**Questions for Board Succession Planning**

Boards have a variety of terms and term limits, depending on their size and culture. Some boards do not have any term limits. In other organizations, members can serve two terms and then are required to take a sabbatical period before re-joining – and many other variations exist. Term limits can help ensure that the organization is in touch with the constituency and is able to transfer power, but rotating boards require the organization to plan for stability and continuity. Some questions to consider as you consider appropriate terms and transitions within your board include:

1. How do we capture and safeguard institutional knowledge? This includes:
   1. Documents: is there a centralized location where all board members can access policies, minutes and other information?
   2. Responsibilities: Do we have a clear and current understanding of everyone’s tasks and how they are carrying out their work?
   3. Relationships: How do we create organizational (as opposed to only individual) relationships with key donors, institutional partners (e.g. vendors, the bank, the media), others?
2. How do we continually track the talents and perspectives that we need on the board? How do we balance needs for consistency and experience with the need for fresh perspectives and different gifts?
3. How do we develop board members to allow them to take greater leadership? How do we ensure that board leadership remains fluid and dynamic as opposed to fixed?
4. How do we ensure that there is a steady and sustainable influx and exodus of talent on our board – avoiding major waves of change?
5. How do we use the talents and time of people who want to contribute to our organization, but aren’t ready or appropriate for board service?