

Creating a
*Process of
Succession Planning
for Lay Leaders*

“It is essential that every one of its members (Jewish leaders) possess the following seven qualifications: wisdom, humility, fear of God, disdain of financial gain, love of truth, love of people, and a good reputation.”

– Maimonides

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Learning Objectives

- › Take an intentional approach to succession planning, rather than treating it as an afterthought.
- › Understand how succession planning will strengthen their organization’s mission and provide other benefits.
- › Create a process of succession planning and initiate a conversation about transition.
- › Recognize when it is the right time to make a leadership transition.
- › Feel the urgency around succession planning as a critical part of a lay leader’s success and it should begin soon after a lay leader takes on a new role.
- › Articulate some of the how-to’s of succession planning.

“ Changing leaders and transitioning to new leadership brings its own constellation of opportunities and anxieties. Leaders who have trail-blazed new projects and seen them through, who have known and mentored others and who have, through the impact of personality and relationships, cemented an institution’s vision, are hard to let go of. Faith in the next candidate notwithstanding, we form deep attachments to current leaders... We might find it hard to transition to leadership which holds promise but is ultimately unfamiliar... A new leader signals change for us all. ”

[Brown, Erica, “A Biblical Story of Succession,” *Leadership in the Wilderness*, Jewish Leadership Institute, Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, Rockville, MD, pages 129 – 132.]

Discuss your own leadership transitions:

› What was scary?

› What was exciting?

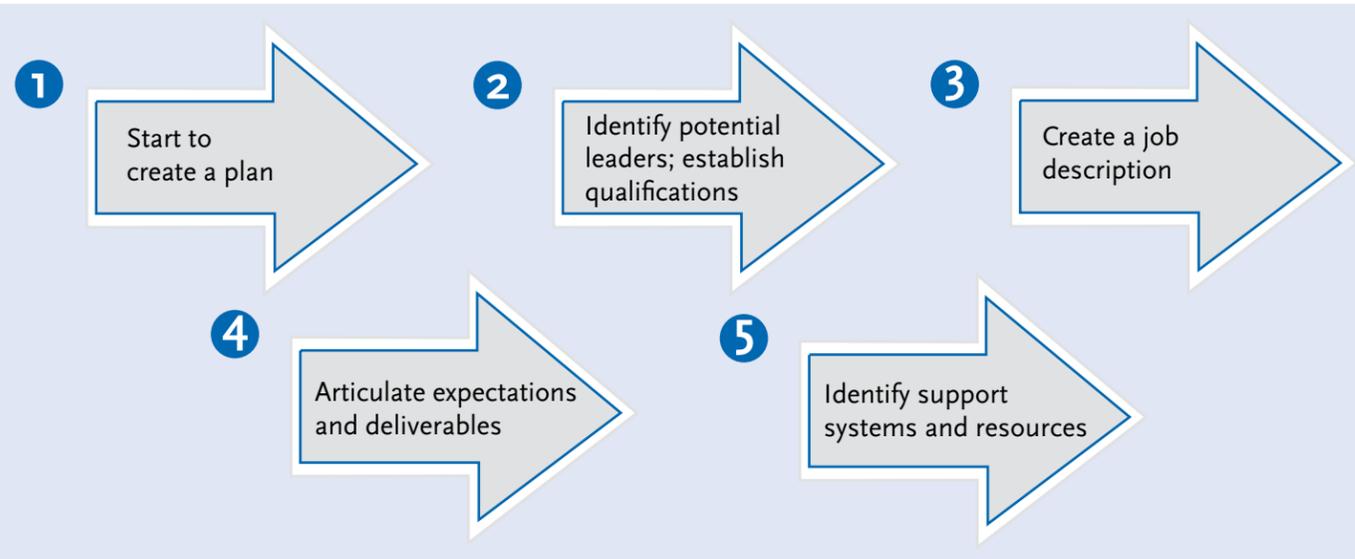
› What were the positive and negative outcomes?

› What were ways in which you were prepared?

› How could you have been better prepared?

