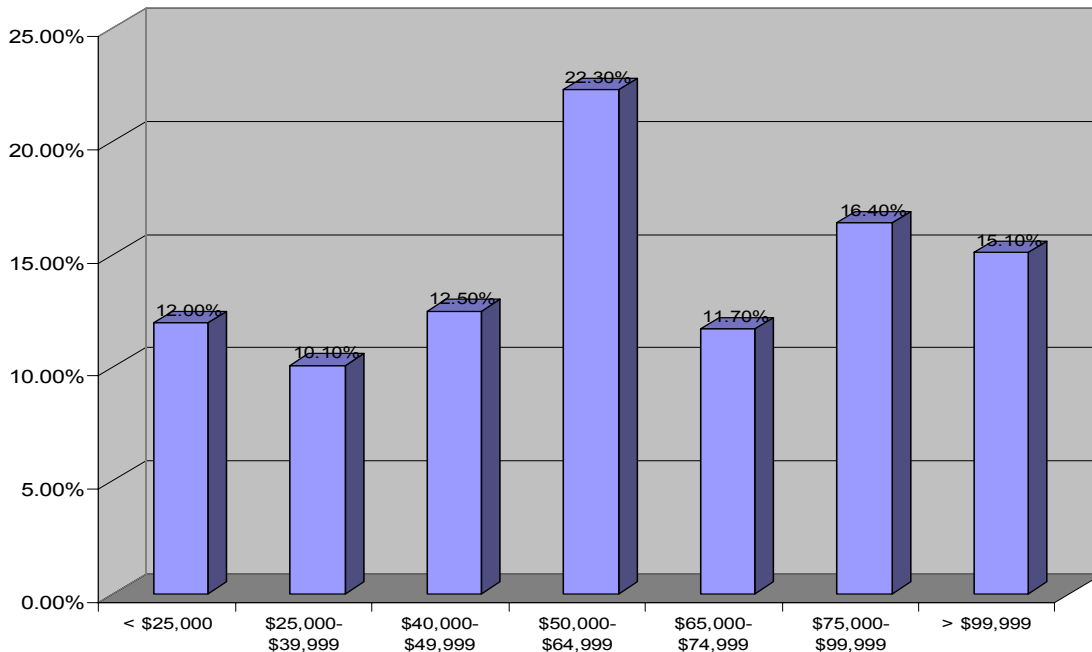
Factors most important to executive directors in deciding to take their positions were:

- Mission of the agency – 94.7 %
- “Giving back” – 88.7%
- Reputation of the agency – 62.9%
- Community in which the organization is located – 61.8%

Respondents identified certain factors as less important in their job selection decision, including: 1) staff or board members they knew at the organization (37%); 2) salary (30.8%); and 3) benefits (30%). While respondents indicated their compensation

packages were not among the key reasons they took their jobs – and 50% said they were satisfied with them – they also believe that compensation issues are likely to be significant obstacles in attracting and retaining future leaders.

Chart 3: Salary Levels of Executive Directors



As noted in the above chart, 34.6% of executive directors have salaries below \$50,000; 34% have salaries that range from \$50,000 to \$74,999; and 31.5% have salaries of \$75,000 or more.

### ***3. Job Satisfaction and Sources of Support for Executive Directors***

A wide majority of executive directors report satisfaction with their jobs. On a scale that measured job enjoyment and ranged from a low of “treading water/given up” to a high of “enthusiastic,” 80.9% selected the two highest categories. Additionally, when asked if the job met their expectations of what the role would demand, 79.6% indicated it did.

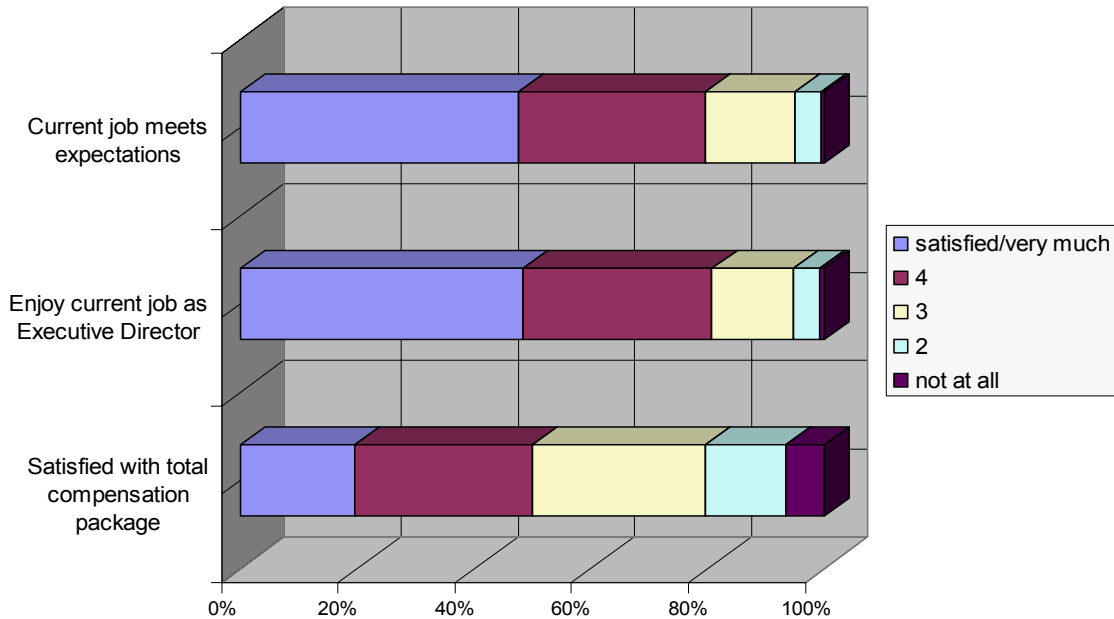
#### ***Positive Aspects of the Executive Director Position***

Respondents were asked to explain how the job has or has not met their expectations. They identified the following positive aspects of the job:

- Utilization of professional skills in a variety of projects;
- Relationship-building;
- Flexibility and varied responsibilities;
- Opportunities to lead and manage/produce/direct organizational growth;

- Opportunities to bring about a visible change in the targeted community;
- Personal growth; and
- Working with motivated people.

Chart 4: Job Satisfaction



### ***Negative Aspects of the Executive Director Position***

Negative aspects were identified as:

- The need for continual, extensive fundraising;
- Capacity to attract and retain qualified staff;
- Difficulty in changing the organization because of established budgetary and structural environments;
- Unsatisfactory benefits packages;
- Too many job responsibilities;
- Spending more time than anticipated on clerical duties rather than on the program objectives of the organization;
- Political issues within the organization; and
- Conflicting agendas with the Board of the organization.

Anxiety about agency finances stands out as the greatest burden on executive directors. On a scale that ranged from “Not at all” to “Very Much,” 59.8% chose the two highest categories when assessing their level of anxiety about agency finances (48% of

respondents said they have no one responsible for fundraising other than the executive director). Other negative aspects that cause particular anxiety are:

- High stress and long hours – 46.9%. (45.2% of responding EDs reported working more than 50 hours in the most recent week; 14.9% said they worked more than 60 hours. Additionally, 82.4% said that the number of hours reported was a normal or average work week for them.)
- Fundraising – 46.5%
- Dealing with government funders and/or program requirements – 35.3%
- Managing personnel problems – 33.5%. (Less than 50% have someone on staff responsible for human resource management.)

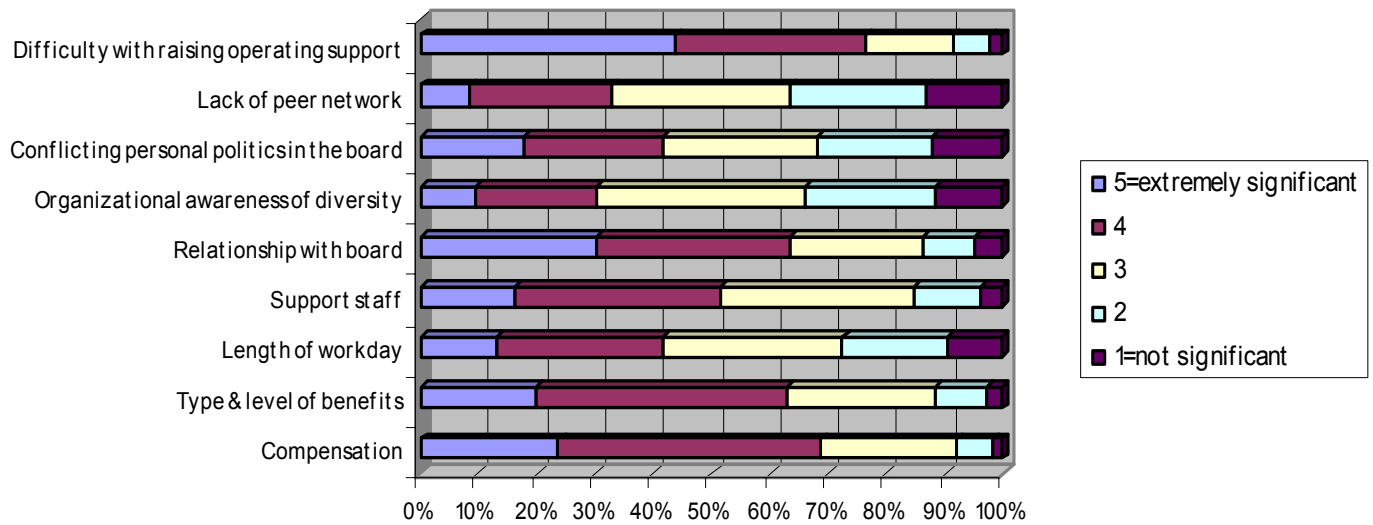
Additional negative factors were: 1) feeling “lonely at the top”/lack of colleague network (25.7%); 2) weak board of directors (25.7%); 3) low compensation (22%); 4) unclear performance goals/direction from the board (17.6%); and 5) conflict with the board (9.1%).

