Executive Director Survey 2018

Leaders of Today: An Inside Look at the Executive Director Experience in Peel Region
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Introduction

Peel Leadership Centre was founded in 2005 and began as a network of nonprofit leaders and funders focused on establishing a leadership resource centre for nonprofits in Peel Region. Known at first as the Peel Learning Institute, the network provided training and learning opportunities for the leaders and the organizations in Peel. Later, when incorporated as a nonprofit, the organization changed its name to Peel Leadership Centre (PLC) and expanded its offerings to include multiple capacity building initiatives.

Today, PLC works closely with Executive Directors (EDs), Boards and management teams to help grow their leadership skills and organizational strength. PLC’s vision is that the nonprofit sector in Peel will maximize its social impact with strong leaders and strong organizations. PLC will support this through its mission to cultivate, enhance and support leadership and capacity of the nonprofit sector in Peel.

The PLC Executive Director Survey, 2018, is the third that PLC has conducted. The findings from the 2013 and 2015 ED Surveys informed the strategic priorities PLC established while undertaking a Strategy Development process in the spring and summer of 2016. The findings have also informed the capacity building activities and learning opportunities delivered by PLC, as well as services offered. These currently include:

- **Succession Planning** – aims to increase organizational stability and sustainability through the 3 Pillars of Succession – Risk Management, Change Management and Talent Development
- **Strategy Development** – supports organizational strategy development through the 4 D’s approach – Discovery, Dream, Design and Deliver
- **HR Coaching** – a resource for Boards and Executive Directors to access with HR related queries
- **Leading from the Middle** – a leadership development program for middle managers to both step into their own leadership potential and to develop the skills to manage people and resources effectively
- **TIME OUT** – an annual leadership conference
- **Peel Region Evaluation Project (PREP)** – in partnership with Peel Counts, this project aims to support, enhance and improve nonprofit evaluation practices in Peel Region
- **Knowledge Sharing** – via the PLC blog, newsletter and social media, PLC creates, curates and shares great content and learning tools that help support and grow nonprofit leadership and capacity building
The survey was electronically delivered to PLC client organizations and other nonprofits in Peel directly through email and via the PLC website, blog, social media and newsletter. The survey was also circulated through various informal networks in Peel Region.

Why an ED Survey?

Leaders of non-profit and charitable organizations (NPCO) in Peel Region play a critical role in improving the quality of life for its residents.

To better understand Peel NPCO leaders’ unique needs, PLC conducted a survey in spring 2018. This survey was compared to two previous surveys from 2013 and 2015.

This year’s survey is aimed to identify trends and better understand the key issues & emerging concerns currently facing Peel’s NPCO leaders. It also provides an opportunity to acknowledge the organizational strengths and challenges in the sector.

The report that follows has been developed as a tool to not only educate Peel’s NPCO stakeholders but to provide suggested calls to action for these key groups with the goal of strengthening the sector even further.

The results gathered will also provide an opportunity for Peel’s NPCO leaders to compare their individual experience to other Peel non-profit leaders.

Lastly, this report will be a staple for PLC in shaping its role to provide relevant support and services to Peel’s non-profit sector.

Moving forward, it is our hope that key non-profit stakeholders including and not limited to Board members, funders, donors, volunteers and community partners who have a vested interest in the effectiveness of Peel Region’s NPCOs will find these insights and suggested calls to action helpful.
The Context in Peel Region

In order to provide a greater understanding of the Peel NPCO ED experience, it is important to understand the community in which they operate. The region, comprised of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga, is growing at a rapid rate and serves a diverse population.

Executive Summary

Since its inception in 2005, Peel Leadership Centre (PLC) has been dedicated to providing leadership development opportunities for Peel Region’s NPCOs. Since 2013, PLC has been engaging leaders across the region to gain insight into their experience in order to identify needs, opportunities and trends to provide effective support.

When taking a big picture view of the 2018 data, it is clear that EDs enjoy many aspects of their job and are satisfied with their role overall. However, there are three key areas of concern that emerge throughout this survey:

(1) Fund development continues to be a challenge for EDs and Boards

(2) EDs are experiencing high levels of burnout and isolation and
EDs are experiencing decreased volunteer support in the areas of Community Ambassadorship, Public Policy & Advocacy and Supervision & Guidance.