Process for Succession Planning

You can use the following five steps to guide you in organizational succession planning



Step 1: Start to Create a Plan

The creation of a plan is the opportunity for the staff and lay leaders involved to reflect on the current and future needs of the organization and the ways in which lay leaders will help to fill those needs. Items to consider in this phase include:

- Do you have by-laws? Where are these found? _____
- Do your by-laws specify job descriptions for officers?
- Do your by-laws specify term limits for board members and officers?
- What are the terms for each? (2- 5 years)
- Who is (should be) involved in the recruitment, selection, and training process for new leaders?
 - Current lay leadership?
 - Various departments within the organization?
 - The board chair?
 - The organization’s human resources director?
- Where are you looking for potential recruits?
 - Current volunteers?
 - New and emerging leaders?
 - Volunteers in other Jewish organizations?
 - “Graduates” of leadership training programs in your community?

- What is your cycle for nominations? _____
- When will new leadership be suggested? _____
- When will potential board members be recruited and approached? _____ Appointed? _____
- What committee chairs or board member portfolios are needed now or in the next few years?

Step 2: Identify Potential Leaders and Establish Qualifications

In considering “prospects” to fill leadership positions consider the 5 W’s: **wealth, wisdom, wallop (influence/passion), work and wit.**

Succession Planning Chart: We are seeking the following qualities in our next leader.

Name/Title of Leadership Position: _____

Leadership Characteristics:

Category	Description – Elaborate! Include additional notes, attributes, etc. here
Leadership qualities	
Dependability	
Experience	
Commitment	
Contacts/Networks	
Knowledge (subject area knowledge, knowledge about the organization, etc.)	
Enthusiasm	
Resources (e.g. time, money)	
Vision	
Managerial skills	
Clout within the community	
Ability to recruit others	
Add in other categories...	

Step 3: Create a job description

Create a list of responsibilities for board members and job descriptions for officers and committee chairs: Using the chart above and the board member responsibility list found in the appendix, create a list of responsibilities for new board members. Creating a job description for a volunteer position professionalizes the succession planning process and enables potential new leaders to accept new responsibilities with a full understanding of what is expected of them.

Sample job description for board members:

- › Provide oversight for the planning and implementation of initiatives
- › Interview and select candidates for leadership development program
- › Advise on policy issues at our board meetings (*attendance is important*)
- › Guide programming (*e.g. speakers, etc.*)
- › Provide fiscal oversight
- › Serve on a committee or task force of interest
- › Advocate for organization's programs
- › Support the organization's annual campaign or fundraiser
- › Communicate progress to stakeholders in the community

Step 4: Articulate Expectation and Deliverables

What can the organization expect from the _____ (*fill in position*)?

- › Attendance at _____
- › Commitment to _____
- › Willingness to _____
- › Readiness to _____
- › An attitude of _____

What can the _____ (*fill in position*) expect from the organization? (*suggested ideas below*)

- › Clear job description
- › Reasonable and attainable time frame
- › Education, training, coaching and motivation
- › Relevant support materials
- › Access to a professional partner (*if there is one*)
- › Greater understanding of the institution and the general Jewish community
- › Meeting other volunteers in the community and creating meaningful contacts
- › What else? (Consider number of meetings, time commitment, conference calls, events, financial commitment)

Refer to *Brit Avodah* on page 8-9.

Step 5: Identify Support Systems and Resources

Support systems the successor will have in place to enable her to succeed:

- › Mentoring and coaching
 - › Job rotation – experience another person’s position for a day, a week, or a meeting
 - › On-the-job training from the current leader
 - › Support from a professional *(either a dedicated or shared professional)*
 - › Workshops led by DFI *(on topics such as budgeting, marketing, supervision, etc.)*
 - › Board training by DFI on various topics: (Building a case for giving, Fundraising/solicitation, Lay/Pro partnership, Succession Planning, Committee work)
 - › The ACHARAI Fellows Program for those in line to be president of the organization or a top leader
 - › Other community leadership programs
 - › Communal opportunities to network with other leaders, such as the Baltimore Jewish Leaders Assembly.
 - › What else?
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Plan for Outgoing Leaders and Make the Transition

› What’s next for the outgoing leader?

Creating plans for outgoing leaders helps to ensure their future involvement while gleaning important lessons learned from their tenure in their leadership position.