### ***Obstacles to Attracting and Retaining Top Leadership***

When asked to identify which obstacles were likely to be most significant in attracting and retaining executive leadership in the nonprofit sector, the following were considered very or extremely significant:

- Difficulty raising operating support – 76.6%
- Compensation – 68.5%
- Relationship with the board of directors – 63.6%
- Type and level of benefits – 62.9%
- Support staff – 51.6%
- Length of workday – 41.9%
- Conflicting personal politics in the board – 41.8%
- Lack of a peer network – 32.8%
- Organizational awareness and appreciation of diversity – 30.5%

Chart 5: Obstacles to Attracting and Retaining Executive Leadership



**Sources of Training and Support**

Respondents were asked how important ten different sources of training and support were to them in their development as executive directors. The survey does not clarify whether or not individual respondents have had direct experience with the various sources, which they rated as important or very important in the following order:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Management team/work colleagues – 70.8%    | Topical workshops and conferences – 44.7%   |
| Peer networking – 63.6%                    | Mentoring – 30.1%                           |
| Board of directors – 51.3%                 | Internet – 21.2%                            |
| Spouse/partner – 50.1%                     | Executive coaching – 15.8%                  |
| Professional associations/networks – 47.2% | College-based management coursework – 14.9% |

**Ability to Team Up with Board of Directors**

In most instances, respondents believe that their boards team up with them well to carry out their organizations’ missions. According to 68.4% of respondents, the board provides personal support for them as executive directors.

The area in which there is the least satisfaction in regard to Board/Executive Director team effort is fundraising. On a scale that ranged from “Not at all” to “Very,” just 36.7%

said the board teamed with them effectively in this area. This is in keeping with other responses that assessed anxiety over agency finances and fundraising.

#### 4. Executive Turnover and Transition

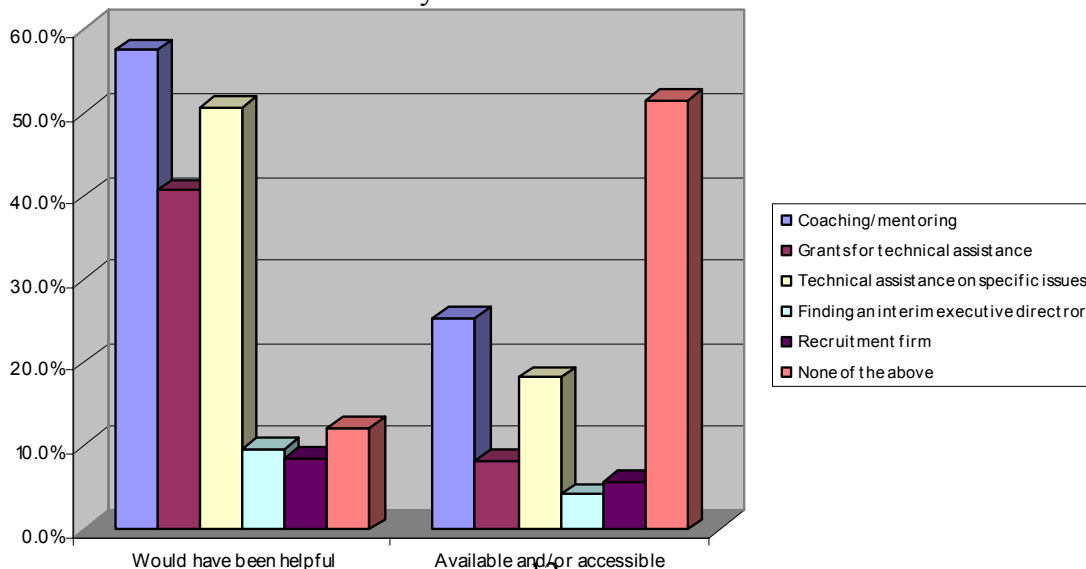
NEETP’s main purpose in conducting the survey was to find out if the increasing rate of leadership change documented in other parts of the country is also occurring in southern New England. It is.

- 70.8% of executive directors imagine they will leave their current positions within five years. Of these, slightly less than 10% believe they will leave within one year; another 22.2% said they will leave within 1 to 2 years; and an additional 39.1% said they are likely to leave within 3 to 5 years. This confirms other findings that the rate of executive turnover, which has been estimated at 10% per year, is increasing.
- 34.4% of organizations have had two or more executive directors in the past five years. Of this group, 9.7% have had three or more leaders in that time period.
- 88.3% of the organizations have not created a succession plan, yet 41.2% of respondents say they have identified one or more people on their staff with the potential to become executive director.

#### Usefulness and Availability of Executive Transition Services

When asked what services had been helpful or would have been helpful during an executive transition, 57.5% answered Coaching/Mentoring. The following chart represents what would have been helpful and what executive directors perceived was available or accessible to them during an executive transition. It indicates that there is varied exposure to options and that executives may not have had experience with the resources that they believe would have been most helpful to them.

Chart 6: Usefulness and Availability of Transition Services



### ***Negative Impacts During Transition***

Given a choice among five possible impacts on their organizations during a time of leadership turnover, half the survey sample responded. There was a fairly even distribution of these types of impacts on responding organizations:

- 18.3% experienced a decline in productivity
- 19.4% had a decrease in funding
- 20.4% suffered a decline in staff morale
- 17.2% lost board members
- 18.9% lost staff

### ***Best Uses of Funding to Assist with Leadership Change***

Respondents were asked to select the three best uses of funding to assist with leadership change from a list of six options. The following services were respondents' top choices, receiving a 1, 2 or 3 rating:

- Support for new executive leader/coaching – 72.2%
- Training in succession and transition strategies – 58.2%
- Funding to support the time of transition and search – 56.9%

Following these was “A trained pool of transition consultants to assist the Board,” which was selected by 53.2%. “Support for the exiting leader/coaching” was selected by 24.4%. “A trained pool of interim executive directors” was chosen by 20.3%.

It should be noted that respondents were executive directors. If boards – who are the clients for transition services – were responding, they may have provided different rankings.

### ***What would executive directors want to know before taking over as executive director of an organization?***

More than 50% of executive directors report that there was something they learned after they had taken the position of executive director that they wished they had known before. Their answers generally fall into two categories: 1) knowledge about some aspect of the organization or the role of executive director; and 2) skill-based knowledge that would have equipped them better to meet challenges they faced once in the position. Within the two categories, the following kinds of knowledge were cited most often:

#### ***1. Knowledge about the organization or executive director's role***

##### **a. Knowledge about the capabilities and commitment of the Board of Directors.**

Executive directors were surprised by the level and nature of board involvement once

they were in their positions. The most common complaint was a lack of support for fundraising. In addition, there was surprise about “weak” boards, about board members’ attitudes toward the executive director and staff, about the capabilities of board members, and/or about the degree and nature of board politics. “It would have been particularly helpful to know that my board knew nothing about their responsibilities as board members and that I could expect little if any help with fundraising/development,” said one respondent. “I wish I had a clear, strong definition of the role of Trustees and staff,” said one long-time ED. “This is something we are still working on after 14 years.”

**b. Knowledge about the state of the organization’s finances.** Many EDs were surprised at how dire the organization’s financial state was. Comments ranged from the general, “the true nature of the budget and fundraising crisis that faced the organization” to the specific, “board said debt was about \$50,000. Actual debt was over \$150,000 and line of credit was exhausted.”

**c. Knowledge about the wide range of responsibilities and skills needed to be an executive director.** “Wearing so many hats that are so different such as one minute you are dealing with a funder, the next you are listening to a client who has problems with the staff, to dealing with a flood in the basement. This can all happen in one day.”

**d. Knowledge about how big – and difficult – the job of fundraising would be.**

**e. Knowledge about existing organizational and staff issues.** One executive director wanted “more detail regarding the organization’s staff morale difficulties. It took three years to change the culture.” Another would have liked to know “the history of the organization, the personalities, politics and the ‘other story.’ It made the job very difficult and frustrating at times.” “My actual discoveries were like dealing with an onion,” said a third. “The more layers you peel away, the more challenges you uncover. I would have appreciated the truth and/or an opportunity to have an honest dialogue with the Board – who did not know these things – about the actual condition of the organization.”

**f. Knowledge about the amount of time the position involved.**

**g. Knowledge about the politics of the organization (internal and external).**

It’s worth noting that several executive directors remarked how difficult it would have been for them to acquire this kind of knowledge on their own, due to inexperience or unfamiliarity with the organization. For example:

- *“I did not have the foresight or experience to thoroughly investigate the financial condition of the organization.”*
- *“There are always questions one does not know to ask in a new community.”*



- *“All the questions I asked during the interview process were helpful, but could not have revealed the depth of the crisis.”*
- *“I thought I had asked all the right questions, but this was my first ED position and I was blindsided.”*

## **2. Skill-based Knowledge**

**a. Financial skills.** One respondent wished they had learned “accounting or the wisdom to know that I should have passed it on to someone else quickly. I thought I would become quick and able at it, but it caused me to spend too much time counting assets instead of raising them.”