This report profiles 40 Peel NPCO leaders and their organizations that responded to the survey. A number of key findings were identified in six areas and are outlined under each theme as below:

The ED Role – Experience and Structure

**Structure:** Many EDs state that they do not have adequate staffing or volunteer support with whom to share the workload, leaving them feeling overwhelmed.

**Burnout:** 76% of leaders reported that they are experiencing some degree of burnout; 60% stated that they do not have work-life balance.

**Isolation:** 58% of respondents indicated that they experience a feeling of isolation in their role as an ED.

**Satisfaction:** Although their work is complex and varied, 94% of EDs reported a high level of job satisfaction.

Performance Management

**Performance Reviews:** Of the 65% of EDs surveyed who had a performance review completed in the last year, only 26% found the process helpful.

Professional Development

**Development Activities:** Over the last five years, similar professional development opportunities have been accessed by EDs in the form of:

- peer groups,
- workshops and
- professional association membership.

**Improving their Skills:** To better serve their organizations, the top three skill areas that EDs would like to see improve are:

- fundraising,
- financial analysis and planning, and
- organizational strategy and vision
Mentoring: 88% of EDs mentor individuals within their own organization; 35% mentor EDs from other organizations.

Organizational Financial Health

Sustainable Funding: Three-quarters of organizations rely on government funding for more than half of their annual budget; this represents an increase of 17% over the past five years.

Budget Changes: 57% of organizations have experienced a budget increase over the past year.

Board Relationships and ED Succession Planning

Board Performance: Over the past five years, the majority of EDs are somewhat to fully satisfied with their Board’s performance.

Board Support: 61% of EDs agree that fundraising is a critical area where more Board support would be helpful. Compared to previous years, there is also a decline in the level of board activity in the areas of Community Ambassadorship and Supervision & Guidance.

Departure Plans: 60% of EDs plan on leaving their current role within the next four years, with almost half of them indicating that they are unlikely to become an ED of another non-profit.

Succession Plans: Just over half of the surveyed organizations have a succession plan in place; this is a 27% increase over the last five years.

Future Salaries: 60% of EDs think that their organization will have to offer more compensation to attract a qualified successor.

Peel Region’s Changing NPCO Landscape

Technology: 61% of EDs do not feel confident in today’s rapidly evolving technological environment.

Intergenerational Staff: The majority of EDs report no concerns with managing intergenerational staff and volunteers, although additional training in this area would be beneficial.

Political Landscape: 84% of EDs are concerned about the potential impact our changing political landscape could have on their organization.
Peel Region’s NPCO Profile

Who responded?

40 Executive Directors in Peel Region completed the survey.

The health/mental health field was the primary activity of the majority of organizations (28%). Mississauga is where the majority (64%) of these leaders’ organizational head offices are located, similar to the past five years. Other than one organization based out of Oshawa, the remainder of the organizations are located in Caledon and Brampton.

Stage of the Organizations

61% of survey respondents indicated that their core programs are established, recognized and functioning well in the community, placing the majority of Peel non-profits surveyed in the Growing/Mature/Sustainable stage of the NPCO lifecycle.

In terms of staffing structures:

- Half of the EDs surveyed have fewer than 15 full-time staff
- 56% have five or fewer part-time staff.
- All organizations rely on volunteer support:
  - 23% have between 26-50 volunteers
  - 19% have 51-100 volunteers
  - 31% have over 100 volunteers
Who are Peel Region’s EDs?

This survey reported a noticeable change in recruitment. Compared to 2015, there was a 52% decrease in EDs recruited from their organization’s Board and a 64% increase in EDs who were recruited from being a paid staff.

- 66% of survey respondents identified as being female and 34% identified as being male.
- Ages ranged from 20 – 69, with 80% of EDs being 50 years of age or older.
- English is the first language for 88% of Peel EDs.
- 68% of EDs described their race/ethnicity as white/Caucasian (down from 74% in 2015).
- 20 hold a post-graduate degree.
- Almost three-quarters of Peel region’s ED’s have been working in the non-profit sector for 12 or more years.

Which ethnicity best describes you?

- Aboriginal: 0.00%
- Asian: 0.00%
- South Asian: 14.71%
- Black or African Canadian: 5.88%
- Hispanic: 0.00%
- White/Caucasian: 67.65%
- Multiracial: 0.00%
- Prefer not to state: 5.88%
- Other: 5.88%

What is your age group?

