

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

Effective Date: 3/5/06

Series: Personnel Management

Part 370: Departmental Personnel Program

Chapter 312: Position Management

Subchapter 2: Workforce and Succession Planning

Originating Office: Office of Strategic Development of Human Capital

370 DM 312.2

2.1 Purpose. This chapter provides Departmental requirements for workforce succession planning which includes responsibilities and standards for incorporating succession planning as a critical component of workforce planning. Workforce succession planning ensures that there is a progression plan for key positions to ensure that the right people with the right skills are in the right roles at all levels in the organization.

2.2 Policy. All bureaus and offices must develop and maintain current workforce succession plans for all critical functions associated with the mission of their organization. The policy in this chapter enhances the Department's strategic management of human capital by providing guidelines for the inclusion of succession planning into workforce plans. Sound workforce planning must include a plan for the identification, development, and selection of successors for future leadership and other mission critical positions to ensure a pool of qualified applicants.

2.3 Scope. This policy is applicable to all bureaus and offices.

2.4 Authority. This chapter is issued under the authority of the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004 [Public Law 108-411 Title II Sec 201, Agency Training] and OMB Circular No. A-11, § 31.11.

2.5 Responsibilities.

A. Heads of bureaus and offices must:

(1) Establish a comprehensive workforce succession program and ensure that succession planning is an integral part of the organization's workforce plan.

(2) Ensure that workforce succession plans are developed and implemented in accordance with the standards established in this chapter.

(3) Develop workforce succession plans to recruit, retain, reassign, and develop the talent the Department needs to meet the forecasted quantity and quality of employees in the future.

B. Managers and supervisors must be fully involved in workforce succession planning by identifying key positions and associated competencies, developing employees, assessing the results of employee development and evaluating the workforce succession planning program.

C. Human Resources officers are responsible for reviewing agency workforce succession plans and implementing actions to assure compliance with this policy.

2.6 Workforce Succession Plan Requirements. Bureau and office workforce succession plans must be linked to the organization's strategic plan and meet the mission-critical and leadership needs of the organization. The workforce succession plan must include an assessment of current and future competencies and the skills and knowledge that support the organization's strategic goals and mission accomplishments, with an emphasis on diversity, leadership capacity, and retention. Workforce succession plans must include the following standard elements:

A. Competencies. A competency is an observable, measurable pattern of skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully and it must encompass attributes that differentiate performers. Bureau and office workforce succession plans must relate core competencies to their leadership positions and mission-critical positions. Bureaus and offices should assess current and future strategic goals and the organization's mission to identify the critical competencies required for success. Organizations should use the Office of Personnel Management's Executive Core Qualifications list of competencies and/or other valid competency databases when identifying and defining mission-critical competencies. In addition, bureaus and offices must implement processes to ensure critical competencies are available to meet human capital needs.

B. Learning and Development. Workforce succession plans must document learning and development programs and methodologies that have been or will be created to ensure that employees are provided the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and standards of professional competence to advance to leadership and/or fill mission critical positions. These plans will ensure the systematic and long-term development of individuals to acquire mission critical competencies. Consistent use of individual development plans aligns employee skills, needs, and individual professional goals with organizational goals and mission. At least twice each year, supervisors should conduct and guide conversations with their employees concerning the development of goals and opportunities. A variety of learning activities can be used to provide needed competencies, including formal classroom training, mentorship, developmental assignments, computer-based training, and other types of distance learning.

C. Knowledge Management. Knowledge management is capturing information and work processes as they are created or used so they can be distributed and shared with the right individuals at the appropriate time in order to prevent the loss of that knowledge. Bureaus and offices can facilitate knowledge management by documenting processes, methods, tools and

techniques of people with special skills and responsibilities to archive and preserve institutional memory. An established communication system such as mentoring or communities of practice that encourage sharing of information on organizational operations and experiences across organizational boundaries must be in place to achieve succession planning and knowledge management goals.

D. Talent Management. Applying the Department's diversity goals, the plan must include strategies for an external recruitment process, while encouraging the most effective use of employee skills along with the professional development and advancement of current employees. Bureaus and offices should identify competency gaps between talent needs and its availability and develop strategies to close them.

E. Employee Awareness. All employees should be aware of their bureau or office workforce succession plan. At the organizational level, this process should be part of the continuing dialogue between managers and employees to address strategic or program plans. At the employee level, workforce succession planning should be addressed during the employee orientation, discussions within the Individual Development Plan process and periodic performance reviews as appropriate.

F. Tiered Approach to Leadership Succession. Workforce succession plans should have a tiered structure in order to develop employee skills at progressive stages. It is advantageous to provide employees with opportunities to develop their leadership skills early in their careers and, as they demonstrate proficiency, to offer experiences and training in progressively responsible leadership challenges through their career.

G. Assessment. Each bureau and office must assess the results of their workforce succession plan. The assessment should include data to demonstrate the attainment of key goals in attracting a diverse pool of candidates for mission critical positions, competency based hiring, talent development, and knowledge management. Minimum elements could include:

- (1) Identification of mission critical positions;
- (2) Forecast of future needs for mission critical and leadership positions;
- (3) Collection and analysis of attrition data;
- (4) Results of recruitment strategies; and
- (5) Results of development strategies.