**b. Human resource/personnel skills.** “I needed a crash course in human resources and employment law. Personnel issues came up immediately and it was all new to me.”

**c. Board development/board relations skills.** “Because the Board is so essential to the success of the organization and the ED, I would have liked to know more about all aspects of Board Development.”

**d. Fundraising skills.** “While I had some fundraising experience and minimal grant writing experience, I had no real development experience.”

**e. Management skills.**

## **VI. Conclusions**

NEETP’s key findings are similar to what CompassPoint and the Annie E. Casey Foundation found in many areas. There are some regional differences, however, which are noted below:

- Characteristics of executive directors are similar in gender, age and education across the studies. The exception is race/ethnicity. In southern New England there is a higher percentage of executive directors who identify themselves as White/Anglo (89.7%) than in other regions studied. For comparisons of these figures, please see Appendix B.
- It appears that a number of New England executive directors have served in this role more than once and may be willing to take on another executive director position in the future. CompassPoint found that many executive directors in its region were not likely to take on another such position.
- While there are differing rates of anticipated leadership change reported in the studies over one to three years, within five years all rates show an increase over the traditional 10% per year: 70.8% of executives in the NEETP survey expect to leave their current positions within that timeframe as do 75.2% in the most recent

CompassPoint study and 61.6% in that conducted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Readers are encouraged to read the CompassPoint and Casey Foundation reports, for which references are provided in Appendix C, to understand other regional similarities and differences and to benefit from report recommendations.

### ***Recommendations***

Many foundations participating in NEETP offer capacity building programs and services for nonprofit organizations in addition to traditional grants. The following thoughts have been contributed by staff overseeing such programs in response to the survey findings:

1. The majority of current executive directors are fifty years of age or over. A pipeline for new leadership must be developed. Opportunities to explore the position of executive director and its demands and rewards will be needed by those considering this career step. They must be encouraged.

Funders are particularly well positioned to develop and offer such programs, given their resources and nonprofit networks, or to partner with management support organizations in doing so. Results of this study provide substantive direction on the types of learning needed. These include competencies in assessing an agency's financial condition, fundraising, human resources, board-staff relations and board development, among others.

2. Nearly 90% of respondents identify themselves as White/Anglo. In a society that has become increasingly diverse, particular attention must be paid to: a) seeking and developing leaders for executive director positions that reflect this growing diversity; b) assuring that search processes build in sufficient time to identify a diverse pool of candidates from which organizations may choose; and c) encouraging organizations to foster a spirit of inclusion and respect for diversity so that they are attractive to diverse candidates. The commitment of boards, staff, management support providers and funders will be needed to reach this important goal. (Please see Appendix C for information on progress nonprofits and grantmakers have made in these areas.)

3. A majority of nonprofit organizations are led by women. Topics that may have specific interest for women leaders, e.g. salary negotiating skills, merit special consideration when training and leadership support services are being developed.

4. More than 80% of executive directors say they enjoy their jobs. Most say their boards team up with them well to carry out their organizations' missions (with the exception of fundraising). To build on these positive aspects and to achieve even greater efficacy, board and staff leaders will benefit from clarification of their respective roles and an understanding of what each needs from the other in order

to be successful. Programs that bring board and staff together as teams for such learning are most likely to result in lasting, positive change.

5. The board is the client for executive transition services. Trainings for board members must emphasize board ownership of this pivotal moment in an organization's history and provide information on what good succession and transition planning look like. Trainings should also highlight the fact that succession planning is an important component of strategic planning.

6. Given that more than 70% of executive directors anticipate leaving their current positions within five years and that many have held their positions for a significant period of time, organizations – particularly large ones – are well-advised to begin transition planning up to two years in advance. CompassPoint has found that when a leader of a large organization has had a long tenure, planning that begins six months in advance of departure is usually inadequate.

Small and mid-sized community based organizations will benefit from help in defining what succession planning means. For most, it has conjured up images of an anointed successor and timetable, something far removed from their everyday reality. Helping them identify and develop the types of planning that will serve their organizations well when the leader moves on is a valuable capacity building pursuit.

7. This survey found that 22% of organizations in the sample – approximately 176 agencies – are led by founders. Of these organizations, 20.8% have been in operation twenty-five years or more. They may need particular help during transition – including coaching for the departing executive – to assure that the transition successfully meets the needs of the founder and the agency. A growing body of research on founder syndrome will be useful in addressing this need.

8. Executive directors in this sample are highly educated – 65% hold advanced degrees. They cite work colleagues and peer networking as their greatest sources of training and support. The development of courses that emphasize peer learning principles and that draw regional colleagues together will be most beneficial to participants and most valued by them. These types of opportunities are also likely to enhance collaboration and cooperation within the community(ies) participating.

9. Most respondents believe that inadequate compensation packages will make it difficult to attract and retain new leaders. At the same time, half of them are relatively satisfied with their own compensation packages, making it unclear to what extent this will be a factor.

Consideration must be given to several challenges: 1) many longer-serving executive directors have salaries that are below market level due to a) their longevity, b) receiving percentage increases based on a low starting salary rather than a board-approved salary scale, which takes current market conditions into account, or c) not pushing adequately for raises; 2) the cost of living is likely to be higher for newly hired executives because departing executives may have bought their homes years before and have significantly lower mortgages; and 3) new hires are more likely to have the costs of children's higher education in front of them. Other costs related to life cycle may cause new executive directors to push for higher salaries or decide not to work in the nonprofit sector. The board may well face "sticker shock" when confronted with salary surveys at the time of search.

It is important that boards start thinking now about how they will surmount these challenges. Since executive directors cited fundraising as the area in which they feel least supported by their boards, it is suggested that board trainings emphasize: 1) compensation issues; 2) the board's role in developing sufficient organizational resources; and 3) strategies for carrying out the board's fundraising responsibility.

10. Nonprofit leaders are drawn to their work by mission and a desire "to give back." Boards of directors and search committees would be well served by emphasizing these factors when seeking candidates.

### *Next Steps*

Among NEETP's key findings are these:

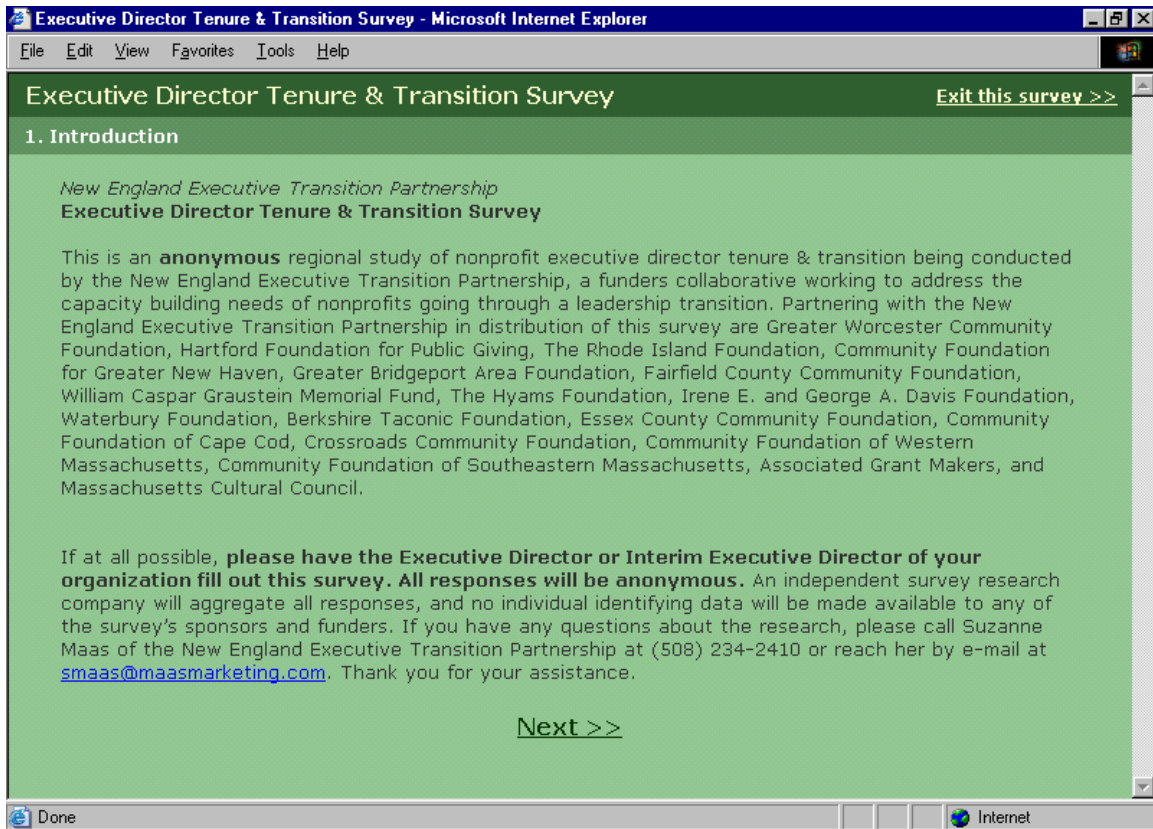
- Within five years, 70.8% of executive directors expect to leave their current positions. This confirms an increasing rate of leadership change documented in other studies.
- There is very limited diversity among current executive directors (89.7% identify themselves as White/Anglo), despite the fact that society has become increasingly diverse.
- Nonprofit organizations have given little attention to succession planning.
- Nonprofit leaders are attracted to their work on the basis of mission and a "desire to give back" and boards are well advised to emphasize these factors when conducting searches. At the same time, current executive directors say that compensation issues may be significant obstacles to attracting and retaining new leadership.