- 20 - 29: 34.29%
- 30 - 39: 48.57%
- 40 - 49: 14.29%
- 50 - 59: 2.86%
- 60 - 69: 0.00%
- 70 - 79: 0.00%

What is your gender?

- Female: 65.71%
- Male: 34.29%
- Other: 0.00%
What is their Leadership Style?

“Shared leadership”, a leadership approach used by 79% of EDs, refers to being an inclusive, collaborative leader who shares leadership responsibilities with others throughout the organization. When asked what type of skills an effective leader must possess, common answers included: being a visionary, being an effective communicator, having a collaborative approach, possessing the ability to coach and mentor, having an inclusive mindset and being humble. 91% respondents feel they are actively creating a culture where they foster a leadership development mindset.

Findings and Observations

The key findings outlined below reflect the current status of the EDs surveyed with insights into five-year trends.

The ED Role - Experience and Structure

Regardless of the size of a NPCO in Peel Region, the ED role is demanding and complex. This multifaceted job can create feelings of isolation and burnout for EDs yet despite this feeling, many continue to report out high levels of job satisfaction.
Key Findings

**Satisfaction:** Overall, EDs enjoy their role; only 6% are completely dissatisfied with their salary.

**Isolation:** As EDs’ sense of isolation is decreasing; 58% reported feeling ‘a little’ to ‘very’ isolated compared to 78% in 2015.

**Burnout:** Although feelings of burnout are the lowest they’ve been in five years, they are still considerably high at 76%.

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**One ED reported that they work "60 to 80 hours depending on the time of year."**

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When asked about their job satisfaction, over 70% of EDs indicated they enjoy their role either the same or more than one year ago. Not surprisingly, the work that EDs enjoy the most and least corresponds to what energizes and depletes them. **Visioning and strategy (79%) and program design & development (44%)** are the job aspects enjoyed the most by EDs. This corresponds directly with the type of work that is most energizing for EDs, which was identified by over 60% as being working with partners and collaborators.

The job aspects reported by EDs as ‘least enjoyable’ were identified as being:

- Fundraising (74%),
- Board work (32%) and
- Staff management (29%).

This corresponds to the type of work that depletes EDs’ energy the most, which includes human resources, technology, and financial management.

88% of EDs work full-time (defined as 40 hours weekly), and almost 80% occasionally or always work more than 50 hours per week averaging an additional 13 hours. One respondent stated that although they are being “paid for 35 hours per week, [they] generally work 40-50 hours per week”. Another ED reported that they work “60 to 80 hours depending on the time of year”.

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2018 Executive Director Survey
A lack of resources, (both human and financial),
A large administrative workload and
A demanding role that requires work after hours.

As one respondent stated, “[there’s] too much to do and not enough resources to do it” while another mentioned that they are “Working too many hours with too many tasks that are not well matched to an ED’s role”.

This year’s survey saw a promising result regarding the sense of isolation experienced by EDs with 58% reporting feeling some degree of isolation in their role, down from 78% in 2015.
Even so, isolation remains a challenge. As one ED noted, “[I’m] always working because I’m always worried about work…feeling of being in it alone”.

When it comes to compensation, three-quarters of respondents indicated that they are satisfied with what they receive. Plus, EDs are receiving better compensation; 39% of EDs are being compensated $100,001-$150,000 annually (excluding benefits) – a 20% increase from 2013.

### Performance Management

One of the Board’s most critical accountabilities is an effective execution of their EDs performance evaluation. Furthermore, it sets the direction for the organization and its employees. Lastly, demonstrates the Boards support of the ED and their leadership effectiveness.

### Key Findings

**Performance reviews:** Although 65% of EDs had a performance review completed in the past year, only 26% found the process very useful.

**Confidence:** All but one of the leaders surveyed expressed confidence regarding their current job performance.

The ED is the only staff person who directly reports to the Board and acts as the main link between the Board and the organization. As such, the importance of a regularly completed ED performance evaluation cannot be overstated. An evaluation provides the Board with an opportunity to shape the type of leader needed to represent the organization. It also provides an opportunity for “Support and clarity from the Board with regards to attainable goals and expectation”, as desired by one ED.

To what degree do the following aspects of the Executive Director position energize (e.g. satisfy, rejuvenate) or deplete (e.g. burnout, frustrate) you?

![Bar chart showing the degree to which different aspects of the Executive Director position energize or deplete respondents.](chart)
65% of EDs had a performance review in the past year, an increase of 16% from 2013. Of those who received an evaluation, just over a quarter found them ‘very useful’ and 35% found them ‘a little useful’.

