

What are the steps the Council should follow when evaluating the executive director?

Adapted from *Assessment of the Chief Executive*, by Jane Pierson and Joshua Mintz

Evaluation is a key tool for helping a **Council** pursue its mission and realize its goals efficiently and effectively. Because the executive director is such a critical figure in the organization, it is important to know how she is contributing to the **Council's** success and in what ways she could improve her performance. To do this, the **Council** must conduct regular evaluations that not only review the executive director's strengths and weaknesses but also propose ways of improving her performance. The following list of steps provides a brief outline of what these evaluations involve:

Step one: Form the evaluation committee. This may be the executive committee, a personnel committee or an ad hoc committee.

Step two: Set the goals and objectives of the executive director's job. Use strategic and annual plans as a guide, but also maintain a dialogue with the executive director about her role in the organization. **Note:** Many Councils have a Designated State Agency(DSA) that provides personnel policies and job descriptions within the infrastructure of the DSA.

Step three: Develop the evaluation form. **Note:** Councils with a DSA will follow the DSA Personnel policies and evaluation procedures.

Step four: Assess. Avoid these common errors when conducting the evaluation:

- Focusing on a single trait or incident
- Rating personality above performance
- Substituting likes and dislikes for objectivity
- Being overly lenient or severe
- Keeping assessments near the average

Provide a copy of the evaluation form to the executive director so she can conduct a self-assessment.

Step five: Meet with the executive director. Allow her to begin with her self-assessment, and add comments where necessary. Finish the meeting by developing a list of ways the executive director can capitalize on her strengths and improve on her weaknesses.

Step six: Implement the changes. The committee should establish a procedure for ensuring the changes occur. Incorporate any changes into the next planning session.

There is no definitive rule about how often a **Council** should conduct a formal evaluation of its executive director, but there should be some kind of annual assessment that examines where the organization stands, what progress it has made, the major problems it faces and how the staff is performing.