Consider conducting an exit interview with the outgoing leader, asking questions such as:

- What did you learn during your tenure in this leadership position?
- Are there particular aspects of the work, or new things that you saw/learned that piqued your interest? What should we be aware of in future planning?
- What do you think is next for you?

› Making the transition – what will outgoing leaders give to new leaders?

- I bequeath the following attributes...*(patience, sense of humor, organizational skill...)*
- I bequeath the following support systems... *(name of a wonderful professional or volunteer leader who will work closely with the new leader...)*
- I bequeath the following resources... *(materials that describe the organization, on line resources, books...)*
- I bequeath the following insights... *(tips, hints...)*
- I bequeath the following networks/contacts...

Leadership Last Will and Testament



Brit Avodah: Covenant of Service

Board of Trustees

ACHARAI: The Shoshana S. Cardin Leadership Development Institute

The concept of *Brit (covenant)* is central to Judaism. From Abraham and Sarah to our collective experience at Sinai, the theme of Brit appears over and over again. Our relationship with God and our Jewish family is one of partnership. Striving to understand what is expected of us and endeavoring to fulfill these expectations is part of the essence of being a Jew.

In that spirit, it is an honor to serve ACHARAI as a member of the Board of Directors. With this honor come responsibilities and a commitment to ensure that this organization continues to support all Jewish Organizations of Greater Baltimore.

› Board members understand and accept their responsibility to set an example of personal commitment by:

- Ensuring that everyone involved in our programs and leadership is treated with *kavod (respect)*.
- Teaching that all are created *b'tzelem Elohim (in the image of God)* and that being a Jew is an honor and a privilege.
- Participating in the various ACHARAI events and programs.
- Expanding their spiritual and intellectual lives through lifelong learning.
- Giving financial support to the ACHARAI annual campaign in accordance with one's own means.
- Helping to raise funds for ACHARAI and its programs.
- Maintaining the confidentiality of Board discussions.
- Working with the staff to support, advance and improve ACHARAI.
- Making decisions based upon Jewish values such as fairness, mutual respect, sensitivity and openness.
- Modeling leadership emphasizing such values as honesty, humility, integrity, loyalty, tolerance and respect, etc.
- Supporting the final decisions of the Board and take a leadership role in disseminating information to the community.
- Communicating openly and truthfully with fellow Board members and staff.

› Board members understand and accept their responsibility to set and implement ACHARAI's mission and strategic direction by:

- Attending regular and special Board meetings, Annual meetings, and retreats.
- Being prepared at Board meetings by reading all pertinent materials beforehand and arriving on time.
- Being familiar with ACHARAI's by-laws, policies, procedures, history, traditions, practices and financial affairs.

- Accepting to serve on at least one committee or Task Force.
- Participate in the recruitment, interviewing and selecting participants in ACHARAI's programs.
- Recruiting organizations to attend and sponsor the BJLA.
- Exercising fiduciary oversight to ensure sound financial and organizational structure and procedures.
- Bringing expressed or observed concerns to the attention of the leadership.
- Bringing to the attention of the Executive Director, and/or President personnel issues and not becoming personally involved.
- Advocating ACHARAI and its programs (*including the BJLA*) in the community by supporting them publicly and helping others to understand the important contribution ACHARAI makes in our Jewish Community.
- Separating the interest of ACHARAI from the specific needs of a particular individual or constituency.
- Conducting discussions and deliberations courteously and with respect for the views and feelings of others, and marked by reflective consideration of the issues.
- Bringing policy issues of concern to the leadership and/ or the Board for discussion.

› As a member of the Board of Trustees of ACHARAI may expect:

- Notices, agendas and reports will be sent in advance of meetings.
- Board meetings will begin on time and be run in an expeditious matter.
- All members will have an opportunity to express their views freely without recriminations.
- Matters requiring confidentiality will be unequivocally respected.
- All board members will respect privacy of deliberations and discussions that take place within meetings.
- Criticism of policy, positions, programs, or individuals will be expressed constructively and addressed to the appropriate party.
- Disagreement during discussions and deliberations will relate only to principles and priorities, not personalities.
- Respectful treatment by staff and other lay leaders and, in turn, will have respect for boundaries, prerogatives and expertise of the professional staff, fellow board members and ACHARAI Fellows.



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