Although the majority of EDs are not receiving adequate and effective performance evaluations, it does not appear to impact their confidence in leading their organization. 97% of EDs are confident in their ability to fulfill their roles, an increase of 7% from 2013. Survey results show that the majority of leaders feel ‘effective’ to ‘very effective’ in all four of the following areas: leading self, leading others inside my organization, leading my organization and external leadership. One respondent said that "After four years of work, things are going very well. This is the first year I feel like I can breathe!"

Professional Development

As Benjamin Franklin once said, “an investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” NPCOs have a lot to gain from welcoming professional development into their organization including improving organizational capacity and attracting and retaining talent.

One ED felt that receiving more "Training [in] finances/accounting, fundraising and human resources, [combined with] a network of support where I can ask questions or seek advice from" would make their job easier. Although traditionally, NPCOs have found it difficult to allocate resources for leaders’ professional development, EDs are also refraining from utilizing certain professional development opportunities that do exist.

Key Findings

Development Activities: EDs are benefiting from mainly ‘one-off’ professional development opportunities and are not capitalizing from more time-intensive learning such as executive coaching, non-profit management certification/degrees and leadership development programs.

Job Skills: A direct correlation occurs between organizational functions that EDs view as most and least favourable, and the job areas that they self-identify as requiring improvement.

Mentoring: EDs are taking a more active role in mentoring than the previous five years. In the past three years, only 23% of EDs applied for or received funding specifically for professional development activities.
The three professional development opportunities viewed by EDs as being most effective were the same as five years ago:

- peer networks and groups (used by 84%),
- workshops and conferences (used by almost three-quarters) and
- professional association membership/events (used by 68%).

The three most infrequently used professional development opportunities could be attributed to the fact that all three involve a much greater time and financial commitment:

- non-profit management certificate/degree programs (used by 19%),
- executive coaching (used by 7 out of 31 respondents) and
- leadership development programs (used by 45%)

When asked which of their skillsets, if improved, would benefit their organization the most, EDs ranked financial analysis and planning (45%), fundraising (39%), organizational strategy and vision (39%) and advocacy and lobbying (26%) in the top four. Besides being the same as in 2013 survey results, they also correlate to the job functions that EDs enjoy the least.

The skills that EDs view as least necessary to improve – writing (3%), public speaking (6%), staff management (10%) and working with Board of Directors (10%) – are also unchanged from 2013.

The number of EDs who are providing mentorship opportunities remains high. 28 of 32 EDs provide mentoring/coaching to a staff member, an increase from 51% in both 2013 and 2015. EDs are mentoring outside of their own organization, too; 11 out of 31 survey respondents are mentoring an ED in another organization for peer-to-peer learning. As one ED stated, having a mentor “Who can understand, advise and listen on an ongoing basis” assists with “Not feeling isolated” in their role.
Organizational Financial Health

A consistent theme: many of Peel Region EDs’ biggest challenge involves finding adequate, sustainable funding.

This comes as no surprise in today’s highly competitive NPCO environment where funding continues to be scarce. When asked what would make their ED role more enjoyable, half of the survey respondents referred to improvements in funding stability and resources. One ED noted that finding “Funder validation through long-term investment rather than annualized funding” could be a solution. This was echoed by another ED who wished for “Secure funding, [so that there was more] time for planning, instead of reacting”.

Key Findings

Sustainable funding: Similar to the past five years, sustainable funding remains a high priority and causes the highest amount of concern for Peel Region EDs. As one respondent stated, “financial stability in the sector would allow for proper resourcing to support organizational capacity and program delivery need”.

Operating reserves: Many organizations’ operating reserve is four months or less.

Budget increases: Over the past five years, NPCOs’ operating budgets have been increasing and Boards have been investing more money into their organizations.

Looking at an organization’s reserve fund provides a key measurement of an organization’s financial health. Although suggestions vary regarding the ideal amount in an operating reserve, according to Grant Thornton, “an ideal reserve level is one that is high enough to allow your organization to maintain sufficient liquid assets without being considered excessive”. As every NPCO is different, there is no ‘one size fits all’ guideline determining the ideal reserve for an organization. It is the accountability of the Board and ED to decide what is sufficient.
64% of EDs reported that their organizations have operating reserves of four months or less, which is the same as five years ago. Although just over one-fifth had an operating reserve for six months’ or greater, this is a 100% improvement from 2013.

