U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

Leadership and Knowledge Management

Best Practices Guide

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June 30, 2014

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LEADERSHIP AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

Through its Strategic Human Capital Plan, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has the opportunity to establish direction for major human capital initiatives, including:

- Creating a Unify FRA culture that integrates all program offices around it safety mission
- Keeping pace with the rapid changes in technology in the rail industry in order to meet its regulatory role
- Replacing those who retire in the next 5 years, especially those in leadership positions

This best practices guide leverages the human capital expertise and decades of experience of the Jefferson team by capturing proven approaches in four key opportunity areas:

- Onboarding
- Knowledge Management
- Succession Planning
- Leadership Development

The guide summarizes key principles that can guide the implementation of programs in these areas, provides examples of processes that have been utilized successfully in the public and private sectors, and provides case studies illustrating leading practices. As human capital initiatives are undertaken at FRA, this guide can serve as a resource for identifying and implementing successful approaches.

Onboarding

Onboarding is a process designed to strategically integrate new employees into their jobs and the organizational environment. An effective onboarding program provides new employees with the tools and resources they need to succeed, from the moment they accept the offer of employment through the new employee's first year with the organization. Onboarding programs strategically align to the organization's missions and vision; therefore, the involvement of senior leadership is critical to their success.

Organizations use onboarding programs to improve employee performance, increase employee engagement and retention, and reduce time-to-productivity. Additionally, onboarding programs demonstrate an organization's commitment to retaining and developing new employees, and provide a consistent experience for all new hires, regardless of location.

OPM's "End2End" hiring report describes the onboarding process as the method of educating new Federal employees about the civil service, their specific organization (its mission, culture, structure, systems and resources), the duties of their job, and responsibilities of serving as a Federal employee and benefits.

Onboarding is a process that is ongoing and may last up to a year. It is designed to anticipate the needs and concerns of new employees, as well as provide vital information to directly accelerate employee productivity. The process involves a series of developmental and acculturating activities that are planned and then delivered at stages matching employees' information and skills gaps.

Benefits of Onboarding

The onboarding process benefits both the organization and the individual. By providing new employees with detailed information about the organization and their jobs, they will be able to work independently and contribute to their organization in a shorter time period. They will also gain insight into what makes organizational systems more effective and efficient.

An effective onboarding process assures new employees they made the right career choice in joining the organization, they will experience greater job satisfaction and they will receive the necessary foundation to progress in their careers. Employees will have a sense of belonging and will have a clear understanding of how their jobs impact the organization. A good onboarding process is designed to show immediate dividends because employees are highly engaged from the beginning of their employment and retention rates for new hires should increase.

BEFORE FIRST DAY	FIRST DAY/ ORIENTATION	FIRST WEEK	FIRST 90 DAYS	FIRST YEAR
• Extend personal welcome to employee • Communicate first day logistics to employee • Send paperwork in advance and/or online portal access • Prepare for employee	• Focus on sharing the mission and values • Incorporate senior leadership • Orient employee to organization and office norms • Introduce employee sponsor • Meet immediate requirements for employment	• Ensure direct managerial involvement • Set performance expectations and job scope • Assign meaningful work • Communicate resources or networks required for work	• Provide essential training • Monitor performance and provide feedback • Obtain feedback through new hire survey and other means	• Recognize positive employee contributions • Provide formal and informal feedback on performance • Create employee development plan

Onboarding Model

The model below was developed by the Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton. It provides a framework for understanding the component activities involved in an effective onboarding program from the first day on the job through the first year.

Leading Practice: NASA Center Employee Orientation Guidelines

16 Guidelines to Ensure a Successful Program

Each Center, organization, supervisor, and employee has a responsibility to ensure that our new employees' first days on the job provide a successful launch to their careers. It is critically important that we provide them with the foundation tools, resources, and organizational perspective that ensure their rapid inclusion within our workforce and our NASA culture.
The following guidelines are intended to communicate in our words, actions, processes, and appearance---that Safety, the NASA Family, Excellence, and Integrity are what we value. They also intended to create the excitement and belief that, *"Wow, this is going to be a great place to work!"* New employees will be electronically surveyed to ensure that we are following these guidelines.

