



Frequently Asked Questions for Interim Executive Director Candidates

Q. Who are ESC's Interim Executive Directors?

A. ESC Interim EDs are former executive directors with *significant successful track records* in nonprofit executive management who are interested in serving in a temporary role to assist organizations facing leadership transition. They work with the organization's board and staff to ensure stability, address important systems/capacity issues and lay the groundwork to assure the next leader's success.

Q. I am an experienced ED. Will I have to undertake any training to become an ESC Interim ED?

A. *Yes.* Before candidates can join ESC's Interim ED referral pool they must complete the two-day training course. The training has been designed to equip experienced EDs with the tools, skills and confidence to face the sorts of challenges and obstacles that emerge during temporary leadership assignments. The course also offers candidates an invaluable opportunity to build peer relationships with other interims in the ESC pool, thereby providing a forum for sharing ideas and experiences as their assignments progress.

Q. Is there a fee for candidacy or training?

There is a fee for training only, a small investment in each candidate's ongoing professional development. ESC's Interim ED training program is the only course of its kind in Chicago. It has been designed by national experts in the field of nonprofit executive transition management, led by experienced Interim Executive Directors who share their proven methodologies and wealth of personal experiences. Those who complete the training become part of ESC's Interim ED referral pool and can also utilize and market the essential skills acquired in this course for their own independent work.

Q. How do I get assigned to an Interim ED position?

A. When a client organization contracts with ESC for assistance in finding an Interim ED, ESC will conduct an onsite assessment to identify the key areas that should be addressed by the Interim ED. From that information a skills profile and Interim ED job announcement is developed. We then match the needs of the agency with the known skills of the Interim EDs in our pool. If we feel the position is a match for your skills and interests we will send you the job announcement. Once you have confirmed your interest we will forward your resume to the client for consideration. If they, in turn, are interested in your qualifications ESC will contact you and schedule an interview. ESC refers up to three candidates from the pool to each Interim ED client, so you will be competing with your peers for any given Interim ED position.

Q. Will ESC provide me with support while I am serving as an Interim ED?

A. Yes. ESC will be available to you on an as-needed basis to provide you with support as well as referrals to other resources throughout your Interim service. You will be provided with the name and number of the ESC Interim ED Coordinator who will be available to assist you. Also available to you are peer group meetings at ESC with other members of the ESC Interim ED program.

Q. Are Interim ED positions full-time and what kind of payment can I expect?

A. Some Interim ED assignments are full time. Some start as full time and then taper down to part time as systems fall into place. Others are part-time from the start, approximately 24-30 hours per week. This part-time time frame often aligns with an Interim EDs' desire to not be engaged full-time and also with an organization's interim leadership needs.

The current rate for Interim ED services is \$65-\$95 per hour without benefits. This amount is typically lower than a consultant's regular hourly rate for contract work, but it is a market-rate balance between an Interim having a guaranteed number of hours over an extended period and what an organization can realistically pay for that extended period.

Q. How long do Interim ED assignments last?

A. Interim ED assignments usually run approximately 4-8 months. An assignment will sometimes go beyond 8 months if the organization needs more time to prepare itself for a successful search for their new permanent ED. We try to estimate the expected length of the position up front, but it is not always possible to do so accurately.

Q. Do Interim EDs ever go on to be hired for the permanent position?

A. *The Interim ED is never a candidate for the permanent position.* ESC presents Interim EDs to potential client organizations as individuals who are especially suited to helping agencies meet the challenges of transition because of the neutrality they bring as outsiders as well as their commitment to focus on clear time-specific client goals. Becoming a candidate for the permanent position creates a conflict of interest and negates that neutrality.

Q. I'm between jobs and looking for the right next permanent position. Is being an Interim ED for ESC an option for me?

A. Probably not. ESC Interim ED candidates are either self-employed consultants or semi-retired or retired Executive Directors. Interim ED job opportunities do not happen on a regular basis and opportunities are not guaranteed since they are a function of client demand. Expecting to find the right Interim-ED position during a job search is unrealistic. Additionally, when you accept an interim position, the expectation is that you will stay with the client agency throughout the entire length of their interim period and not leave the assignment prematurely. For this reason, we do not accept people who are looking for permanent work into the Interim ED program.

Q. I've never been an Executive Director before. Is the Interim ED program at ESC a good way to learn?

A. No. Interim ED positions can be challenging assignments that require candidates to have a high level of experience of working effectively with boards and staff, sometimes in pressurized and emotionally-charged environments. Those who will be considered for the ESC Interim ED pool are exclusively current and former executive directors with deep, successful experience in nonprofit executive management and with a clear interest in serving in this role for organizations facing leadership transition.

Q. If I am hired as an Interim ED, do I become an ESC employee or volunteer?

A. No. While you represent the quality of the ESC program and are expected to support the mission of ESC to the clients, you are not an employee nor a volunteer of ESC. When offered a position, the Interim ED negotiates and agrees on terms and compensation directly with the client organization. (Contracting is covered in the ESC Interim ED training.)

ESC does not dictate the terms of the contract agreement, but suggests to client organizations that they consider IRS regulations regarding employee vs. consultant status in their hiring decision. Most commonly, Interims are paid hourly as independent contractors by the hiring organization.

Q. After I am hired as an Interim ED by an organization, what is my relationship with ESC?

A. The client organization remains an ESC client for the duration of your interim assignment, regardless of whether or not they contract ESC for any additional assistance beyond Interim ED referrals. Your performance and professionalism will be considered a direct link with ESC since the client will always consider you as the 'Interim from ESC'. As such, you will be expected to perform to the highest standards possible by both the client and ESC and you will be required to provide feedback to ESC from time to time.

On occasion the Interim ED will be teamed up with an ESC Executive Transition Management consultant or consulting team, which may have been in place prior to the interim's arrival. In such cases the Interim ED and ETM team are expected to negotiate a coordinated work plan to ensure the full transition needs and goals of the client are met in a timely and effective manner.

Q. Can I contract with the client directly for other work beyond the Interim ED job description?

A. In participating in the ESC program you are agreeing to promote and support ESC services and not compete for additional work with the client. For example, it is often the case that an Interim ED client agency has postponed their decision to proceed with the search for their permanent ED until they have an Interim ED in place, or are similarly deferring onset of strategic planning or addressing other critical organizational issues. It is expected that you will promote ESC as appropriate assistance for such when applicable.

Q. Will I ever be expected to do the search for the permanent ED?

A. The Interim ED's role is most commonly to manage the day-to-day activity of the organization and address identified organizational issues. ESC typically informs a client organization that expecting the Interim ED to also conduct a search is not an efficient approach; it normally detracts them from the other responsibilities required for the Interim role.

**For more information about becoming an Interim Executive Director
contact iedp@esc-chicago.org or call (312) 870-5804.**