Although ideally, NPCOs should have diversified funding sources, government funding remains the most common revenue stream. 75% of survey respondents indicated that their organization relies on government funding for over half of their budget (an increase of 17% from five years ago).

The 2013 ED Survey data showed that the majority of EDs were leading organizations with budgets of $100,001 - $500,000 range. In 2018, most organizations had budgets between $500,001 - $1 million.

Despite a consistently displayed concern for sustainable funding throughout this year’s survey, 57% of organizations did see a budget increase over the past year. Only 10% reported a decrease, which represents an 8% improvement from 2015.

**Board Relationships and ED Succession Planning**

Board-ED interactions provide the foundation for a critical relationship. One that may not always be perfect however, it is essential. All but one of the respondents feel they can be transparent with their Board, sharing mistakes without fear of repercussion (up 16% from 2015).

In 54% of organizations, a formal succession plan is in place (up from 27% in 2013).

**Key Findings**

**Time on Board work:** Number of EDs working 20+ hours on board work has increased 157% since 2015; this could be because of the sector’s evolving trend of mergers.

**Retirements:** A large number of EDs are approaching the age of retirement, with many not intending to assume another ED role. This presents risk to the future of the organization, the region and the sector overall. The importance of succession planning remains undisputed; luckily, the majority of respondents think that there is at least one credible Board or staff person who could become a suitable successor.
Time Spent on Board-Related Activities

71% of respondents indicated that they spend 5-19 hours per month on Board-related activities, which is similar to the past five years. However, we are seeing a significant increase in the number of EDs who are spending 20-29 hours on Board-related activities. In 2018, 18% of survey respondents indicated that they are spending 20-29 hours on Board-related activities, which represents a 157% increase from 2015. When questioned whether they believe the amount of time spent in this area is appropriate, 43% of EDs responded that they spend either too much or too little of their time on this task.

Level of Board Support

Financial oversight (68%) and strategic decision making and planning (64%) are the two areas that EDs receive the most amount of Board support. Two areas that received significantly less Board support than in 2013 were community ambassadorship (down 19%) and supervision & guidance (down 10%).

The Board-ED Working Relationship

Since EDs normally work closely with their Board, having a strong, supportive relationship is key. Survey respondents stated that having a "stronger leadership team" and a "more engaged board chair" would make their ED role more enjoyable. 96% of EDs indicated that they believe they have an open, transparent relationship with their Board (up from 80% in 2015). 20 (out of 28) EDs indicated that they have one or more individuals on staff that they would trust to make important decisions on their behalf.

The Board’s Performance

The majority of EDs are satisfied with their Board’s performance over the past five years. However, an organization’s fundraising efforts continue to be consistently noted as a concern throughout the survey results. Unsurprisingly, fundraising is also the support area that EDs would like to see supported more by their Board. 61% of EDs agreed on the need for more Board support in their organization’s fundraising efforts, compared to 66% in 2013.
Board member inconsistency is only adding to the issue; as one respondent stated, “we are seeing Board members resign part way through terms and the transition is killing any momentum we were starting to make after addressing internal transitions of staff”.

**ED Succession Planning**

The majority of EDs (58%) plan on leaving their current role in three to four years (18% within the next two), with 45% of them stating that they are unlikely to assume a future ED role. When asked what concerned them most about leaving their organization, the results were similar between their personal well-being (55%) and the organization’s well-being (45%).

A large majority of EDs (82%) believe a credible internal candidate exists, a significant increase from 64% in 2013. Although there’s been a 27% increase from 2013, just over half of NPCOs have a documented succession plan for the ED position. What remains consistent with 2013 and 2015 findings, however, is the overall ED belief that the Board will have to offer a higher compensation package to attract a qualified successor in the future.

**Peel Region’s Changing Non-Profit and Charitable Organization Landscape**

Today, the role of an ED is much different than in years past. Evolving technology, intergenerational staff and volunteers and a changing political landscape provide new challenges for EDs to overcome. These emerging issues are ones that EDs and Boards alike need to focus on to remain relevant and nimble as an organization. As one survey respondent stated, having “education on emerging trends in technology, innovation and management science” would make their ED role more enjoyable.

**Key Findings**

**Technology:** Over 60% of EDs are not confident about leading their organization through rapidly changing technology (as per the choices in the question such as social media, online systems, etc.).

