



Leader Succession Institute – Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Leader Succession Institute (LSI)?

The Leader Succession Institute is an eight-month distance learning program that combines coaching, peer-networking, and learning labs to create a supportive professional environment where ready-next leaders learn new skills, enhance existing strengths, and become more flexible and resilient in the face of the new realities of working in a nonprofit organization. The curriculum is based on seven competencies developed by Lead for Good's Founder, Karen Ramsey. The competencies include:

- Knowing Mission and Purpose
- Investment in Self and Others
- Thinking Strategically
- Inspiring Others
- Sharing Leadership
- Building Strong Community Relationships
- Achieving Results

2. Why LSI?

Inadequate succession planning is a major risk factor for the majority of nonprofits!

Is your organization well-prepared for a transition in executive leadership? Although effective executive leadership is a key to success, and most organizations acknowledge leadership succession planning as critically important for organizational stability, studies show that most nonprofits are doing little to nothing about it.

An unprecedented period of leadership transition is looming as baby-boomers approach retirement age. U.S. Census Bureau estimates indicate that baby boomers reaching age 65 will surpass four million by 2020. Studies indicate that 67% of executive directors are planning to leave the profession in the next two to six years!

An extensive survey of nonprofits conducted by Froelich, McKee and Rathge* reveals a troubling picture of nonprofit preparedness, whether for anticipated retirement or for emergency succession, as illustrated by these excerpts from their study:

"The nonprofits studied here appear ill-prepared for and even unrealistic about the upcoming challenges.... Clearly there is considerable work ahead to better prepare for executive succession in nonprofit organizations."

"Finding qualified, motivated leaders to fill all the vital executive positions vacated by this generation is going to present pressing challenges for many organizations, nonprofit and for-profit alike. The problem is likely to be more difficult in the nonprofit sector due to an apparent shortage of experienced executive directors in the job market, lower salaries and lack of organizational infrastructure, yet an increasingly demanding set of executive tasks and related attributes that make nonprofit executive positions potentially less appealing to upcoming Generation X and Y future leaders."



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“Relatively poor board performance is reported for succession planning in general and identification of external and internal candidates in particular. Internal candidates are preferred in about half the organizations, even though about two-thirds report no viable internal candidate. Moreover, level of effort in leadership development activities was not high.”

Evidence shows it is essential that nonprofit organizations start now to:

- Identify rising stars with the potential to fill leadership ranks in the future.
- Develop leadership skills and knowledge-base in those high potentials.
- Create opportunities for mentorship and collaboration between current leaders and upcoming leaders, and provide chances for them to stretch and put learning into practice.
- Define a detailed succession plan for all key leadership positions.

The Leader Succession Institute provides a powerful and affordable incubator that expands personal effectiveness, leadership knowledge and skills, connects rising stars to experienced mentors and coaches, and includes a keystone project as an opportunity for the participant to make an important leadership impact on the organization.

*“Succession Planning in Nonprofit Organizations,” by Karen Froelich, Gregory McKee and Richard Rathge. 2009
https://www.baruch.cuny.edu/spa/researchcenters/nonprofitsstrategy/documents/FroelichMcKeeRathge_SuccessionPlanninginNonprofitOrganizations.pdf

3. Who should participate in LSI?

LSI candidates:

- Are leaders with the potential and desire to move into a higher level position within their nonprofit organization and/or to expand their social sector leadership in other capacities.
- Are eager to learn and grow and are interested in getting feedback.
- Are committed to investing the time necessary to become a stronger leader.
- Have the support of their organization to participate.

4. What are the components of LSI?

- **Assessment:** Leaders participate in a 360° assessment including a self-assessment and receive feedback from their manager, directly-reporting staff, and volunteers and/or others.
- **Personal Development Plan:** Based on the 360° assessment, each leader partners with a professional coach to develop a plan that builds on strengths and addresses strategies for growth. This plan is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-sensitive.
- **Coaching:** Twice monthly 30-minute professional coaching sessions allow for check-in and support development plan progress.
- **Learning Labs:** After an initial orientation session, leaders participate in four 2 ½ hour joint interactive learning lab webinars that focus on skill building and address elements of the seven key leadership competencies.
- **Project:** Individuals design and complete through collaboration and delegation a project that adds value to their organization.
- **Mentoring:** Participants will have the help of a mentor of their own choosing to support creation and execution of their project.
- **Peer Networking:** For the two months following completion of the Learning Labs, the group engages in facilitated 90-minute peer-networking sessions.
- **Graduation:** The program concludes with a celebratory meeting where participants discuss their learnings and take-aways and present on their LSI projects.

5. What are the advantages of LSI being offered in a distance learning format?

Lead for Good has had success delivering this type of program in a face-to-face format, and we want to offer the program to a broader audience. By using an on-line platform, the costs of travel,



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meals and meeting space are eliminated, thus keeping fees to a minimum, while still allowing for the richness that comes from having the diversity of an expanded cohort base. In addition, it reduces the amount of time required to attend the sessions and offers the added convenience of being easily accessible. Our use of Webex video conferencing provides opportunity for face-to-face connection in the virtual environment.

6. How long is the LSI program?

The program is eight months in length. The following reflects the schedule of sessions*:

The 2nd Friday of each month, June 2015 – January 2016, starting at 8:00 am PT / 11:00 am ET (session duration varies with the program component – see below)

- **Orientation** - 2.5 hours: June 12, 2015
- **Four Learning Sessions** -2.5 hours each:
 - July 10, 2015
 - August 14, 2015
 - September 11, 2015
 - October 9, 2015
- **Two Peer Networking Conversations** – 1.5 hours each:
 - November 12, 2015
 - December 11, 2015
- **Graduation & Project Presentations** - 2.5 hours: January 8, 2016
- **Coaching** calls are scheduled individually
- **Mentoring** interactions are scheduled individually by participant and mentor

*Dates/times are fixed, unless modified by mutual agreement of the full cohort.

7. How much does LSI cost?

Generous donations have allowed us to offer this program (valued at \$3,900) to a limited number of participants for only \$750.

8. What type of time commitment should the participant expect?

Approximately 40 hours.

9. What technology will be needed for the program?

Participants will need access to a computer with audio capabilities and minimum bandwidth capability of 128kbps downstream or upstream, and a webcam.

10. What happens if an individual misses a session?

We understand that unavoidable conflicts will occur on occasion. A participant may miss up to two sessions and still receive the Certificate of Completion. Participants who miss a session must contact the facilitator of that session about arrangements to make-up the content.



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