1. Designate a Center Employee Orientation Manager
2. Assign Sponsors
3. Ensure a successful First Day Experience
4. Offer Letter
5. Orientation Website
6. Online Checklist Builder
7. Online Calendar
8. Workforce Transformation & Tracking System
9. New Employee Recognition
10. Promotional Items
11. Training Support for Orientation
12. Functional Area Support of Orientation
13. Security: First day Reception
14. Work Area Preparation
15. Organization and Position
16. Oversight, Metrics, and Feedback Response

1. **Designate a Center Employee Orientation Manager** and assign organization responsibility for the Center Orientation process. Your Employee Orientation Manager is responsible for the following:
    - Coordinating and monitoring the orientation of new, transferring, detailed, and returning employees at your Center;
    - Ensuring that your Center has an effective level of Center unique orientation activities and training;
    - Familiarizing supervisors, functional areas, and sponsors with their Employee Orientation roles and responsibilities
    - Responding to issues and feedback from orgs, employees, supervisors
    - Monitoring performance metrics; reporting and measuring program compliance and success;
    - Ensuring the quality of your Center's information on the agency Employee Orientation website and within the checklist builder and calendar
2. **Assign Sponsors.** Implement the requirement that the gaining organization / supervisor assigns sponsors for their new, transferring, or detailed employees. A common theme and request from our new employees is for assistance with the day-to-day activities needed to get settled into their new workplace and local area. Basically, a sponsor is your new employee's temporary best friend tasked with helping them get settled into your Center. Typically the sponsor should be of similar background as the new employee (occupation, organization, grade-level etc.). The sponsor will assist the new employee from the time of the offer to about a month after arrival. Detailed sponsor guidelines, a custom checklist builder for sponsors, and a brochure are available on the Orientation web page. In Phase 2, you will be asked to post the name and contact information for each sponsor assigned to the new employee in the Workforce Transformation Tracking System (WTTS).
3. **Ensure a successful First Day Experience.** The manner in which we prepare and receive our employees on their first day is absolutely critical to a successful orientation. The goal is to ensure that upon arrival the new employee is welcomed with courtesy and attentiveness, that in-processing is efficient and organized, that the new employee's work location is prepared with a PC, phone, user accounts, and email address, and that their supervisor/ organization is prepared for their arrival.

    Your Center should ensure that employee orientation is accepted as a shared responsibility between human resources, the supervisor/organization, and the functional areas (IT, facilities, security, safety, etc.,). Suggested steps for a successful First Day Experience are posted on the website and are included within the checklists and in the supervisor/sponsor guidance. Note: Phase 2 implementation of the Workforce Transformation tracking system (WTTS) later this summer will provide you with the automated tools to easily notify and involve functional area, supervisor, and sponsor, and organizations.

4. **Offer Letter With each employment offer letter,** provide:
   - The NASA Employee Orientation brochure with instructions on employee orientation and the checklist builder. (*Download from the website)*
   - A list of key contacts using the format on the website. (*Download from the website in fillable PDF format)*.
5. **Orientation Website** Maintain your Center's content on the NASA Employee Orientation Website. Assist in the maintenance of the agency-wide pages.
6. **Online Checklist Builder** Maintain your Center's orientation checklist items within the online Checklist Builder.
7. **Online Calendar** Post your Center's orientation activities on the Employee Orientation Online Calendar
8. **Workforce Transformation & Tracking System** Post and maintain current gain, transfer, detail, military returnee, and loss information within the Workforce Transformation Tracking System (WTTS).
9. **New Employee Recognition** Communicate and reinforce the sense of importance of the arrival of your new employees.
   - Supervisor and sponsor should contact welcome the new employee immediately after their acceptance of the job offer.
   - Provide a Welcome letter from the Center Director
   - Have the gaining supervisor swear in the new employee in the presence of their co-workers
   - Introduce the new employee to their chain of management, key staff, and key service providers within the first week.
   - Hold periodic welcoming receptions / luncheons for new employees
   - Upon completion of employee orientation hold a short ceremony to present the completion certificate and a NASA lapel pin. Officially, welcome the new employee to the community of aviation and space explorers.
10. **Promotional Items**
    - Provide promotional items to new employees to help instill a sense of mission, purpose, responsibility, and identity. Items may include NASA pins, posters, photos, certificates, cups, etc. Note: many of these items are available through the Space Flight Awareness (SFA) program.
    - Also, if available, provide coupons and flyers from the gift shop, cafeteria, visitor center, credit union, etc.
11. **Training Support for Orientation**
    - List Employee Orientation as a training course in your catalogue.
    - Supervisory---Provide training during your Center's supervisory training that focuses on employee orientation roles, requirements, and practices.
    - New and Transfer Employees---
      a. Provide an individual development plan (IDP)
      b. Provide a local briefing on training processes and opportunities.
      c. Ensure that required training (safety, IT Security, Hazmat, etc.) is completed within the specified times listed on the checklists.
      d. Provide Center level training that familiarizes the new employee with the Agency

and Center roles and missions, organization, employee roles, rights, and responsibilities, and Safety

e. Provide Organizational and job level training that is required for the new employee's job
f. Provide organized tours of faculties and Center
g. If available, have the new employee take a visitors tour of your facility along with regular visitors/ tourists.