**Intergenerational Staff:** Many EDs would find executive coaching helpful, especially in managing an intergenerational workforce.

**Changing Political Landscape:** There is a significant concern around the changing political landscape; particularly, sustainable funding and programming.
Technology

A large part of ensuring the continued success of an NPCO is preparing it for the future. However, 17 out of 28 EDs indicated that they are ‘not at all confident’ to ‘somewhat confident’ leading their organization through rapidly changing technology.

The three technology areas that EDs are most concerned about are data privacy and security (75%), social media (54%) and online communications (36%). One respondent questioned how an ED is expected to manage the complexities of technology, “as phone, data and apps [continue to] grow in interoperability and number”.

The three technology areas that EDs are most concerned about are data privacy and security (75%), social media (54%) and online communications (36%).

Intergenerational Staff/Volunteers

Today’s workforce is comprised of multiple generations of people working together in the same organization. Although 79% of respondents indicated that managing an intergenerational workforce has been ‘relatively easy’ to ‘very easy’, the majority (54%) would find coaching support for managing an intergenerational workforce helpful.
Changing Political Landscape

Consistent over the past five years, the majority of an organization’s funding relies on government grants. Not surprisingly, the majority (86%) of EDs express concern about the changing political landscape’s impact on their organization – especially in regard to funding (indicated by 88%). Programming (48%), reporting requirements & measurement (40%) and organizational structure/staffing (36%) are also concerns about potential areas that could be affected.

Suggested Calls to Action by Stakeholder

One of the main objectives of this report is to educate key stakeholders on the current context faced by EDs and their organizations. Each recommendation that follows may not be relevant for every stakeholder in Peel, however, can be used to inform and guide important conversations that can strengthen their organizations and the NCPO sector as a whole.

For Executive Directors

The ED Role – Experience and Structure

- Identify one to two future leaders in your organization; provide a mentorship opportunity to cultivate their skills, foster leadership and to share your workload
- Strategize on how to lighten your workload; consider utilizing outsourcing opportunities on an ‘as needs’ basis
- Connect with sector peers; create a support system that involves sharing your experiences and learning from each other

Performance Management

- Lead the performance evaluation process for yourself and demonstrate its importance to your Board
- Network with your peers to compare evaluation processes and to learn from each other’s experiences
### Professional Development
- Source mentorship opportunities that will help you gain practical experience from others while creating a supportive network.
- Prioritize professional development opportunities and identify which ones will provide the greatest impact to your organization; incorporate them into your performance review and annual goals.
- Engage capacity-building resources (on a volunteer or reduced-rate basis) to work with you and your organization.
- Promote the importance of professional development and its benefits to your Board and funders.

### Organizational Financial Health
- Conduct a financial and program analysis of your organization to determine current return on investment for programs and services.
- Have a proactive discussion with your Board to examine the amount of your organization’s operating reserve.
- Prioritize funding diversification and work with your board to build infrastructure focused on sustainability.
- Work with other NPCOs on collaborative projects to increase your organization’s funding.
- Place emphasis on relationship building with government, new funders and foundations to remain competitive.

### Board Relationships and ED Succession Planning
- Develop and execute a comprehensive onboarding orientation for new Board members to help maximize their contributions.
- Work with your Board to document a robust succession policy and plan that prepares the organization to deal with an unplanned or planned vacancy.
- Identify one or two employees to cultivate for leadership development opportunities.
- Support your Board’s preparation for your departure by giving generous lead time and by supporting a transition plan.

### Peel Region’s Changing NPCO Landscape
- Assess the feasibility of utilizing technology-specific expertise in your organization.
- Strategically work with and engage Board members on government relations; gain training when required.

