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Template: How to Dissolve an Organization with Dignity & Intention

Documents to support team leaders in what to consider when dissolving an organization and creating a work plan to close out programs.

Quick Dissolution Checklist

Things to Consider Before Dissolution

- What are the conditions (past and present) that have led up to the decision point of dissolution?
 - Is there a solution that can make the work possible? (e.g. dissolving a program, shifting to a new model, transitioning certain staff members, etc.)
- Everyone will have a different story around the dissolution, so what is the narrative around your organization's dissolution? What is the story that you want to tell?
- How could this impact your staff and what safety net are you able to provide? (e.g. severance packages, etc.)
- Who are the point people for communicating around the dissolution? Who is the lead?
- Ensure that the vote by the board of directors to approve the motion of dissolution is documented and organized (this will be needed by the dissolution attorney)
- Do a risk assessment – is there any significant risk to consider?

Staff, Severance, & Offboarding

- Complicated feelings will arise that will directly impact the work. Regardless of how the news is delivered, the stakeholders who made the decision (executive directors, board of directors) will be vilified. This will impact the way that staff show up in the workplace.
- Contract with a neutral party to hold processing spaces for staff members (group and 1 on 1) as they navigate their complicated feelings
- Contract with someone who would be able to support staff members with updating their resumes, job interview skills, how to write a cover letter, and other technical skills to support their transition to the next opportunity
- Ensure that there is an appropriate person for the executive directors to process and connect with as they will endure a lot as staff are being offboarded
- You can request confidence until the official announcement is made, but know that someone will likely divulge the information pre-maturely. You must be very careful about what is communicated to staff
 - What exactly are you telling the staff?
- Identify the formula for deciding severance packages. Is it based on seniority? Contributions to the organization? Then consider the current economic conditions. Are we experiencing inflation? Are we in a recession?
 - Consider the conditions for eligibility for severance. Do they need to complete every item on their dissolution work plan? Do they need to meet with their supervisor at least once within a specific timeframe?
- Create a detailed timeline to relay to staff that will include their offboarding dates
- Create a dissolution work plan template for each team member to complete so everyone can be on the same page around what needs to be completed prior to their departure.

- Consider how you will close out with the team and how you will honor each other's time at the organization. What feels appropriate?
- What is the designated support for the young people (24 and under) on your team?

Communications

- Create a timeline for announcing the dissolution of the organization
 - How strong is your narrative? What do you want to share?
 - Does it make sense to create a survey for community input? If so, what are they sharing?
 - Who is the point of contact to answer all questions and curiosities in ways that are appropriate?
- Decide what will happen to your website. Will you shut it down? Will it exist as a time capsule? Will there be resources (e.g. toolkits, etc.) available for community at large?
- Decide the social media strategy until dissolution? When will be your last day posting on social media? When will the website receive the final update?
- Who needs to be informed of the dissolution ahead of the public announcement?
 - Who are the internal partners and stakeholders that you have relationships with?
 - Who are the funders?

Admin & Operations

- End any leases you have for a physical location and open a UPS mailbox to continue receiving mail in order to cut back on operating costs
- Move all items into an affordable storage unit
 - Take inventory of the items in storage and begin identifying what needs to be discarded and what can be donated to other organizations and entities (e.g. schools, afterschool programs, community centers, etc.)
 - Consider hiring [TaskRabbit](#) or similar services to support with moving and organizing organizational items
- Hire an attorney that is familiar with and specialized in dissolutions to streamline the process
 - File your final 990 with the IRS

Dissolution Template

DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION: (INSERT date)

(Please make a copy of this and title with your name- do not edit directly in this document. Thank you.)

This is an organizational dissolution template that will be used to inform the organizations' official dissolution and cease of operations in *(INSERT date)*. **This template is to be completed by team members in consideration of specific needs around programs and workload.** Following the completion of this document by *(INSERT deadline)*, your direct manager will finalize, and the executive leadership team will approve and follow up regarding next steps related to your offboarding. For any questions/curiosities/thoughts or needs for extension, please be in contact with your direct manager(s).

Section I: Logistics

Team Name:

(example: Program Team, Admin & Ops Team, etc.)

Team Members:

(list all members of your team & their role)

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Team Location:

(City or National?)

Section II: Current Program(s) Status *(Only applicable to staff that run programs. If you are not responsible for a program, please skip to the next section.)*

Name of Program(s):

(example: INSERT program names)

Program Assessment:

- *Name of program/site*
- *Is this program active or inactive?*
- *Who are the partners for this site/program?*

- *Is there anything to consider regarding the dissolution (e.g. holding a closing circle for the youth who are part of the program)*

Name of Program/Site	Active or Inactive?	Program/Site Partner(s) + Contact Info	Anything to Consider?
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•

Funding Deliverables (This section to be complete by program manager or director)

Are there any known deliverables that your program or office has to meet prior to dissolution?

Funder + Point of Contact	Deliverable	Timeline
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•

Section III: Workload Assessment

Workload Assessment:

- *Bucket of work/responsibilities*
- *Deadline for completion*

- *Work Status (please include what remains to be done)*
- *Anything to consider? (this includes any support needed)*

Bucket of Work/Responsibilities	Deadline for Completion	Work status (please include what remains to be done)	Anything to Consider?
•	•		•
•	•		•
•	•		•
•	•		•

Section IV: Dissolution

Is there any support that you and/or your team need to close your program/workload in a way that feels complete? Please list all of your needs.

(example: Executive Director to join a call with a site partner to provide clarity on the dissolution.)

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Include resources of local and national organizations that have similar work to ours that can be resources for partners and young people. Please include their focus, website, social media platforms, and other appropriate contact information.

(example: Project youth who are interested in trainings and organizing)

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