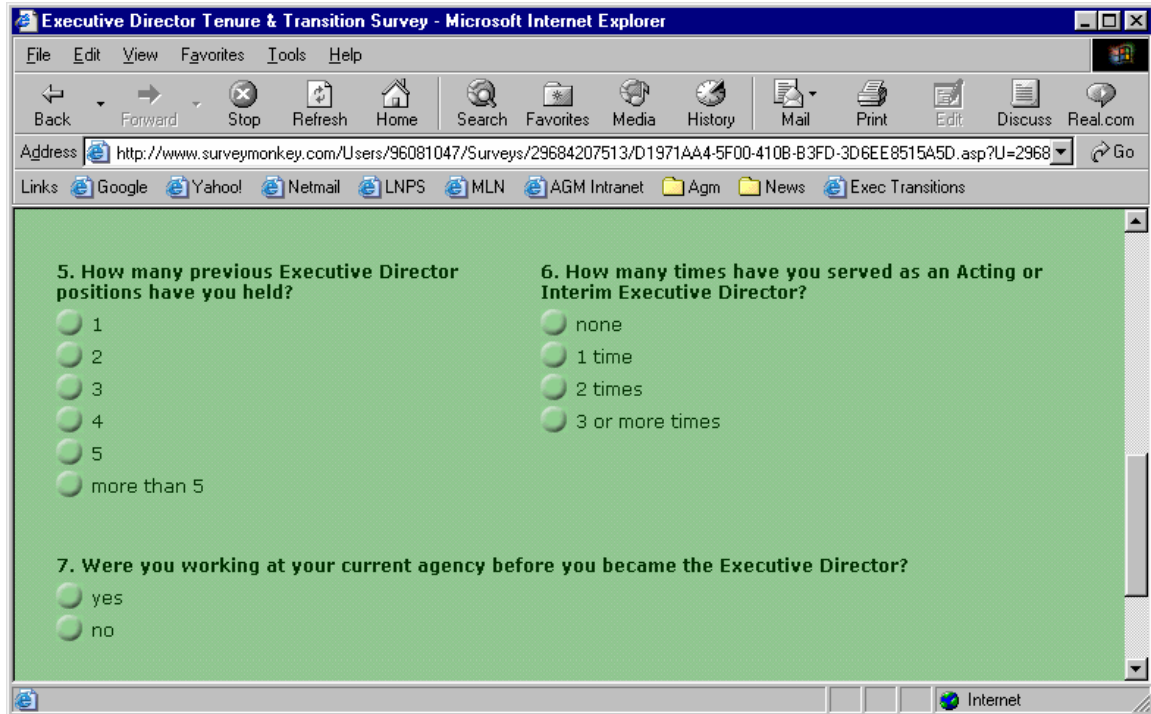
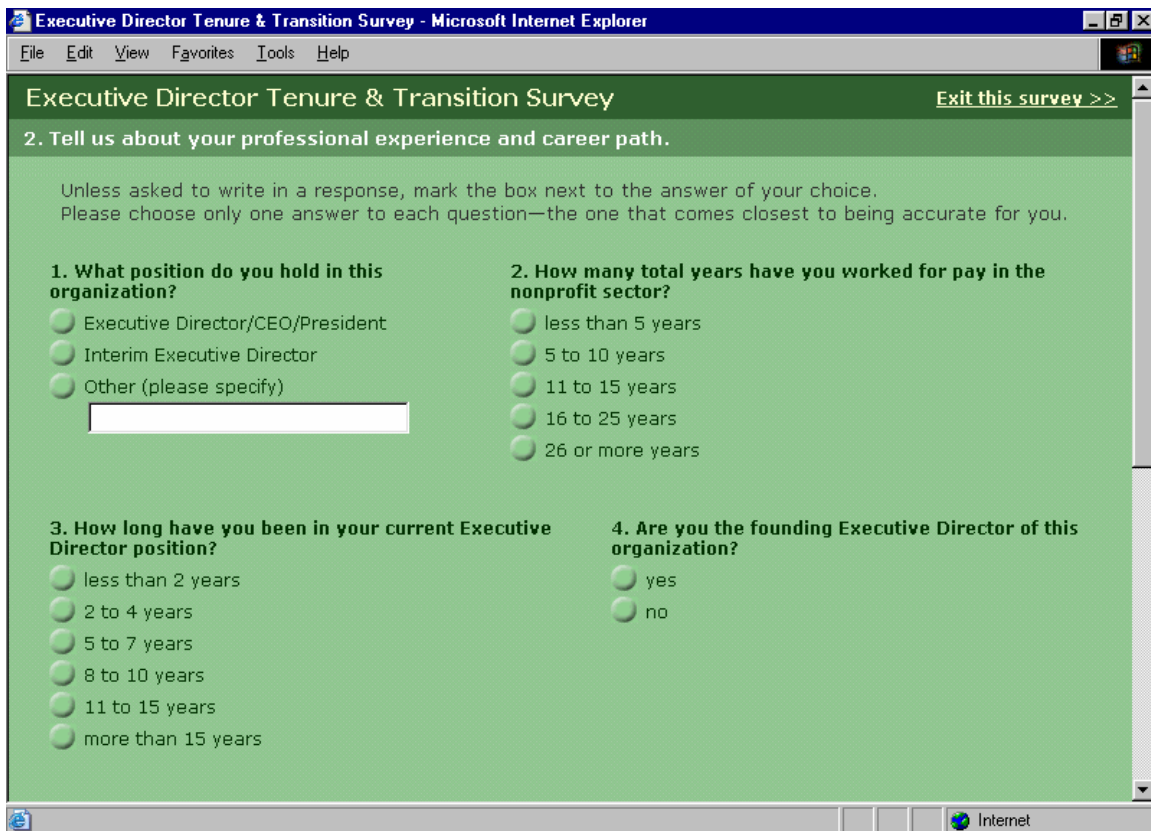
Given these and other findings, NEETP members believe it makes sense to assure that executive transition services are available to assist organizations in preparing for

and managing leadership change. They expect to move forward with a plan to: 1) train transition consultants and interim executive directors; 2) educate funders and nonprofit organizations about the risks and opportunities inherent in executive transition; and 3) provide information on the steps most likely to result in a successful transition process.