12. **Functional Area Support of Orientation** (safety, security, legal, IT, facilities, etc.)
    - Prior to the arrival of your new employee, implement a process that ensures that your Center's functional support areas are aware of the date of the arrival along with any special needs. *Note: This will be an automated service through WTTS websites and email.*
    - Maintain an email distribution list of functional area new employee contacts and service providers
    - Provide employee orientation familiarization training to functional area representatives involved in orientation processes. Ensure that they are aware of their role and responsibilities as posted on the website, checklist builder, calendar, First day Experience requirements.
    - Provide survey feedback from new employees and supervisors to the functional areas; Recognize outstanding service. Request corrective action for inadequate service.
13. **Security: First day Reception**
    - Security should be notified no later than three working days in advance of a new arrival if possible.
    - Security should welcome the new employee with courtesy and attentiveness.
    - New employee should be provided a temporary badge; safety, parking & traffic instructions; directions and a map, information about obtaining their permanent badge.
    - Security should be provided a contact number for clearance or in case any difficulties occur.
    - If possible, the sponsor or supervisor should meet the new employee at Security and provide an escort to the in-processing location.
14. **Work Area Preparation** The new employee's work location / office should be prepared before the new employee's arrival to include;
    - Desk and chair and other required furniture
    - Computer, user ID / temp password, Email address
    - Welcoming emails from their new coworkers, management chain, and key personnel.
    - Phone and assigned phone number / Phone instruction booklet
    - Office, phone, and PC should also be prepared to meet any handicap requirements.
    - Welcome letter from the Center Director
    - Employee Orientation Brochure
    - Organization chart showing the new employees position in the organization.
    - List of useful contacts with phone number/email address. Include Supervisor, Sponsor, Administrative Officer, human resources specialist, benefits specialist, relocation / travel contact. Use format provided on website.
    - Center, Agency, Space Flight Awareness materials including NASA lapel pin, photos, cups etc. should be provided.
15. **Organization and Position** Within the first two weeks the employee should be familiarized with the following:
    - Job responsibilities, position description, job classification
    - Performance plan and expectations, performance ratings
    - Individual development plan (IDP) and required training
    - Organization's functional statement including organization roles and missions
    - Management chain and the new employee's position in the organization

- NASA Strategic Plan, Vision for Space Exploration, Center implementation plan,
- NASA Initiatives including Safety, One NASA, etc.

16. **Oversight, Metrics, and Feedback Response** The continuing success and impact of the Employee Orientation program is dependent upon continuous maintenance and improvement. Your center should:
    - Solicit continuous feedback through the website, focus groups, and training evaluations.
    - Report the metrics along with recommendations periodically but at least every six months depending activity

Sample Process: Onboarding Program

An effective onboarding program requires the collaboration of many different parties within an organization. The process below provides one example of what this process may look like.

Phase 1: Before the First Day

Building the Foundation - prior to the arrival of new employees

- Define roles and responsibilities for the on-boarding process
- Develop and test a notification process to assure that the information about new hires is received and communicated in a timely fashion
- Train supervisors, sponsors/buddies, HR specialists and recruiters on the agency's orientation process and their roles in the process
- Train recruiters on how to link mission accomplishment to the positions they are recruiting for in an effort to build excitement and sense of impact that the new employee will have

Before the onboarding process is implemented, the agency should establish an organization-wide plan for communication and coordination around the arrival of each new employee. This requires agreement on the duties and responsibilities of each participant in the process.

Pre-Engagement - occurs through the interview process; provides information directly to the job candidate; ensures the manager has complete orientation information.

