



HEADWATERS™

FOUNDATION *for* JUSTICE

Interim Decision-Making Tool

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Background:

This tool is a dynamic, living resource, cultivated by HFJ staff in early 2023. It is intended to guide decision-making for major bodies of work while HFJ researches and pilots permanent organizational structures and decision-making practices. In this period, Headwaters is practicing using a modified [advice process](#). That means, in many cases, decision-makers must consult other colleagues and seek their advice when making decisions. This tool outlines current agreed-upon steps HFJ staff should take to do so.

As HFJ establishes policies and practices for a permanent decision-making framework, this tool will be adapted or altered.

How To Use This Tool:

When a decision needs to be made, consult the table below to determine:

- Who needs to be consulted (a team, all staff, impacted people, etc.)
- What level of consultation or consensus is required for a decision to be made

The table is organized into color-coded categories with headers that describe the level of consultation needed and who needs to be consulted for the decisions in that category. The type/content of decisions are bolded in the left-hand column and are alphabetized within each section. The right-hand column has any notes about how to approach that kind of decision. Please be sure to pay special attention to the notes, as they provide context and specific information for different decisions.

To use, find the type of decision you are interested in making, determine who you need to consult, and how much engagement you need from them, and follow the outlined steps or processes in the notes section.

The table below does not include all the decisions an HFJ staff member might encounter – rather, it outlines categories of decisions that staff identified as being particularly significant to have clarity around how to approach in the interim period. If necessary, new decision types will be added.

If you don't see the kind of decision you are looking for and you think it may be outside of your individual purview, we encourage you to bring the decision to your supervisor, team, or all staff for discussion about how to move forward.

Notes:

“Leader” refers to whoever is making the decision – in cases where we have decided as a staff who that is, it is listed in parentheses. “Leader” is not indicative of position within the organization and can include a staff member of any organizational position.

“Team” refers to the 4 HFJ teams/departments – Program, Development, Communications, and Operations & Finance.

“ODC” refers to HFJ’s Organizational Development Committee. This is a staff committee that works in partnership with our organizational development consultants ([Dragonfly Partners](#)) to move forward organizational development work related to organizational policies, structure, and culture.

“Consult” refers to a process that makes room for meaningful feedback or information sharing. How a leader provides information and solicits information and feedback may vary depending on the situation and may take the form of holding an open feedback session, sharing information and asking for input in a meeting, sending an email, posting a document open for editing, or sending a message to all staff.

Decision requires full group discussion and consensus	
Compensation policies and practices	<i>Leader (ODC) should start by getting input from full staff, make space for ideation, develop a draft plan, and bring back to full staff for feedback, deliberation, and consensus. The plan should then be brought to the Board for input.</i>
Defining and deepening org commitment to Black liberation, Native self-determination, and gender justice	<i>Leader (ODC) should start by getting input from full staff, make space for ideation, develop a draft plan, and bring back to full staff for feedback, deliberation, and consensus. The plan should then be brought to the Board for input.</i>
Health & safety protocols	<i>Leader (Operations) should start by getting input from full staff, make space for ideation, develop a draft plan, and bring back to full staff for feedback, deliberation, and consensus.</i> <i>What’s important is that folks have a comfortable space to share their concerns/needs and the group can discuss things together and come to an agreement that works for everybody.</i>

Hiring policies and practices	<i>Leader (ODC) should start by getting input from full staff, make space for ideation, develop a draft plan, and bring back to full staff for feedback, deliberation, and consensus. The plan should then be brought to the Board for input</i>
Intra-team culture & practices	<i>Leader (ODC) should start by getting input from full staff, make space for ideation, develop a draft plan, and bring back to full staff for feedback, deliberation, and consensus. The plan should then be brought to the Board for input.</i>
Onboarding policies and practices	<i>Leader (Operations) should start by getting input from full staff, make space for ideation, develop a draft plan, and bring back to full staff for feedback, deliberation, and consensus.</i>
Organizational structure	<i>Leader (ODC) should start by getting input from full staff, make space for ideation, develop a draft plan, and bring back to full staff for feedback, deliberation, and consensus. The plan should then be brought to the Board for input.</i>
Performance management, promotion, and termination policies and practices	<i>Leader (ODC) should research best practices, legal and compliance boundaries and bring to full staff for meaningful discussion and consensus.</i>

