



# Center *for* Nonprofit Leadership

at ADELPHI UNIVERSITY  
School of Social Work

## Exit Interview for Employees

When an employee leaves an organization, an exit interview is a helpful tool to:

- Identify what the organization is doing well
- Pinpoint areas where you can strengthen the organization
- Confirm the skill sets, experience, and attributes needed for the job
- Capture useful knowledge, contacts, tips, etc. from the exiting employee
- Understand why the employee is leaving
- Say good-bye on good terms

In a large organization, an HR staff person would typically hold the exit interview. Otherwise, the supervisor of the exiting employee would conduct the interview. If the executive is leaving, the board should conduct the interview.

Exit interviews can be face-to-face, in the form of a written survey (hard-copy or electronic), or over the phone. Only face-to-face and telephone interviews allow you to explore responses and gain even more insight. You can help the existing employee feel more comfortable by starting with friendly discussion and then easing into the more probing questions. Always begin by explaining the purpose of the exit interview. However, some exiting employees may be more forthcoming with information if they can write, rather than say, their feelings. Participation in an exit interview must be voluntary.

## Potential exit interview questions

### **Reason for Leaving**

- Why have you decided to leave the fund?
- Did anything trigger your decision to leave?
- Have you shared your concerns with anyone on the board prior to deciding to leave?
- Did anyone at the organization discriminate against you, harass you, or cause hostile working conditions? (important to follow up if they say yes)

### **Job satisfaction**

- What was the most satisfying aspect of your job? What was least satisfying?
- What would you change about your job?
- What did you like most about the organization? What did you like least?
- What would you improve to make our workplace better?
- Did your job duties turn out to be as you expected?
- Were your job responsibilities characterized correctly during the interview process and orientation?
- Did the fund help you to fulfill your career goals?
- Were you happy with your pay, benefits and other incentives?
- Did any organization policies or procedures (or any other obstacle) make your job more difficult?

### **Support**

- Do you feel you had the resources and support necessary to accomplish your job? If not, what was missing?
- The relationship between the Executive and the board is critical to an organization's success. How would you describe your relationship with the board?
- Did you have clear goals and know what was expected of you?
- Did you receive enough training to do your job effectively?
- Did you receive adequate support?
- Did you receive adequate feedback about your performance day-to-day and in the performance development planning process?

### **Other**

- Do you have any tips to help us find your replacement?
- Based on your experience with the fund, what do you think it takes to succeed here?
- Would you consider working again for this organization in the future?
- Would you recommend working for the fund to your family and friends?
- What is your experience with staff morale and motivation?
- Any other comments?

### **Good Practice**

End the meeting on a positive note. Thank exiting employees for their service to the fund. Let them know that the exit interview information is helpful and wish them the best in their new venture.