Prior to and During the Employment Interview:

- Prior to the interview, suggest to interviewees they should review specific components of the agency's website to learn about the organization's history, mission and strategic plan.
- During the interview process, include information about the agency's culture, work assignments and job expectations, specifically, what will the person actually do and how it aligns with the agency's mission.
- During the interview, explain to the interviewees what it means to serve the American public and the role the agency plays in the Federal Government.
- Provide interviewees with realistic understanding of the interview process and timeline; provide a distinct time when they should hear back from the organization.
- Determine interviewees' expectations of the position as compared to the actual position to determine if they are a good fit.

After the Employee Accepts an Offer:

- Call and congratulate new employee, confirm start date and answer any questions.
- Send pre-arrival information (including videos, DVDs, Strategic Plans, Federal childcare information) and forms (e.g., health benefits, TSP) to new employee. Identify someone, possibly an HR Specialist who they can contact if needed. This may be called a “welcome kit.”
- HR ensures the supervisor and all appropriate personnel are aware of the new employees start date.
- Identify a sponsor or buddy for the new employee and have him/her call the employee prior to arrival to welcome him/her aboard.
- Communicate regularly to ensure the new employee continues to be engaged and excited about the position.
- Make sure the new employee understands what will happen the first day and what time the supervisor will meet with him/her.
- Alert current staff of the new employee’s arrival and discuss the person’s role, skills and where the individual will sit.
- Prepare new employee’s workspace, including phone, computer, email and access to systems or equipment necessary for productivity.
- Order and stock supplies for new employee.

Best Practice: An automated system for employees to complete forms on-line and have new employees bring hard copies of the forms with them on the first day. This will save time and help streamline the in-processing part of day one orientation.

Phase 2: First Day on the Job

- Supervisor meets and personally welcomes new employee, before initial in-processing if possible.
- Conduct in-processing by knowledgeable staff who can answer new employees’ questions.
- Conduct a formal swearing-in ceremony.
- Conduct tour of building and provide information on neighboring resources (e.g., gyms, banks, places to eat, etc.).
- Introduce new employee to staff members.
- Take new employee to lunch (if allowable).
- Provide time for new employee to settle in the work space and environment.
- Provide copies of work unit’s manuals, procedures, work samples, etc.
- Conduct end of day debrief.
- Provide new employee with a copy of the initial on-boarding evaluation form.

Best Practices: (1) Have a senior management official or experienced career employee available to greet new employees during orientation to congratulate them on their smart decision to accept employment with the agency; (2) provide a welcome letter from the Division head.

Phase 3: First Week on the Job

Supervisors will:

- Meet with the new employee and review the work area to make sure the individual has everything necessary to perform the job.
- Provide information on agency policies and procedures as well as communicate the culture of the agency and the employee's specific work unit.
- Provide detailed information about job assignments including copy of position description, performance expectations and agency goals.
- Give first work assignment. To the extent possible, make sure it is meaningful.
- Provide applicable mandatory training relating to the Constitution, ethics, computer security, the No Fear Act, safety and agency-specific training.
- Discuss probationary period expectations.
- Discuss telework and work schedule options (if any).
- Establish work schedule.
- Introduce office sponsor/buddy (meet with sponsor as necessary).

Phase 4: First Month on the Job

Supervisors will:

- Provide information on Government-wide policies and regulations impacting the performance of official duties (e.g., Hatch Act, ethics).
- Outline the importance and relationship of the employee's job to the mission and priorities of the organization.
- Conduct training needs assessment.
- Discuss and issue performance standards and provide 30-day feedback session.
- Provide employee with knowledge of organizational resources (e.g., historical files, knowledge management system).
- Discuss business continuity, shelter-in-place and emergency plans.

Best Practice: Schedule time for the new employee to discuss with other employees about their work and how the individuals will work together.

Phase 5: Engagement and Training (First 1-3 Months)

- Review the results of the training needs assessment with the employee and develop an individual development plan.
- Provide information about training opportunities.
- Hold a brown bag lunch or arrange for the new employee to meet with agency head or other senior level official to hear firsthand about the agency's strategic priorities.
- Assess orientation process and provide feedback, through dialogue and the 90-day new employee survey.
- Conduct informal performance review.
- Conduct individual and/or group developmental activity.

Best Practices: (1) Utilize web-based training applications to support mandatory training where appropriate; (2) Hold a brown bag discussion with an attorney regarding ethics; (3) Include a shadowing assignment of an executive employee.

Phase 6: Performance and Teambuilding (First 6 Months)

- Conduct mid-year performance review after employee has been on board 90 days (if the employee is hired after the first three months of the annual performance period).
- Conduct individual and/or group developmental activity.