# APPENDIX A

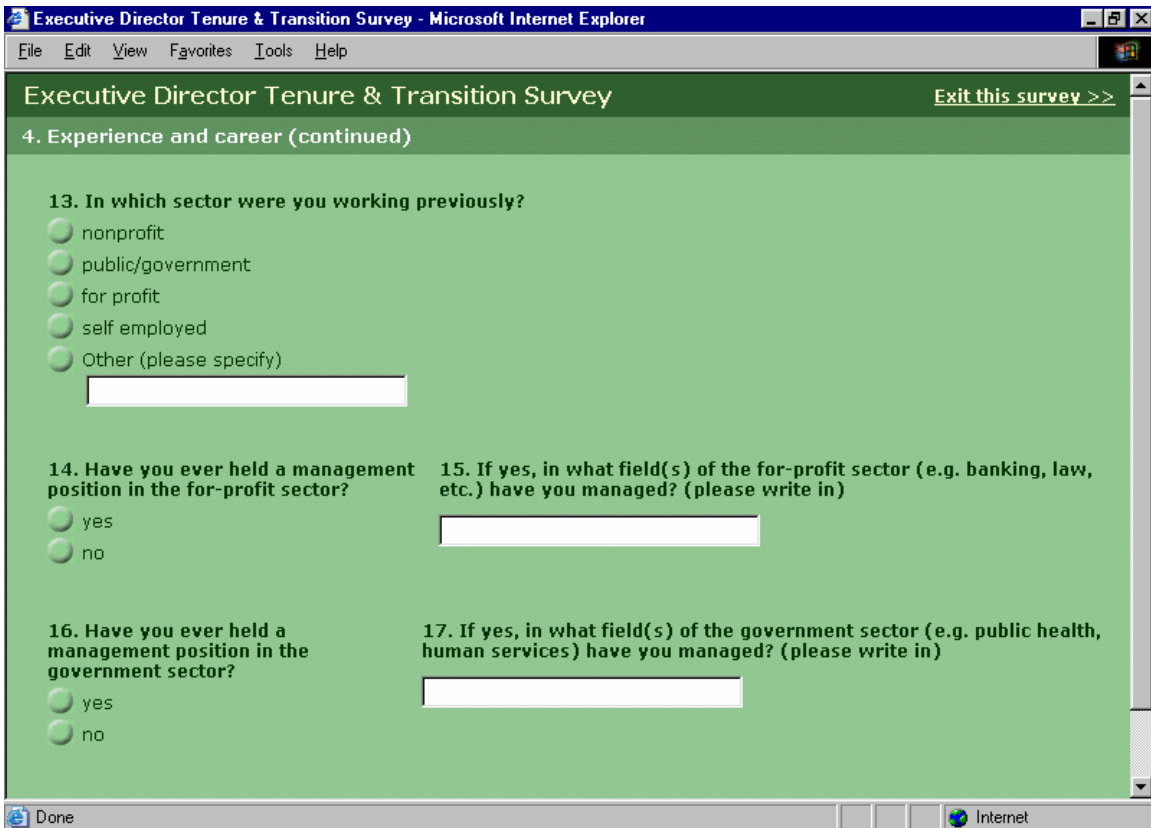
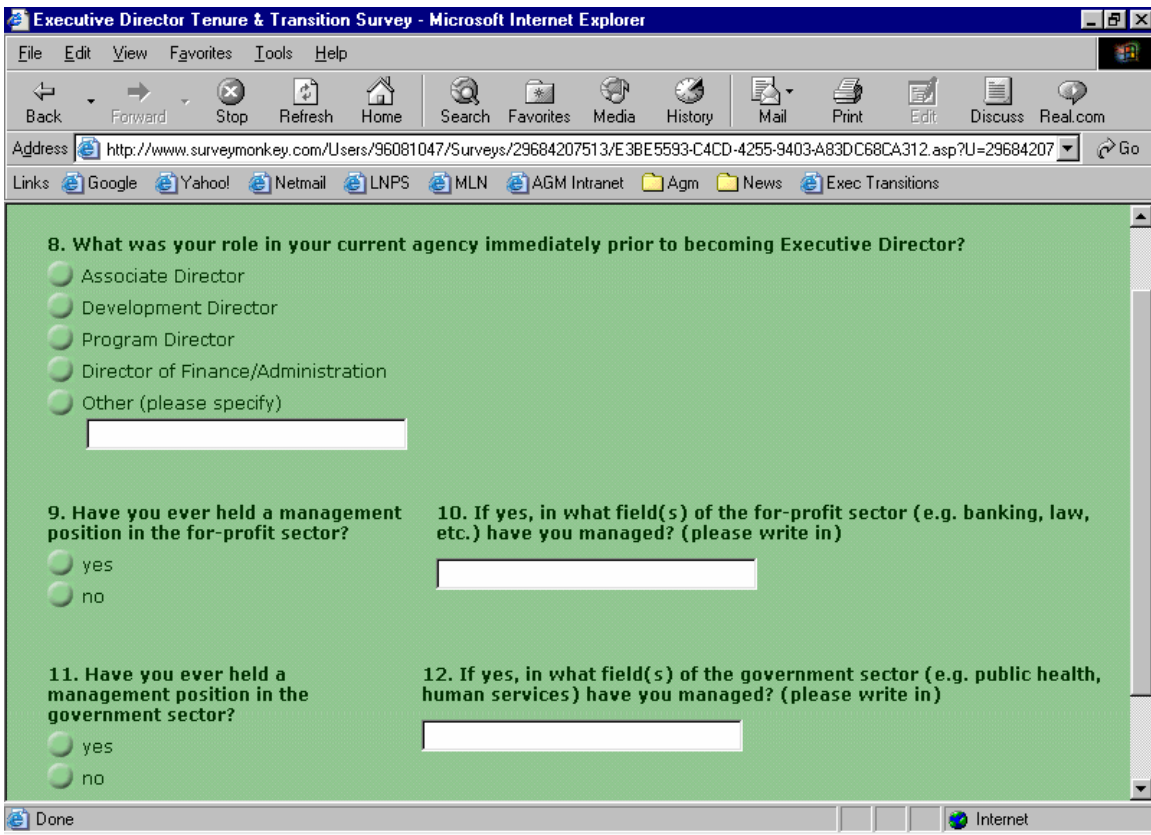
## *Survey Instrument*



