

Snapshot Survey Results



COMMUNITY
OPPORTUNITY
ALLIANCE

Every year, we conduct a survey of the state and regional associations in our membership. The data in this report is based on a 2025 survey that focused on leadership transitions, succession planning, and the development of future leaders across the network. 22 member associations participated.

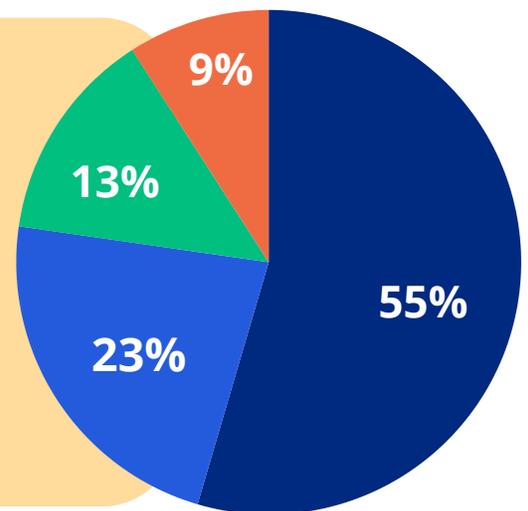
Distribution of Executive Director Tenure (Years)



While the average executive director among respondents has served nearly ten years, roughly one-third were appointed within the last three years — highlighting both stability and a recent wave of transitions.

Do you have a succession plan for your executive director? (% of Survey Participants)

- No, we do not
- Yes, a written succession plan
- Yes, but it is informal or unwritten
- I'm not sure



A **succession plan** is a formal document that outlines how an organization will recruit, select, and onboard new leaders in the event of planned or unplanned vacancies.

Top 5 most challenging factors during a leadership transition

Maintaining relationships with funders

Identifying suitable successors

Ensuring readiness of next leader

Maintaining organizational continuity & stability

Maintaining former leader's contacts

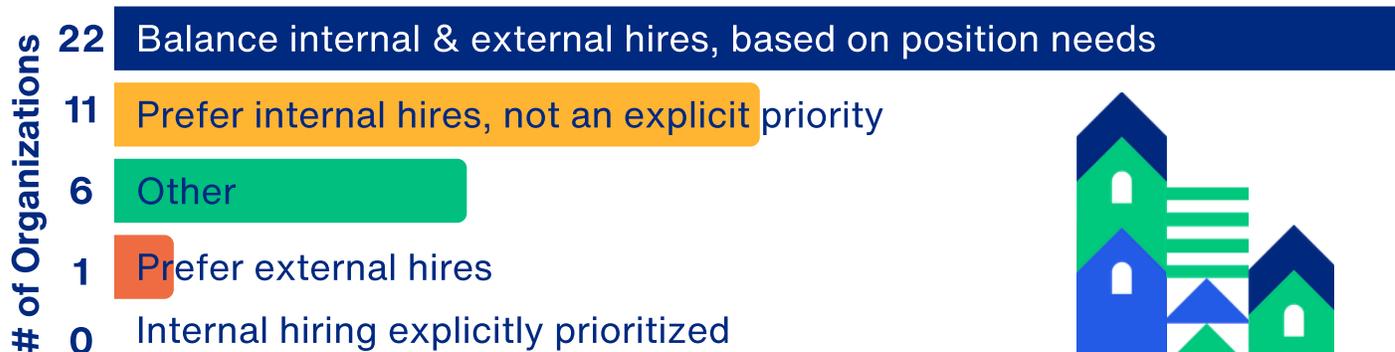
Top barriers for preparing existing staff for executive leadership:

Lack of time for additional training

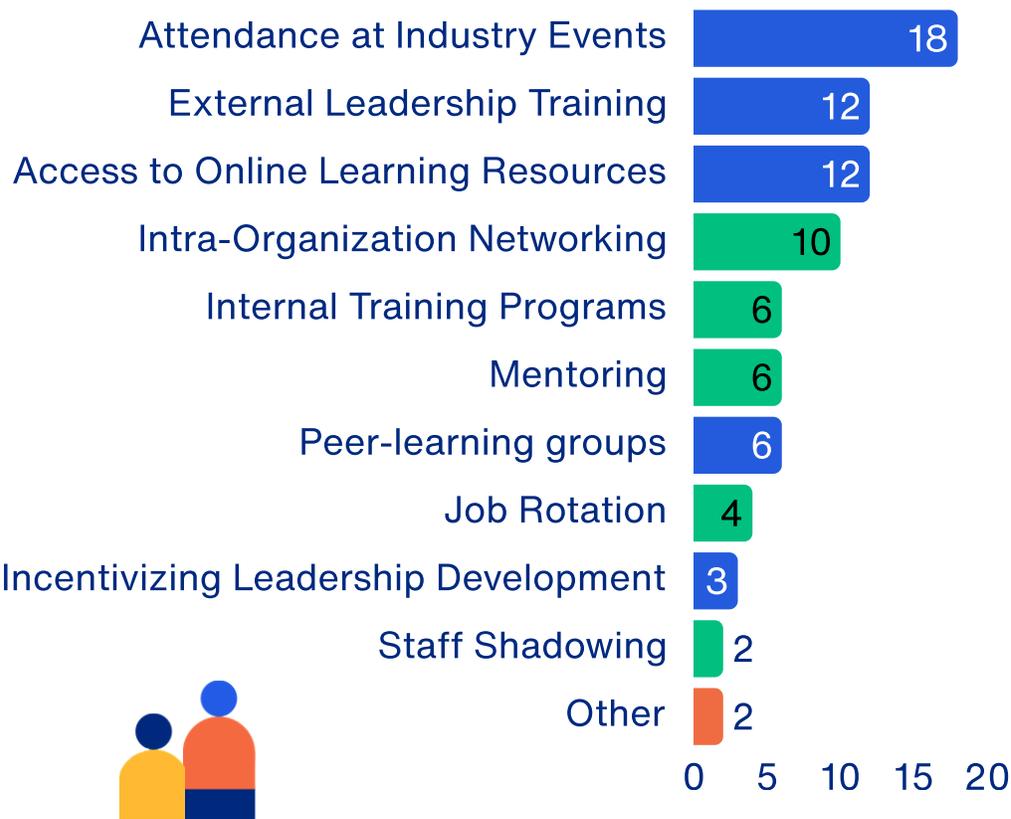
Insufficient budget for development programs

Lack of leadership roles available in the coming years

How does your organization approach internal hiring for leadership positions?



Leadership Development Supports Reported by Organizations



Internal (Embedded) Development

Development integrated into day-to-day work; builds skills, relationships, and readiness for future roles within the organization.

External Development

Training and learning opportunities delivered outside the organization; expands individual knowledge and networks but is not embedded in organizational systems.