

Scenario Planning Guide

Pillar: The Leadership • Prevention Continuity Playbook

Resilient leadership is proactive, not reactive. Use this guide to stress-test your organization's response to two common funding shock scenarios. Complete this with your board and senior leadership team, and store your answers somewhere your leadership team can access when needed.

SCENARIO A: THE 3-DAY SHOCK

You receive an email on a Wednesday that an administrative error has frozen payments on your largest grant, effective immediately. Cash flow will halt by Friday.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (HOURS 0-72) — Q1

Who is on the crisis response team?

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (HOURS 0-72) — Q2

What is our communication plan for staff? For the board? For key partners?

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (HOURS 0-72) — Q3

How much operating cash reserve do we have on hand, and how many days of payroll can it cover?

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (HOURS 0-72) — Q4

Which non-essential expenses can be frozen instantly?

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SCENARIO B: THE 30-DAY WARNING

You are notified that a major multi-year grant will not be renewed. The final payment will be made in 30 days.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS (WEEK 1-4)

Financial: What is the exact budget shortfall? What combination of reserves, bridge funding, or line of credit can cover the gap?

STRATEGIC ACTIONS (WEEK 1-4)

People: Which staff positions are directly impacted? Can they be reassigned to other funded projects through cross-training? What severance, PTO, transition, reference, or job search supports should be reviewed with HR in advance?

STRATEGIC ACTIONS (WEEK 1-4)

Programs: Which services are tied to this grant? Can we scale them back or transition them to a different funding source without disrupting community access? How will we communicate changes to the people we serve?

STRATEGIC ACTIONS (WEEK 1-4)

Governance: How will the board leverage its networks for fundraising, strategic partnerships, or warm employment connections for affected staff? If reductions become unavoidable, what gentle off-boarding practices can offer as much notice, flexibility, and support as possible?