### For Boards
- Evaluate your financial position; assess feasibility of investing in specialized staff for core functions.
- Consider utilizing short-term support from outside experts in order to better meet the organizations’ needs.
- Encourage collaboration with NPCOs in areas where your organization is lacking specialized skills (ie. Advocacy, IT, HR, etc.).
| Performance Management                                      | o Ensure EDs performance evaluation is built into your Board’s accountabilities and processes  
|                                                          | o Work in partnership with your ED to build an effective evaluation that best supports the ED and organizational goals |
| Professional Development                                   | o Leverage Board members’ skills, resources and professional networks to source mentors for your ED  
|                                                          | o Prioritize and increase budget for professional development |
| Organizational Financial Health                            | o Assess your Board’s expertise; recruit future Board members with experience in fund development and government relations  
|                                                          | o Play an active role in advocating for the needs and great work of your organizations |
| Board Relationships and ED Succession Planning            | o Match the organization’s business and strategic plan to Board accountabilities; ensure effective contributions can be made to the organization’s goals and objectives  
|                                                          | o Recruit Board members strategically; ensure new members possess skills needed by the organization and have strong networks that will propel the organization forward  
|                                                          | o Work in partnership with your EDs to develop and implement a robust succession plan  
|                                                          | o Identify key roles for Board members to facilitate a successful onboarding process for your successor |
| Peel Region’s Changing NPCO Landscape                     | o Build organizational capacity to adapt to technological needs for the organization and its clients, donors and volunteers  
|                                                          | o Actively engage in government relations work; seek support when necessary |
| For Funders                                               | o Complete an analysis of compensation packages for leaders of organizations you fund; ensure rates are competitive and commensurate with relevant job scope  
|                                                          | o Assess feasibility of fund allocation for specialized skill sets such as fundraising |
Professional Development

- Create the financial ability for EDs and staff to access meaningful professional development opportunities

Organizational Financial Health

- Transition to a multi-year funding model that enhances financial and organizational stability
- Review reporting requirements to increase EDs capacity and create additional sustainability for organizations to drive community outcomes

Peel Region’s Changing NPCO Landscape

- Organize information sessions on changes given new political infrastructure
- Provide funding for organizations to increase their capacity to acquire technological support regarding database management, technology integration, giving platforms, etc.

PLC’s Evolving Role and Response

One of the many strengths of PLC is our understanding of the Peel community, its organizations and our ability to adapt to the current landscape. Our commitment to remain relevant is imperative to ensure our sector continues to drive important work forward. The results of the 2018 Executive Director survey reaffirms the need to be both strategic and nimble.

As we analyze the 2018 survey results, we see many consistencies in terms of the ED role and experience that have remained relatively unchanged over five years: feelings of burnout and isolation, ongoing challenges with fund development and the need for increased support. We have also been surprised by some of the results as well – particularly the increased amount of time spent on board work per month, the discomfort with evolving technology and the number of EDs that intend on retiring in the next 4 years.

As our current climate continues to evolve, it is important for us to understand trends, be proactive and begin addressing current or near future challenges that our sector will face. As we continue to build capacity in the sector, PLC is committed to providing learning and networking opportunities for our EDs to support them in their role and drive their organizational work forward. Over the course of the next two years, we will provide educational opportunities in some key areas: ED and Board Coaching, Strategy and Succession, Evaluation, Leadership Development and much more.
Conclusion

The 2018 survey results provide an overview of the work experienced by 40 EDs in Peel Region. Although it’s a relatively small sample size (we estimate it represents less than 10% of the EDs throughout Peel Region) the results provide valuable insight and information regarding our NPCO leaders’ needs.

Leaders of NPCOs in Peel Region continue to have a multidimensional role, feeling pulled by varying responsibilities. Despite the challenges presented within their role, the majority of EDs report high levels of job satisfaction.

Most of an ED’s time is being spent on organizational strategy and program management; areas such as public policy and advocacy and financial analysis and planned fundraising could benefit from more attention. Enabling EDs to access professional development opportunities on an ongoing basis could drastically help improve these key areas and at the same time improve EDs’ stress levels.

Consistent over the past five years, financial sustainability is still the biggest area of concern for Peel Region leaders. Increasing demands, stretched resources and the evolving political climate requires more focus and attention than ever.

With technology constantly evolving, a lack of expertise in this skillset is becoming apparent in the ED role. More support would be beneficial in the area of intergenerational workforce management as well – delivered specifically in the form of coaching.

Addressing the issues and challenges outlined in this report is key to ensuring the residents of Peel Region continue to benefit from our NPCOs. To best prepare our NPCOs for the future, there are three key questions that need to be addressed by a cross-section of stakeholders:

1. How can we support the Boards in strategically driving the organizations mission?
2. How can we decrease ED burnout and feelings of isolation?
3. How can we create a sustainable funding infrastructure and increase organizational capacity in these changing times?

The ‘Suggested Calls to Action’ contained within this report outline the proactive involvement for EDs, Boards and Funders. How will you respond? How should PLC? We’d love to hear your thoughts – stay tuned for opportunities to continue the conversation.
Appendix


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