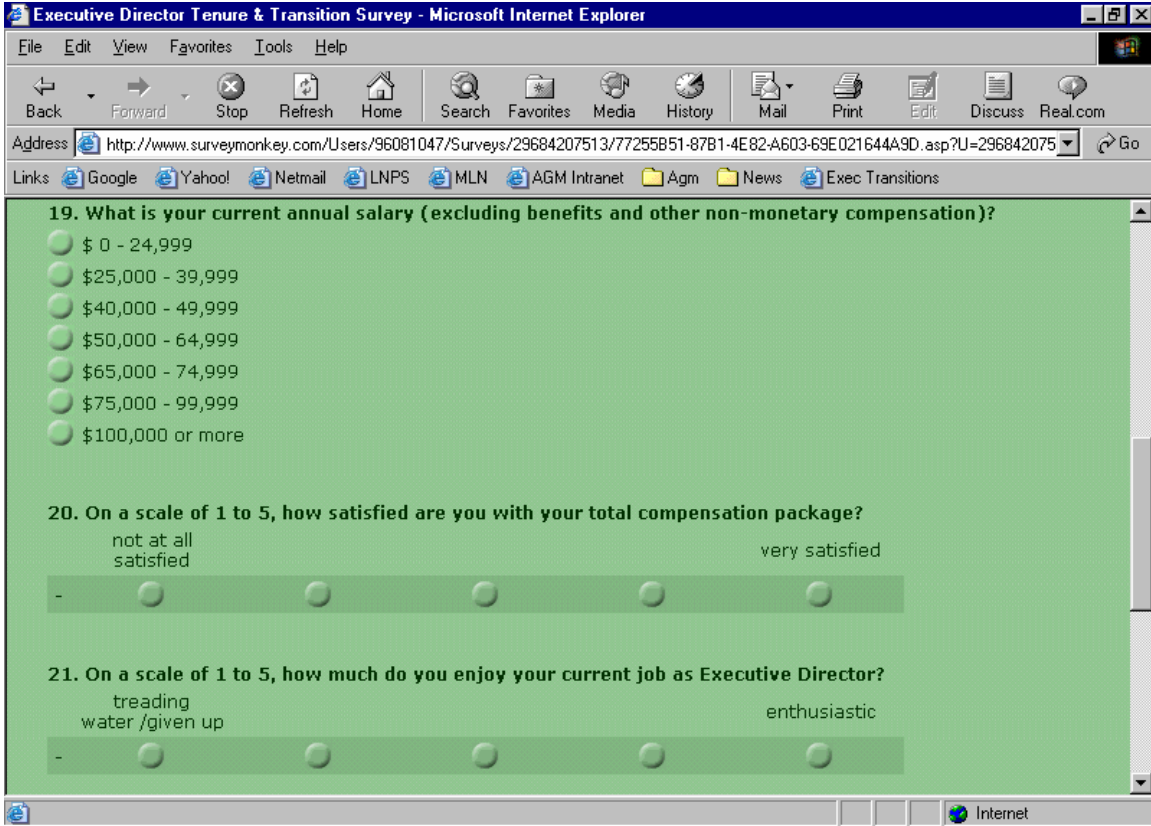


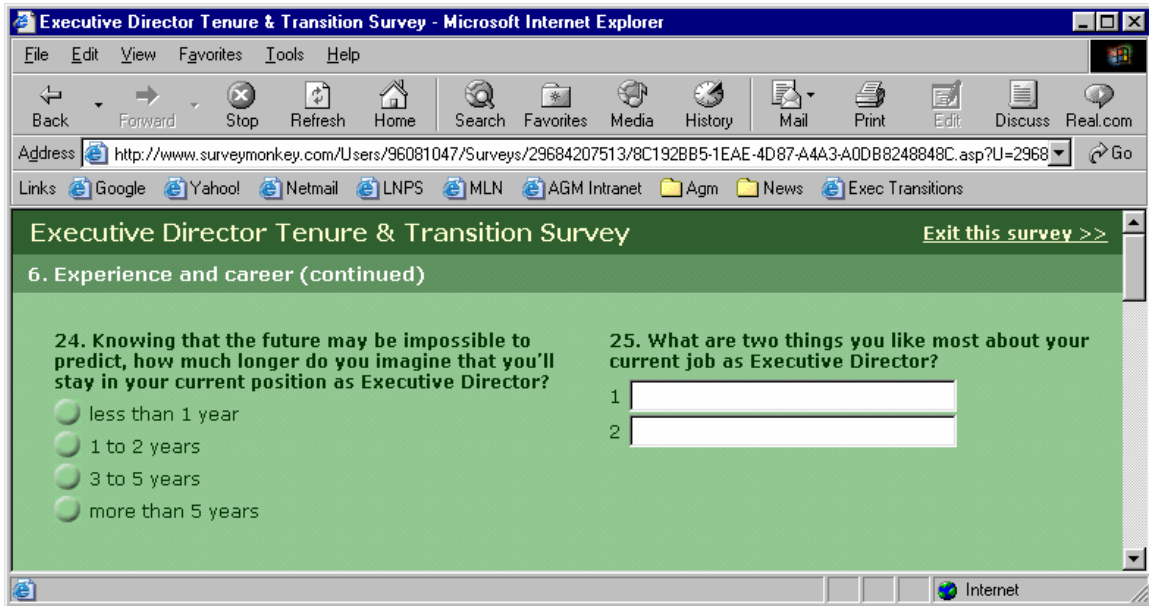
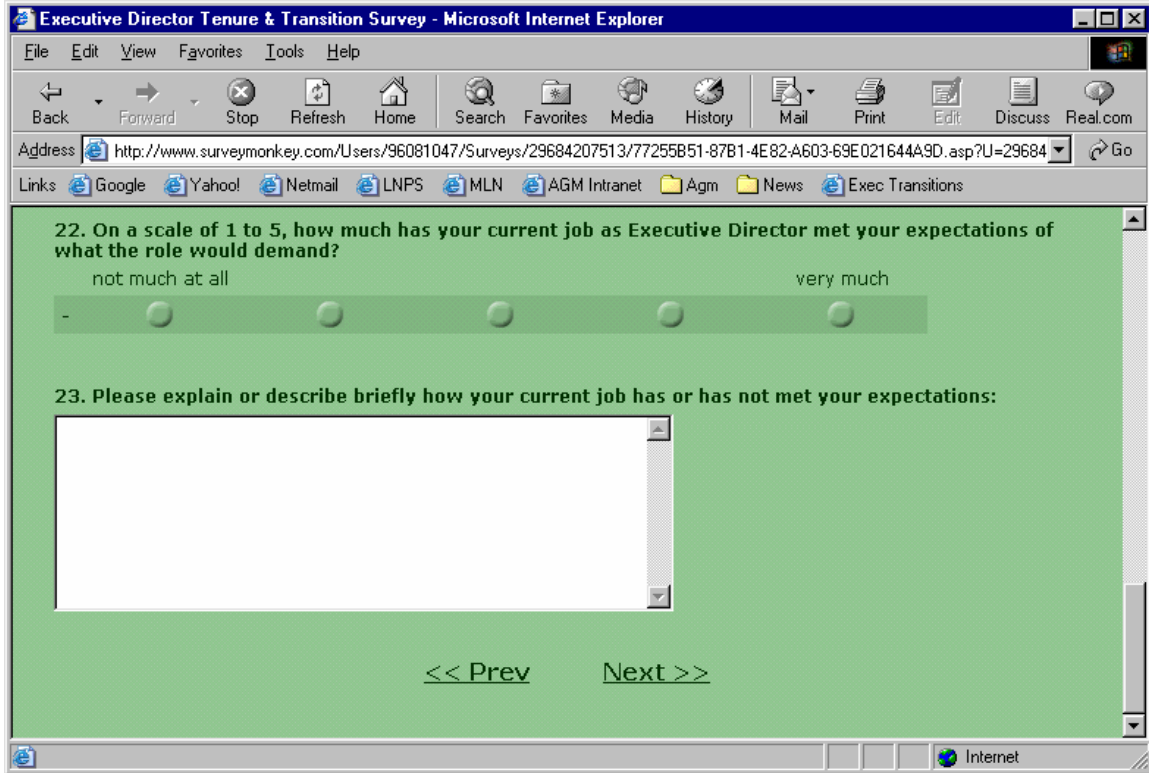
**If the answer to question 7 is Yes, please answer Questions 8-12 and skip Questions 13-17.**

**If the answer to question 7 is No, please skip Questions 8-12 and answer Questions 13-17.**

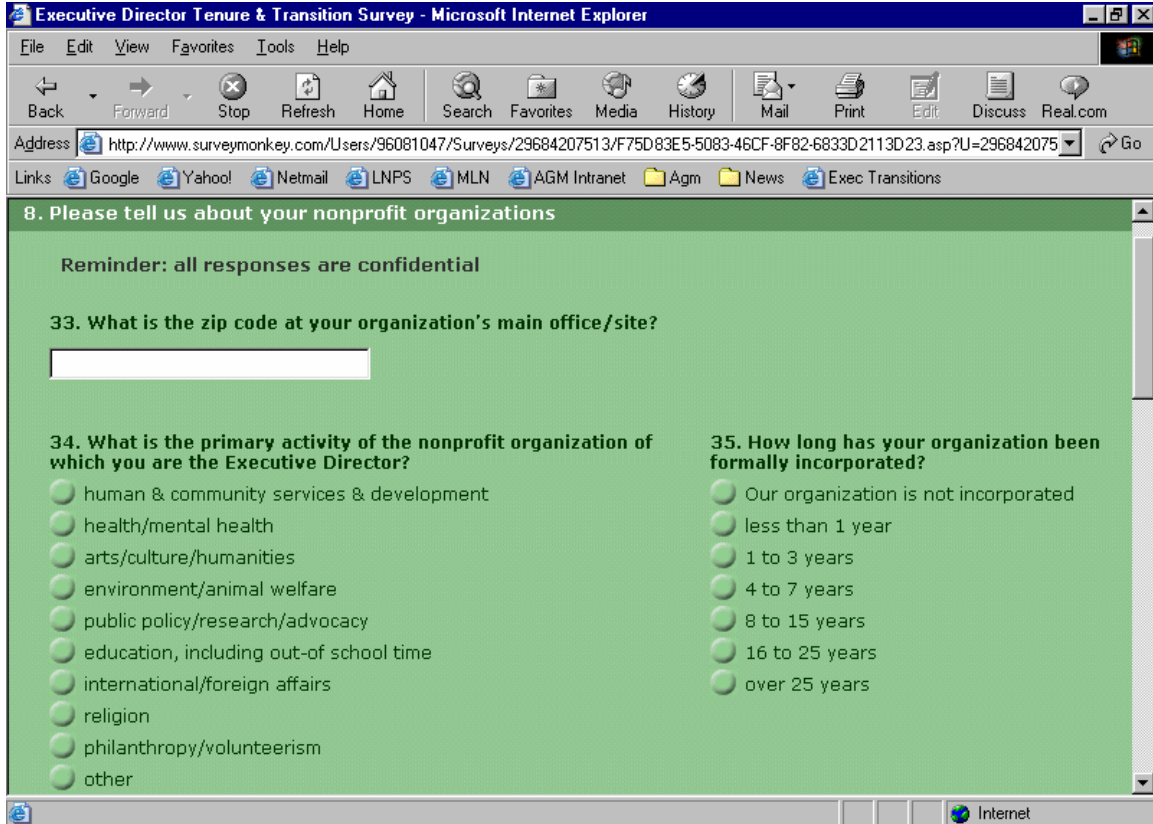
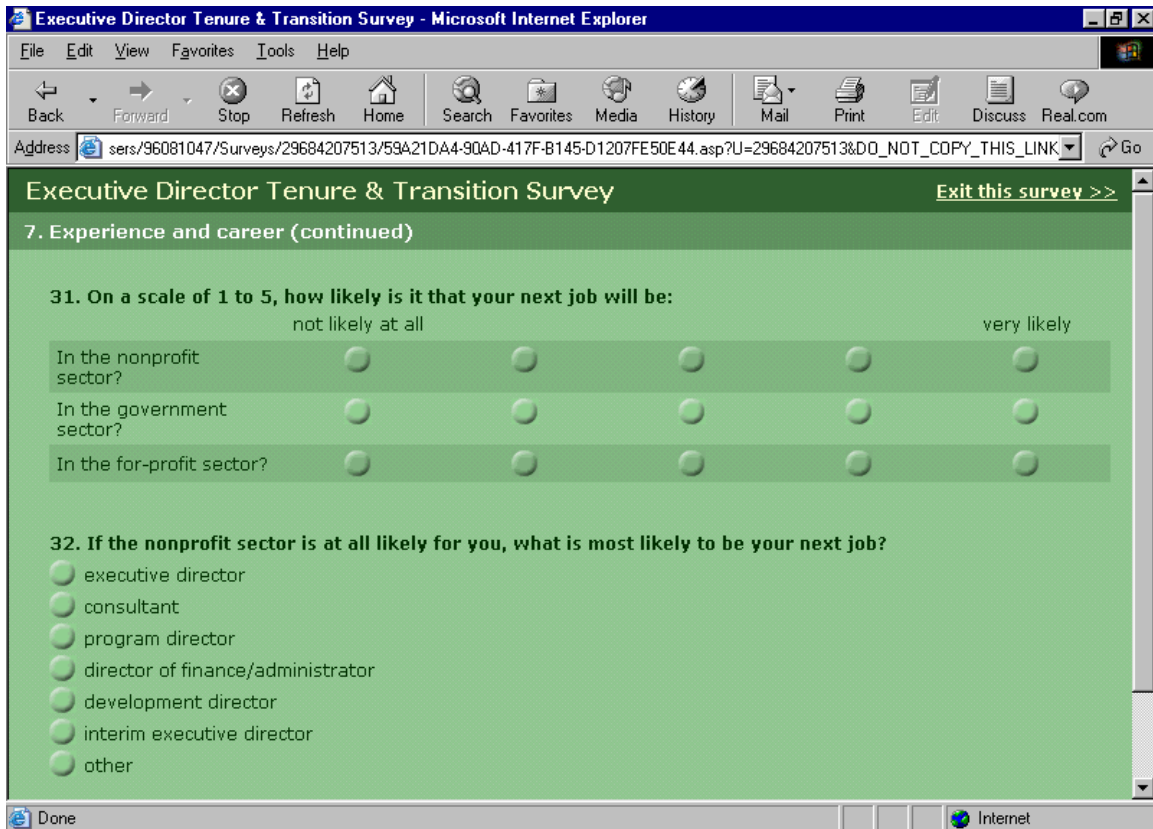