Phase 7: Integration and Transition (First Year)

- Continue individual and/or group developmental activity.
- Conduct an end of year performance evaluation.
- If employee is on probationary period, determine if employee's performance and conduct are sufficient to retain.
- Provide a certificate indicating the employee has completed the new employee orientation process with a note of congratulations from a Senior Executive.
- Discuss the orientation process; solicit recommendations for improvements.
- Determine employee first year satisfaction and engagement from Annual Employee Survey.

Throughout the Process

- Ownership: Manager and Human Resources Office.
- Reinforce what it means to serve the American public.
- Reinforce the agency's mission and culture Communicate the employee's value to mission accomplishment.
- Conduct periodic performance checks and discussions. Communicate the employee's value to mission accomplishment.
- Conduct periodic performance checks and discussions.
- Provide training to develop skills or insight into the workings of the organization based on the individual development plan and work assignments.
- Provide mandatory Government-wide or agency-specific training.
- Encourage the new employee to provide insight into how to make the organization more effective and efficient.
- Be sensitive to ways to help a new employee fit into the informal, as well as the formal networks and information channels of the agency and workgroup.
- Assess the new employee's need for history, context, how-to information, procedures, etc. and provide that information to help acclimate to the agency.
- Measures
  - Percentage of employees reporting satisfaction with the orientation process (per new hire survey).
  - Percentage increase in retention rates (1-year and 2-year per Central Personnel Data File).

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management involves the transfer of knowledge related to organizational mission-critical operations and culture from a more experienced employee to a less experienced employee. The scope of this knowledge transfer can range from a one-on-one session focusing on one subject matter to a public document summarizing multiple topics that is intended for an organization-wide audience.

Successful succession planning systems couple the formal training initiatives, listed in the previous section, with effective knowledge sharing practices. The following summarizes the most commonly used vehicles for transferring knowledge from a more experienced employee to a less experienced employee. Each vehicle below requires a minimal level of effort to implement and maintain, yet can yield significant benefits to improving the oversight of programs and operations.

Knowledge Management Vehicles

Documented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Standard operating procedures provide a profile of various mission-critical occupations, including key job responsibilities, stakeholders and timelines. Executives can help grow technical skills of future leaders by collaboratively reviewing the SOPs and then assigning related tasks.

Blogs: A blog is a journal summarizing personal commentary on a topic or set of topics that is intended for public viewing. Blogs can be reviewed together between the executive and future leader(s).

Wiki: A wiki is webpage that allows employees to make contributions and/or edits. Wikis are most appropriate for disseminating knowledge on a topic of interest. A wiki differs from a blog in that a wiki page can be edited by readers, while a blog cannot.

Communities of Practice (COP): A Community of Practice is a medium through which a collection of individuals, containing similar job responsibilities but distributed across offices or organizations, can convene to share best practices, discuss relevant issues and ask questions. Communities of Practice can take the form of online (e.g., through message boards or dedicated SharePoint pages) or in person (e.g., monthly town hall meetings; structured conversations with subject matter experts, etc.) meetings. Results of a COP discussion can be posted on an easily accessible web site, database and/or blog for independent review.

Executive Knowledge Transfer Capsule: An executive knowledge transfer capsule provides a structured tool for executives to document notes and useful references related to the organization's operational and cultural factors with the intent of passing the information along to the eventual successor or group of potential successors. This allows the successor to quickly gain an "insider's perspective" on the status of specific organizational operations and will help ensure a smooth transition into the more senior position. The tool can be structured such that a variety of categories are pre-determined for an executive to discuss; a combination of written pieces (e.g., blogs, wikis, etc.) and video conferencing techniques (e.g., recorded senior leader exit interview) can be used to capture the knowledge of the executive.

Technical Question Databases: Technical question databases provide a repository for frequently asked questions related to a range of topics that can be repeatedly and independently reviewed by employees, as needed.

Featured Newsletters: Featured newsletters are documents intended for distribution office- or organization-wide that summarize recent accomplishments, significant external happenings influencing organizational operations, thought-provoking articles and small reminders.

