



The Pet Rescue Foundation

NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT FOR PET RESCUE ORGANIZATIONS

Part Six: Human Resources – Staff and Volunteers

For more information on these
and other nonprofit
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In this section:

- ◉ The Board's human resources role
- ◉ Hiring, supervising and evaluating the Executive Director
- ◉ The Executive Director's role
- ◉ Volunteer Management



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The Board's HR Role

- ◉ The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that the nonprofit organization has effective staff leadership.
- ◉ In all-volunteer organizations, the Board ensures there are enough trained and motivated volunteers to accomplish the program goals.
- ◉ The Board is responsible for selecting, hiring, supervising and annually evaluating the Executive Director.
- ◉ Direct supervision duties for the Executive Director are usually delegated to the Board President. It's not advisable to ask the ED to directly report to more than one person.



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Hiring the Executive Director

- ◉ The Board's Search Committee should develop a detailed job description for the Executive Director position that includes general and specific duties, who the ED will report to, and both required and preferred qualifications for the position.
- ◉ Ask some of your community partners to share their ED job descriptions to get you started.
- ◉ Remember that the job description will form the basis for future performance evaluations, so spend time making sure it's inclusive!
- ◉ Include formal education, experience and skills in the qualifications, and decide ahead of time what the minimum requirements will be for an applicant to be selected for an interview.



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Hiring the Executive Director

- After you have developed the Executive Director's job description, use the same information to create:
 - The position announcement: a description of the organization and its goals, the job and qualifications, and perhaps some information about your community. This one-page announcement can be posted online and sent to potential applicants. Brief ads such as newspaper classifieds can be distilled from the position announcement.
 - Interview questions. You should be asking all applicants the same questions.
 - An applicant rating form. Decide which qualifications are most important to your organization and assign each one a point value so you can rank the applications you receive and decide which should be selected for interviews.



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Hiring the Executive Director

- While rescue groups in larger communities may have a flood of Executive Director applicants to choose from, smaller communities may have a very limited pool of applicants. When identifying the position qualifications, don't make your qualifications too rigid, because you'll have to live with them. Give yourself some leeway to select the best applicant. For example, don't make a four-year degree a requirement if there's a shortage of college grads in your community; instead you could make it a four-year degree and two years of management experience, OR a high school diploma and eight years of management experience.



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Preparing for Interviews

- ◉ Your Search Committee or Hiring Committee should plan to interview the applicants in a panel setting. This will give all committee members a chance to participate in the hiring decision.
- ◉ Try to schedule all interviews over one or two days to minimize disruption in your Board members' schedules and to allow comparison between applicants.
- ◉ Assign each member of the committee one or more interview questions so that everybody gets a chance to interact with the applicants.
- ◉ Many organizations include a staff representative on the interview panel to get staff perspective and buy-in.



Getting useful information through interview questions

- Draft a set of interview questions that are open-ended and get your applicant thinking and talking. A good way to avoid closed-ended, yes/no questions is to ask the applicant, “Tell us about a time when...”.
- For example, instead of “Do you have supervisory experience?”
- Try: “Tell us about a time when you were challenged as a supervisor. What happened, how did you handle it, and what did you learn?”



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Interview Questions

- ◉ Another useful interview strategy is to give the applicant a scenario to respond to, or to ask him or her (ahead of time) to prepare a short presentation for the committee. These approaches will give the committee a lot of information about how the applicant responds to challenges and stress.
- ◉ Give each applicant the same questions, scenarios and activities so you can fairly compare and rank them to make your hiring decision.
- ◉ Document your interview scores, ranking and hiring decision rationale so that the full Board understands how your decision was made.



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Keep in mind...

- Many pet rescue organizations start off as all-volunteer efforts, and when it's time to hire the first Executive Director, the founder of the rescue seems to be the obvious choice for the job. This can be a good solution IF:
 - The founder is ready to give up control to the Board.
 - The founder is willing to take direction from and report to the Board.
 - Everybody understands that the Executive Director is an employee who serves at the pleasure of the Board, and can be disciplined or fired by the Board.
 - The Board is not intimidated by the founder and is willing to exercise its authority when necessary.



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Keep in mind...

- ◉ If your organization's Board decides to hire the rescue founder as a paid Executive Director, examine your Board structure and operations carefully to determine whether any conflicts of interest exist. For example, no family members or business partners of the proposed Executive Director should be on the Board.
- ◉ The issue of making the organization's founder a paid employee has been a stumbling block for many nonprofits, causing hurt feelings, conflict and sometimes lawsuits. If the IRS determines that a conflict of interest exists in this hiring decision, it can jeopardize your 501(c)(3) status. Please approach this issue with caution. Get lots of advice and document your decisions.



Supervising & Evaluating the Executive Director

- The Board should ensure that the Executive Director has a written copy of his/her job description, a copy of the current Strategic Plan, and a set of written professional goals and objectives for the Executive Director.
- These documents should be updated annually!
- There should be no need for day-to-day supervision of the Executive Director. The President and Board should evaluate the ED's performance based on monthly reports at Board meetings that demonstrate the ED's and the organization's progress toward achieving goals.