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**36. How many paid full-time and part-time staff (FTE) does your organization employ?**

less than 1

1-2

3-5

6-10

11-20

21-50

51-100

101 or more

**37. What is the annual operating budget of your organization?**

less than \$100,000

\$100,000-\$499,999

\$500,000-\$999,999

\$1,000,000-\$4,999,999

\$5,000,000-\$9,999,999

\$10,000,000 and above

**38. Is there anyone on your paid staff besides you with responsibilities for:**

	yes	no
human resource management?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fundraising?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**39. Do you have a person on staff who acts as your "number two person," the equivalent of an Associate Director, Deputy Director, or Assistant Director?**

yes

no

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**40. Has your Board of Directors created a Succession Plan for your organization?**

yes

no

**41. How many Executive Directors has your organization had in the last 5 years?**

1

2

3

4

5

more than 5

**42. Please mark the following that most accurately describes your organization's experience with executive transition.**

We have never had a paid executive director

We are about to have our first paid executive director

We are currently without or are about to be without an executive director

Our organization has been through an executive transition in the past 24 months

Our organization has had the same executive director for over 2 years, but not more than 10 years

Our organization has had the same executive director for over 10 years

Other (please specify)

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9. Tell us about your training and support network and needs

43. On a scale of 1 to 5, how important have each of these sources of training and support been to you in your ongoing development as an Executive Director?

	not important at all				very important
my management team/work colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my spouse/partner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
peer networking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
executive coaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
professional associations/networks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
college-based management coursework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
topical workshops and conferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
internet as a source of information for your role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board of Directors as a source of overall support in your role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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44. On a scale of 1 to 5, how effectively do you and your Board of Directors team up in the following areas?

community/public relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fundraising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
strategic planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
financial oversight and budgeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
advocacy for the agency's mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
personal support of you as Executive Director	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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**45. How significant do you think the following obstacles are to attracting and retaining executive leadership in the nonprofit field?**

	Not a significant obstacle				Extremely significant obstacle
Compensation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Type and level of benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Length of workday	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relationship with board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organization awareness and appreciation for diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflicting personal politics in the board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of peer network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficulty with raising operating support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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**10. Training and support network and needs (continued)**

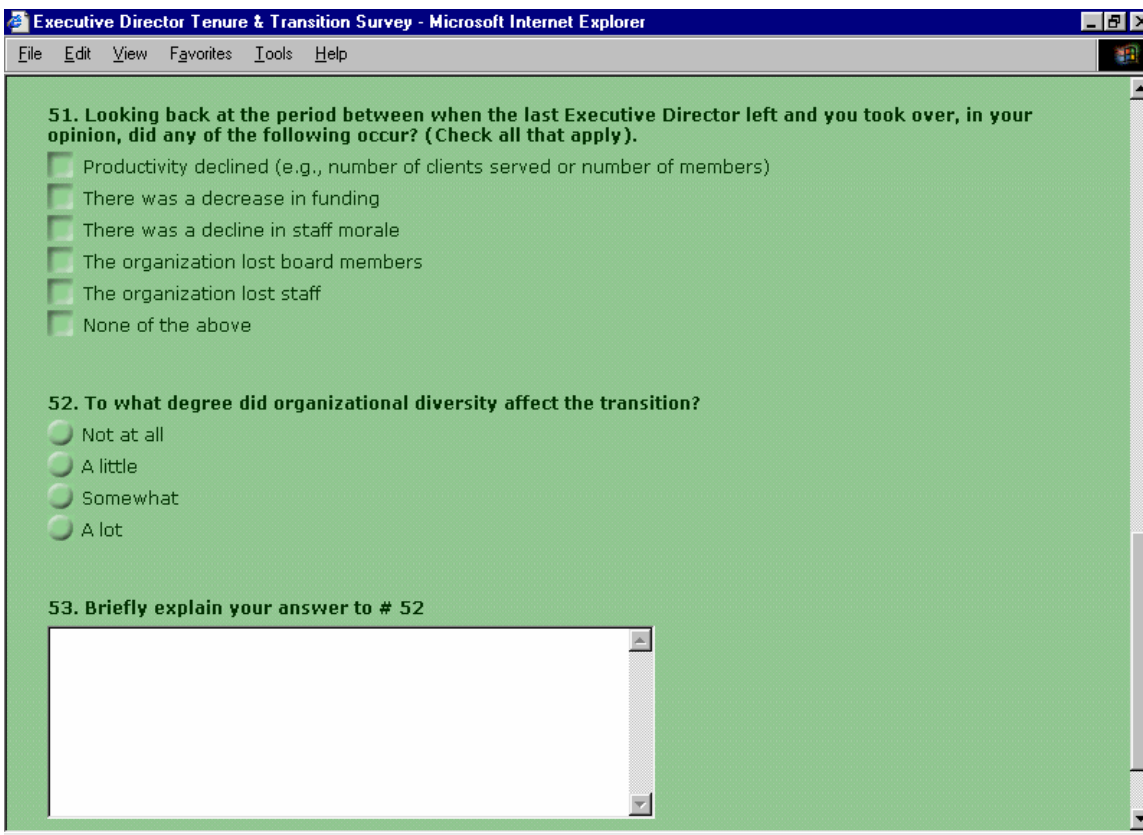
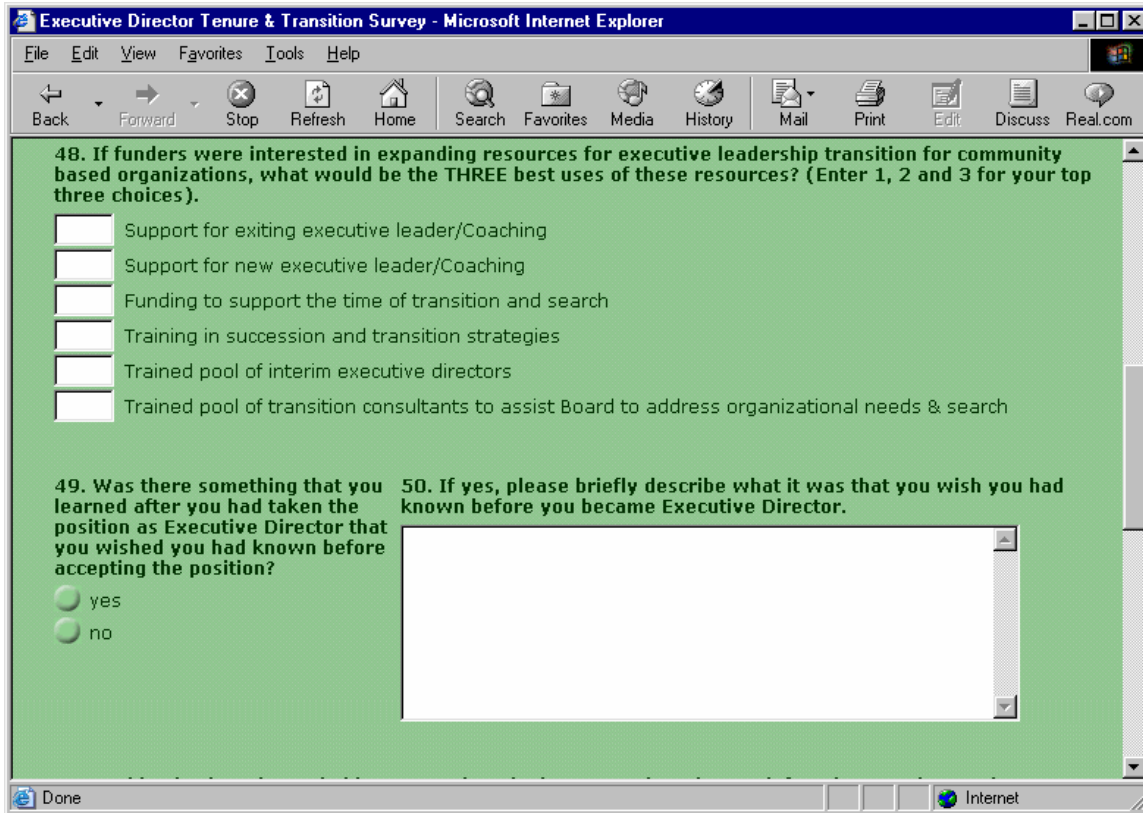
**46. Which of the following have been helpful or would have been helpful to you during an executive transition? (Check as many as apply.)**

- Coaching/Mentoring
- Grant for technical assistance
- Technical assistance on specific issues, e.g., Board Development or financial management assistance
- Assistance finding an Interim Executive Director for the agency
- Recruitment firm
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

**47. Which of the following were available and/or accessible to you during an executive transition? (Check as many as apply.)**

- Coaching/Mentoring
- Grant for technical assistance
- Technical assistance on specific issues, e.g., Board Development or financial management assistance
- Assistance finding an Interim Executive Director for the agency
- Recruitment firm
- None of the above

Done Internet





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11. Please tell us about yourself

**Reminder: all responses are confidential**

**54. What is your age?**

- under 30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- over 60

**55. What is your gender?**

- female
- male
- transgender

**56. What is your race/ethnicity?**

- African American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Latino/a
- Middle Eastern
- Native American or Aboriginal
- White/Anglo
- Other (please specify)

**57. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?**

- junior high
- high school
- associates degree
- undergraduate degree (e.g. B.A., B.S.)
- Master's degree (e.g. MSW, MBA)
- Doctorate (e.g. Ed.D., Ph.D.)