Intranet Knowledge Sharing Features: Organizations' intranet sites and file management programs (e.g., SharePoint) can be used as a centralized location for storing critical organizational communications and job aids. Potential knowledge sharing features include:

- *Company Announcements*: A centralized location, preferably on the homepage, that lists all communications distributed by the organization.
- *Toolkits*: A collection of materials centered on a topic of interest. These materials can include example work products, best practices, related scholarly articles and training opportunities.
- *Public Forums*: Discussion boards that are dedicated to a single topic of interest and provide for continuous senior leader and employee contribution.
- *Conferences and Presentations*: A collection of useful references and/or lessons learned from an employee's attendance or presentation at a major conference or event. These pages can also include key presentations developed and conducted internally at FRA.
- *Blogs and Wikis:* As previously discussed, blogs and wikis summarize employee insight into a topic or set of topics that allow for public viewing, and with wikis, editing.

Supporting a Culture of Knowledge Sharing

Various factors of an organization's environment play a significant role in facilitating the successful sharing of knowledge, and thus, stand to impact the effectiveness of the knowledge management vehicles. The following three elements of an organization's culture are particularly important in supporting a culture of knowledge sharing:

IT Infrastructure: The IT support of the organization must have the expertise to create the supporting knowledge sharing platforms. They must also have the vision to assist in the development of these platforms, collaboratively with other stakeholders, to improve their utility.

Executive Buy-In: The organization must have leadership that recognizes the benefits of knowledge sharing and actively contributes to knowledge sharing practices.

Reinforcement of Knowledge Sharing Efforts: The organization should recognize effective knowledge sharing principles, incorporate these principles into performance plans, and reward the accomplishment of noteworthy achievements.

Leading Practice: The Role of a Knowledge Management Officer (KMO) in Effective Knowledge Sharing

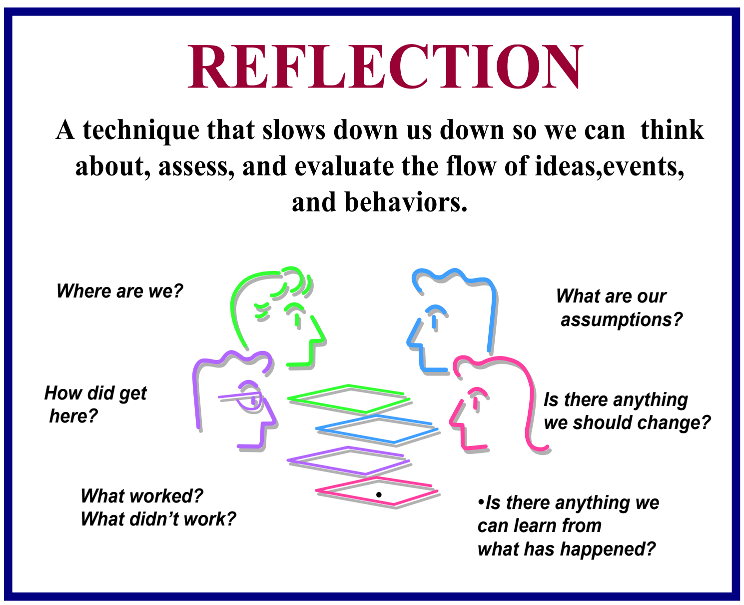
Though individual knowledge sharing techniques and mediums vary across Federal organizations, one thing is consistent among organizations that consistently and effectively share knowledge and lessons

learned – that is, the presence of a “Knowledge Management Officer,” or KMO. The KMO is an employee with a formal assignment to promote and enhance the effective sharing of knowledge across an organization. The KMO can range from a dedicated FTE to a small fraction of an FTE.
Though the job duties of a KMO can vary depending on his or her availability, the principle responsibilities of this position include:

- Collaborate with the senior leadership team to identify the desired goals for a knowledge management system, both within an office and across offices
- Create innovative processes, products and services in support of the knowledge management goals of senior leadership
- Collaborate with stakeholders to identify and populate critical knowledge (e.g., lessons learned, best practices, etc.)
- Disseminate knowledge through sharing, learning and collaboration
- Moderate ongoing knowledge management tools (e.g., discussion boards)

The effectiveness of knowledge sharing efforts can be substantially increased by incorporating various technologies (e.g., SharePoint sites, Communities of Practice, etc.). Therefore, an organization should consider coupling a KMO with a dedicated IT support employee to help create and structure the knowledge management vehicles.

