



FRONT PAGE

Capacity-Building News to Use for Wiregrass Organizations



HOT TOPIC **Succession Planning**

It seems wherever you go in nonprofit circles these days, someone is talking about "succession planning." We all probably would agree that continuity of excellent leadership and direction is important to our organizations. Still, succession planning can be a tough topic to bring up with your board and top staff. "Hey, let's all meet next Tuesday and talk about who will replace us when we are gone." Doesn't exactly inspire, does it?

Succession planning also is easy to avoid thanks to the denial factor. "Nobody is going anywhere, so why be concerned?" But when we consider how dependent each of our organizations is on the individual and collective skills and expertise of our leadership, the people in charge really do matter. A LOT!

Succession planning is a key component of organizational strength and durability. It is a process of thinking-through who next will be invited into the boardroom or asked to fill the CEO's chair. *When* these events will occur is not relevant. *Being prepared* for their eventuality is the key. Succession planning also is a process by which we reaffirm the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes that we most value and that we know will enable us to fulfill our missions. Planning often includes preliminary, confidential discussions of individuals who will make excellent directors or lead staff, and the training we want to provide when newcomers are added to the leadership team. This same process may also point the way for professional development for those of us currently serving. At a minimum, succession planning takes the drama out of filling critical positions in our organizations. It ensures infusion of new people and new ideas, while preserving the steady forward momentum of our strategic plans.

A few references to get you thinking:
http://www.boardnetusa.org/infocenter/vz/rc_content.asp?contentid=244 (focused on succession of CEO's);
www.boardsource.org (for many good resources on board succession planning and development.)

A prophetic quotation from Ben Franklin, "You may delay but time will not." Succession planning prepares our organizations for whatever comes our way.

GRANTS RECENTLY AWARDED **(April Meeting)**

SARCOA--Renovation Project for Expansion of Care Transitions Program
\$145,000

Wallace Community College--Three Year Continuation of Dual Enrollment Academic Scholarships for Dothan and Houston County High School Seniors
\$252,000

Wiregrass Children's Home--Kitchen Renovation
\$62,750

D-HC Airport Authority--Ramp Renovation
\$1.5 million

\$28,795 in Microgrants to six organizations



GRANTEE HIGHLIGHT **Capacity Building Initiative**

Wiregrass Foundation is several months into our Capacity Building Initiative, and we have great things to report! We began with an Orientation, organizational assessment, interpretation session, workshop, and a survey to provide the top priorities for our nonprofits. Emerging from these steps are four inter-related capacity building themes. Of those participating, 55% of you would like to see a curriculum for board training to develop, recruit and engage directors who support their core mission. Leadership training and sustainability was perceived as being closely tied to board development and a priority for 75% of the participants. Finally, strategic planning was considered another essential need for our partners with 85% of you making it a top priority. In the coming weeks we will announce a framework for training workshops designed around these.

TCC Group, Inc., our consultants for this initiative to-date, stated it well: "These capacities will be developed NOT simply to create greater strength on the part of a single organization, but rather, in support of clearly articulated outcomes by each participating organization and the Wiregrass community at-large."

Stay tuned for more!