Leader must consult all staff, then decide

Please refer to definition of "consult" in intro

Developing new roles during the interim	<i>Leader (Directors and/or team) decides after consulting full staff with special attention to those who will be directly impacted by the new role and folks with expertise, and may also consult the Board, especially if this role reports to the Board.</i>
Program related decisions that involve staff outside of the Program Team	<i>Leaders work with members of their team to develop a plan for new programs or program changes then engages full staff for transparency and to tap into group wisdom before making a final decision.</i>

Leaders must consult members of their team, then decide

Please refer to definition of "consult" in intro

Individual pay raises due to promotion or change in role during the interim	<i>Leader (Director) should follow the process for new roles and full staff should be informed once the decision is made for celebration and transparency, including a recap of the general steps that the leader went through to come to the decision.</i>
Performance management, promotions, and terminations during the interim	<p><i>Leaders (Director) consult with members of their team and any other impacted people in the organization before coming to a decision.</i></p> <p><i>Full staff should be informed once the decision is made for transparency, including a recap of the general steps that the leader went through to come to the decision.</i></p>

Leader must consult impacted people, then decide

Please pay special attention to notes to determine specific course of action; refer to definition of "consult" in intro

Budget	<p><i>If it's an area of expertise/within a team- leader can make decisions with their team.</i></p> <p><i>If on behalf of the org/represents Headwaters- leader should bring to full staff for discussion and consensus.</i></p> <p><i>What's important is that our org budget processes are more transparent, include staff, and are participatory.</i></p>
Deepening movement connections	<p><i>If it's an area of expertise/within a team- leader can make decisions with their team.</i></p> <p><i>If it's on behalf of the org/represents Headwaters- leader should bring to full staff for discussion and consensus.</i></p>
Donor relations	<p><i>If it's an area of expertise/within a team- leader can make decisions with their team.</i></p> <p><i>If it's on behalf of the org/represents Headwaters- leader should bring to full staff for discussion and consensus.</i></p>

External communications	<p><i>If it's an area of expertise/within a team- leader can make decisions with their team.</i></p> <p><i>If it's on behalf of the org/represents Headwaters- leader should bring to full staff for discussion and consensus.</i></p>
Funder relationships/grants	<p><i>This assumes that most often, the impacted people at minimum include their team members and potentially the Board.</i></p>
Individual hiring processes	<p><i>Leaders (Directors and/or team) work with members of their team to develop a plan for hiring then engages full staff for transparency and to tap into group wisdom before making a final decision.</i></p>
Individual onboarding for new staff during the interim	<p><i>Leader works with members of their team and Operations to develop a plan for onboarding then engages full staff for transparency and to tap into group wisdom before implementing.</i></p>
Individual workplans	<p><i>Individuals work with their supervisor and supervisors should take into consideration the way individual team members' work plan impacts other team members.</i></p>
IT/Tech	<p><i>What's important to staff is more communication about tech, notice of changes coming/impacts that may have, the ability to learn more about our technology, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Staff want to encourage more creativity and ideas for our tech usage.</i></p> <p><i>The team will be gracious on this knowing it is not a top priority in the interim.</i></p>
Team workplans	<p><i>Leader (Director) works with their team and consults impacted people on staff.</i></p>

Leader must consult experts, then decide

Please refer to definition of "consult" in intro

Legal, audit, and regulatory compliance	<p><i>These experts may be within the HFJ team and/or external consultants depending on the context</i></p>
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Board must consult staff, then decide

Please refer to definition of "consult" in intro

Board development and role

What's important to staff is the opportunity for connection and the ability to heavily consult and make recommendations on the Board's decisions, while also recognizing that those decisions are often legally required to come directly from the Board.