Sample Process: Supporting a Culture of Knowledge Sharing Through the Systematic Use of Team Conversational Tools



Reflection is a way of slowing down our thinking so we can become more aware of how we form our mental models, or our views of the world, and how they influence our actions. It helps us to learn how to tell the difference between what we can directly observe and verify from what we suppose is true. It asks us to pause so that we can weigh and assess the flow of ideas and thoughts before continuing down a specific path of actions.

For example, assume that we are operating under a mental model that says, “The employees in the X Work Unit are lazy, because they never meet their goals.” If during one week, this work unit meets its work goals, we may say, “The X Work Unit made its goals, because the X Work Unit just lucked out this week. No one in the unit lifted a finger to meet the unit’s goals.” What would happen if we started to question our view of this work unit? We would we learn if we asked these questions?

What data are we using when we say that the X Work Unit is lazy and that it lucked out this week?

Is this assumption accurate? Is it misleading?

What would happen if we talked to some members of the X Work Unit and find out why the unit made its work goals this week?

If we asked these questions, we might be willing to change our mental model of the work unit to more accurately explain what took place. We might learn that the unit was not meeting its goals, because it did not know about a new procedure. With the new procedure in place, the X Work Unit was able to meet its goals. With this new piece of data, we would reflect upon and think about what had actually taken place. We could recognize that our original view of the work unit – the employees in the work unit are lazy – was incorrect. We could begin to think about that work unit in a new way. We could also think about why we had thought the people in the work unit were lazy and determine what we could do to avoid such errors in the future.

Reflection is more than asking questions. It requires us to look at how we interpret information and how we form opinions so that in the future, we will be able to draw better conclusions, make more accurate assessments, and act more appropriately.

How can we use reflection?

- We can use reflection to help us focus upon the process a group is using.
- We can use reflection to review our own behavior, or the team's behavior.
- We can also use reflection to look at our own learning or the learning of the entire team.

INQUIRY, or ASKING

Inquiry is the process in which we ask questions of other people to get more information about an issue. We use inquiry to look into issues that are complex and creating conflict. We use it to obtain a variety of views about an issue. In a discussion, inquiry is the opposite of advocacy, which is explaining and selling a personal position. In many meetings, people are there to sell their own positions and are not interested in listening to and understanding the views of others. If the selling of positions dominates a meeting, no one will "win." No one will be able to convince the group to follow a particular view, or the group will make little progress, because each person will leave with the same views he or she had before the meeting. Try to balance inquiry and advocacy in meetings.

Ladder of Inference: The ladder of inference is a tool that helps us remember that we are constantly interpreting our experience bases on our past experience and the beliefs and attitudes we have acquired and developed over time. Each of us is constantly trying to make sense of the world around us.

We all start on the ground floor. Data is constantly hitting us from a variety of sources. Because there is so much we are experiencing, we all take the information and data that we encounter and try to simplify and organize it. As we do so, we take our first step away from pure information and data and up the first rung of the ladder of inference. We begin to interpret the data by simplifying.

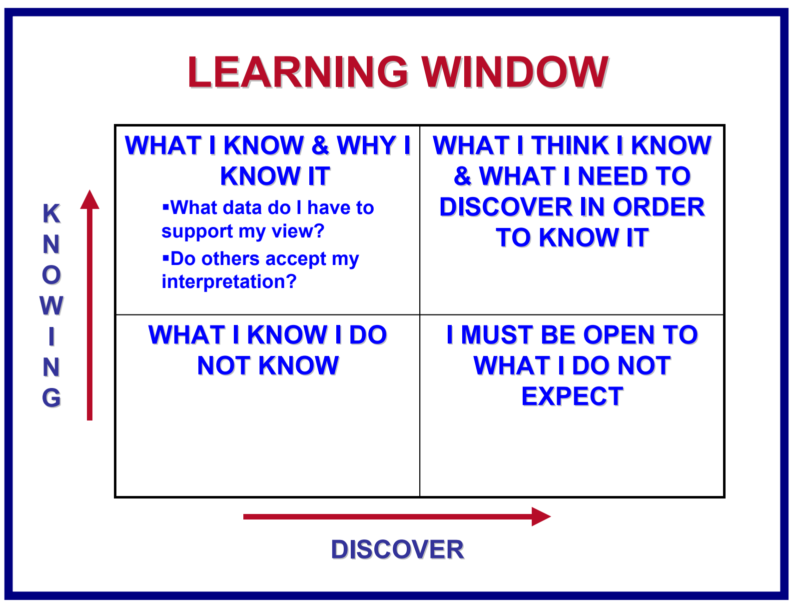
Our next step up the ladder involves selecting the data we will look at and work with. We are moving the data away from its natural context into a context that we create.