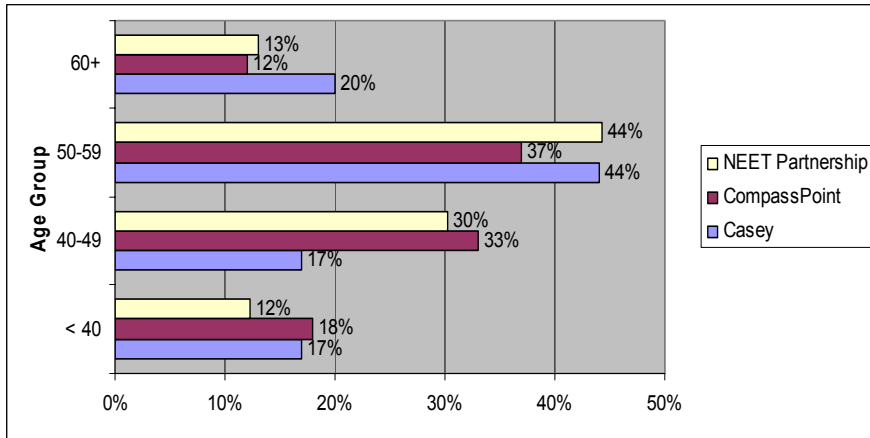
## APPENDIX B

### Comparisons with CompassPoint and Annie E. Casey Foundation survey results

28



### Comparison: Age

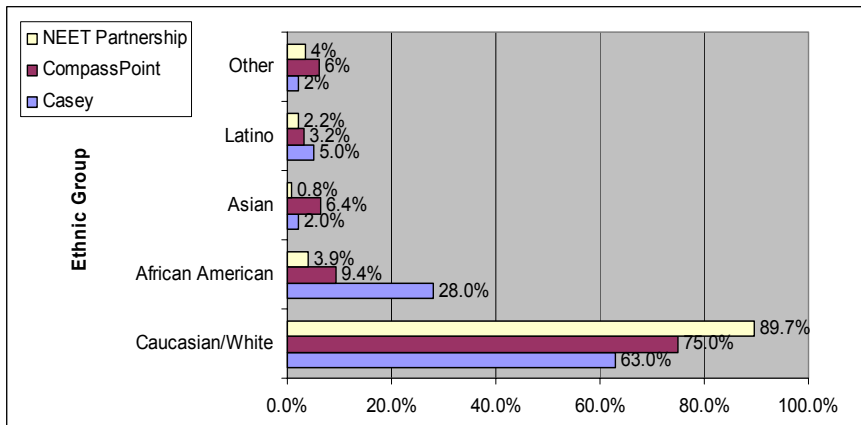


ASSOCIATED GRANT MAKERS - 2003

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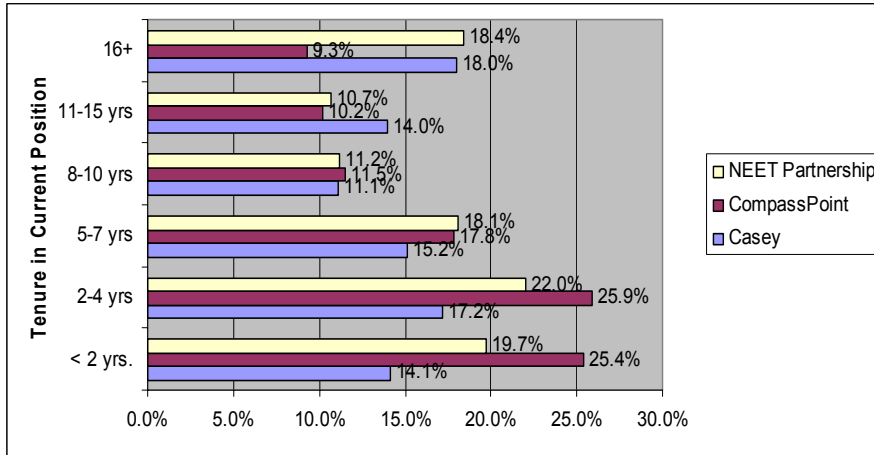


### Comparison: Ethnicity



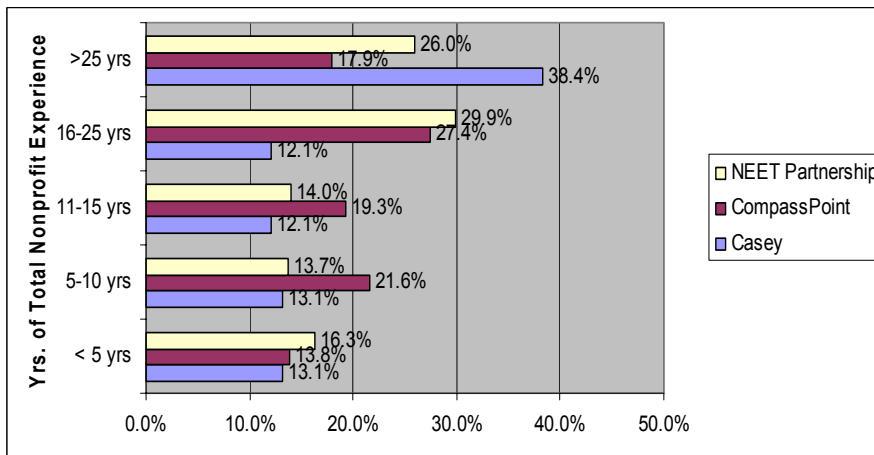
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## Comparison: Years in Current Position



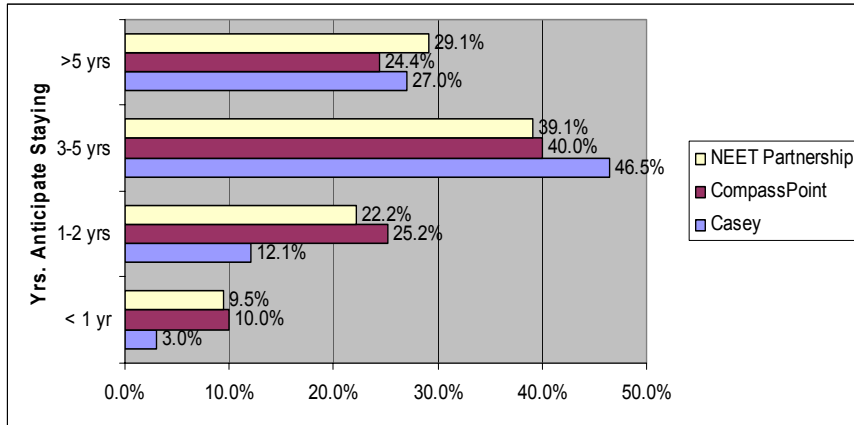
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## Comparison: Years of Nonprofit Experience



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## Comparison: Years Executive Directors Anticipate Staying in Current Position



ASSOCIATED GRANT MAKERS - 2003

## APPENDIX C

### *Resource List*

The following resources will be helpful to those interested in learning more about executive transition and the challenges of nonprofit leadership:

Adams and Associates and Management Performance Concepts, “Community-Based Organizations & Executive Leadership Transitions: A Survey of the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Community-Based Grantees.” Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2001.

Adams, Tom and Donna Stark: “Examining Executive Leadership Transitions” and “Executive Transitions Research Update.” Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2002.

Adams, Tom, “Capturing the Power of Leadership Change: Using Executive Transition Services to Strengthen Organizational Capacity.” Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2000.

Allison, Michael, “Into the Fire: Boards and Executive Transitions.” San Francisco: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, 2001.

Axelrod, Nancy, “Chief Executive Succession Planning: The Board’s Role in Securing Your Organization’s Future.” Washington, DC: BoardSource, 2002.

Ban, Carolyn and Marcia Towers, “The Challenges of Nonprofit Leadership: A Comparative Study of Nonprofit Executives in the Pittsburgh Region.” Research report prepared for the William J. Copeland Fund and the Elmer J. Tropman Nonprofit Management Institute of the Pittsburgh Foundation, July 2003.

Board Café: A free electronic newsletter for nonprofit board members. Published by CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and BoardSource. Register and see archives at [www.boardcafe.org](http://www.boardcafe.org)

Bridges, William, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1991.

Carlson, Mim and Margaret Donohoe, *The Executive Director’s Survival Guide: Thriving as a Nonprofit Leader*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.

Gilmore, Thomas N., *Making a Leadership Change: How Organizations and Leaders Can Handle Leadership Transition Successfully*. Lincoln, NE: Authors Choice Press, 2003.

Linnell, Deborah, “Nonprofit Effectiveness – Inclusiveness Matters.” Boston: Third Sector New England, 2003.

Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, “Managing Executive Transitions: A Handbook for Nonprofit Organizations.” Washington, DC: Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, 1999.

Peters, Jeanne and Timothy Wolfred, “Daring to Lead: Nonprofit Executive Directors and Their Work Experience.” San Francisco: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, 2001.

Redington, Emily and Donn Vickers, “Following the Leader: A Guide for Planning Founding Director Transition.” Columbus, OH: The Academy for Leadership and Governance, 2001.

United Way of New York City, “The Next Leaders: UWNYP Grantee Leadership Development and Succession Management Needs.”

Wolfred, Timothy, Mike Allison and Jan Masaoka, “Leadership Lost: A Study of Executive Director Tenure and Experience.” San Francisco: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, 1999.

Web sites:

[www.compasspoint.org](http://www.compasspoint.org)

[www.transitionguides.com](http://www.transitionguides.com)

**APPENDIX D**  
***NEETP Advisory Committee***

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