Supervising & Evaluating the Executive Director

- ◉ The Executive Director should be formally evaluated 6 months after initial hire, and annually on date of hire thereafter. This performance evaluation should occur regardless of whether a pay raise is involved.
- ◉ The evaluation should be directly aligned with the Executive Director's job description and written goals/objectives.
- ◉ The performance evaluation is the mechanism that ensures both Board and Executive Director are clear about performance expectations, recognize achievements and challenges, and agree on strategies for achieving personal and organizational goals.



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The Executive Director's Role

◎ Board Committee Development:

- Helps Board committees learn the mechanics of committee management
- Provides advice and information on the organization's programs, activities and needs
- Collaborates with committee members as a strategist/planner
- Does NOT have authority over the committee or its structure.



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The Executive Director's Role

◉ Strategic Planning and Work Plans:

- Assists the Board and Board committees in developing strategic and work plans
- Helps committee members complete their projects, but doesn't assume responsibility for those projects
- Develops work plans for staff and self that support the Board's long- and short-term goals.
- Is NOT someone to whom volunteers and Board members delegate all their work.



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The Executive Director's Role

◉ Fundraising Activities:

- Coordinates fundraising campaigns, newsletter production, volunteer communications, financial systems (or supervises these functions in staffed organizations)
- Helps Board Fundraising Committees coordinate fundraising projects and events
- Is NOT directly responsible for raising money; that is the job of the Board and volunteers, or the development department in larger organizations



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The Executive Director's Role

○ Promotional Projects:

- Coordinates production of public relations, graphic image and other promotional materials (or supervises these functions in staffed organizations)
- Helps Board committees coordinate special events, promotions and advertising activities
- Speaks on behalf of the organization and coordinates speaking opportunities for Board members.
- Is NOT responsible for taking the lead on organizing or running events



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The Executive Director's Role

○ Staff Management:

- The Executive Director hires, supervises and evaluates all other staff of the organization. In larger organizations, some of these duties may be delegated to mid-level managers.
- It's very important that the Board of Directors does NOT get directly involved with staff issues. You will neutralize the effectiveness of your Executive Director if you allow staff to ignore chain of command.



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The Executive Director should remember the words of Lao Tzu:

The leader is best

When people are hardly aware of his existence,

Not so good when people praise his leadership,

Less good when people stand in fear,

Worst, when people are contemptuous.

Fail to honor people, and they will fail to honor you.

But of a good leader, who speaks little,

When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,

The people say, 'We did it ourselves.'

Tao Te Ching



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Volunteer Management

- ◉ Nonprofit organizations run on volunteers, including Board members, committee members and others.
- ◉ Well-planned and executed volunteer coordination is crucial to make the most of this important resource. Volunteer coordination is a full-time job in many organizations!
- ◉ The Board should ensure that there is a documented system for volunteer recruitment, training, supervision and reward.
- ◉ Development of a Volunteer Manual with all this information is an important first year task for a new nonprofit organization.



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Volunteer Management

- ◉ Assign a Board member to work with the Executive on developing the Volunteer Manual.
- ◉ Often other local nonprofits or your United Way may be willing to share their volunteer manual and forms to get you started.
- ◉ Board members and the Executive Director can recruit volunteers during events or public speaking opportunities.
- ◉ Many businesses support their employees volunteering by offering comp time or other recognition. Check with your local businesses.



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Volunteer Management

- ◎ Make sure you capture volunteer contact information (including email addresses!) in a database program or spreadsheet to facilitate quick communication with your corps of volunteers.
- ◎ Use volunteer sign-in sheets to track the number of hours donated to your organization. Tracking volunteer hours can be a hassle, but the data can be invaluable when seeking grants or other support.



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So you have a volunteer...now what?

- ◉ Find out what issues matter most to your volunteer
- ◉ Does your volunteer want to use the skills that are part of his/her “paying job”, or do they want to do something different?
- ◉ What does your volunteer NOT want to do? Not everybody is a dog walker or envelope stuffer, and you’ll lose them if you give them the wrong job.
- ◉ Does your volunteer want a long-term or short-term assignment? Will your volunteer need any special training?
- ◉ A volunteer screening/application form can help you gather this information and keep it on file.



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Effective use of volunteers

- ◉ Nothing turns off new volunteers faster than attending meetings with no articulated purpose. Don't ask volunteers to attend meetings for the sake of meetings.
- ◉ Make sure your volunteer gets a concrete, specific task or assignment with a deadline.
- ◉ Develop generic and specialist volunteer job descriptions.
- ◉ If you expect a volunteer to report on activities or outcomes (for example, an event attendance report), make sure he or she knows when reports are expected and who receives the report



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Reward your volunteers

- ◉ Annual or event-based awards: recognize volunteers at your annual meeting or fundraising gala
- ◉ Give them name badges for events
- ◉ Give them T shirts or bumper stickers that identify them as volunteers for your organization
- ◉ Mention them by name in press releases, include in photos
- ◉ Hold an annual volunteer appreciation banquet
- ◉ Send them thank you cards/holiday cards
- ◉ Say thank you a thousand times



What's next?

In Parts Seven through Eight of this Nonprofit Management Series you can learn about:

- ◉ Assessment and Evaluation
- ◉ Administrative Tasks/Meeting Management



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Questions or Comments?

For more information about these topics:

Download the complete
Nonprofit Management series at
www.maddiesfund.org

or contact Mary Ippoliti-Smith at

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