

Focus on Nonprofit Leadership



Over the past few years, the Meyer Foundation has increased its focus on strengthening and supporting the executive leadership of its grantees. Meyer has released two reports — one about the challenges and professional development needs of executive directors and one about the challenges facing younger leaders who might become executive directors later in their careers.

In 2005, Meyer and CompassPoint Nonprofit Services conducted a national study of executive directors of community-based nonprofits in eight major cities. The report on these findings, *Daring to Lead 2006*, revealed the following:

- Three out of four executives plan to leave their jobs within five years.
- Boards of directors and funders contribute to executive burnout.
- Executives need help with fundraising and financial management.

In 2008, Meyer released the largest national study to date of emerging nonprofit leaders. The survey, produced in

partnership with CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Idealist.org, found that a skilled, committed, and diverse pool of next generation leaders would like to be nonprofit executive directors, but that there are significant barriers in their way. Some key findings of the report based on the survey:

- Only one-third of those surveyed have aspirations of becoming executive directors, and of those who do, 40 percent reported that they are ready now or will be within five years.
- Lack of mentorship and support from current executive directors in helping to pave a career path is a source of frustration.
- The nonprofit sector is viewed as desirable by people interested in social change.

For more information, visit www.meyerfoundation.org.

"Thanks for sending us a copy of Daring to Lead...This is an important piece of work that has implications for our leadership programs here at United Way."

AMANUEL MELLES

*Director, Organizational Capacity Building
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