Our third step involves interpreting the data based on our past experience and history. This is normal. A child after being burned by touching a hot stove knows that based on prior experience touching a hot stove will result in a burn. Such interpretation is useful!

When we start using our past experiences and history to interpret events, we may fail to recognize assumptions that may no longer be valid, or may not work in the situation we are encountering. When we use our past experiences and history to make assumptions about a situation, or about data, we have moved up another rung of the ladder of inference. We move the data and information out of its natural context and into one that we create and interpret.

We acquire assumptions through our family, community, education, and experience. Those assumptions form an invisible operating system that influences our actions in ways that we are often unable to see. The operating system contains assumptions that filter the way we perceive reality. The ladder of influence is a triggering tool to remind us that we need to think about the assumptions underlying our actions. Its use in a group will help each of us identify our own blind spots and give us a way to help others see their blind spots

Individually, we see a portion of the data that a group sees collectively. Questioning our own assumptions and those others in a group surfaces limiting perceptions that can adversely affect the group's ability to analyze data and to make decisions. Questioning assumptions allows us to open new windows and perspectives to the data that we were unable, or unwilling, to see before. Questioning assumptions may also help us to obtain new information about a problem so that we will be able to develop a better understanding of the problem and why things happened.



Learning Window

Groups often make decisions based on assumptions that data does not support, or upon data, which the group has not discussed or validated. The Learning Window is a simple tool that asks the group to openly discuss and test the data supporting a statement or belief.

What We Know

There are two questions that we must answer.

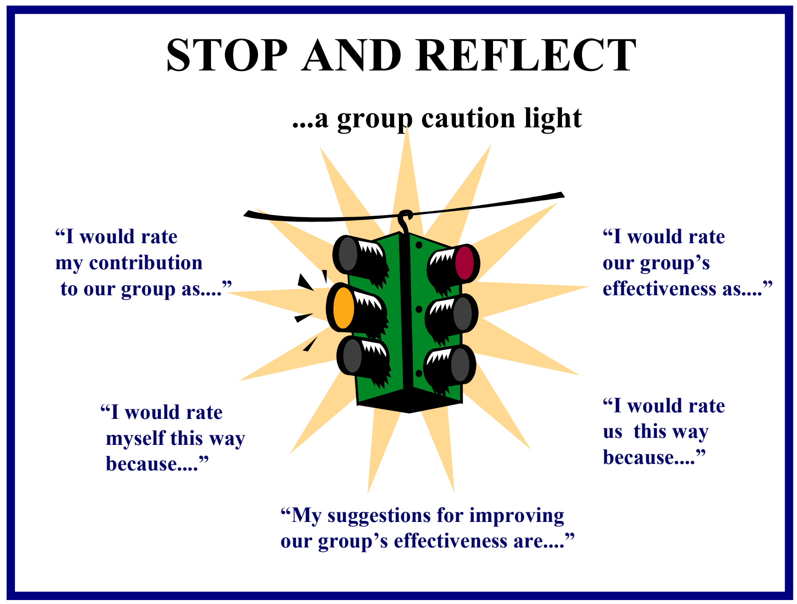
- What data do we have to support this view?

- Does everyone interpret the data in the same way?

To say we know something means that we have enough data to support this statement and that the majority of others working on the question agree that the data does support the statement that we know something is true. This is not a guess, or a hunch, but something that we can prove. - We must have enough data to support the view.

What we think we know

We have some data. Based on our discussion of the data, we think that something could possibly be true. To find out if it is true, we either need more data or more proof, or we need to allow others the time they need to agree with our view.   Furthermore, when we have the additional information and we believe that we can say something is true, everyone will also have to agree that this is true before we can say we know something is true.



We know what we don't know.

We have insufficient data and information to even take an educated guess. We have a question to answer that needs more information. It may be an interesting possibility, but it is simply a hypothesis that we have to explore.

What we don't know we know.

We have to expect surprises along the way and new questions we never imagined to ask.

As we work through the window, the number of things we do know as true will grow. As we continue our inquiry, we can also expect that we will ask more questions that we will have to explore and more possibilities that we will have to learn more about. The window helps us to avoid making assumptions about what we know and forces us to recognizes how we use assumptions and how we use and interpret data to learn about our experiences and our world

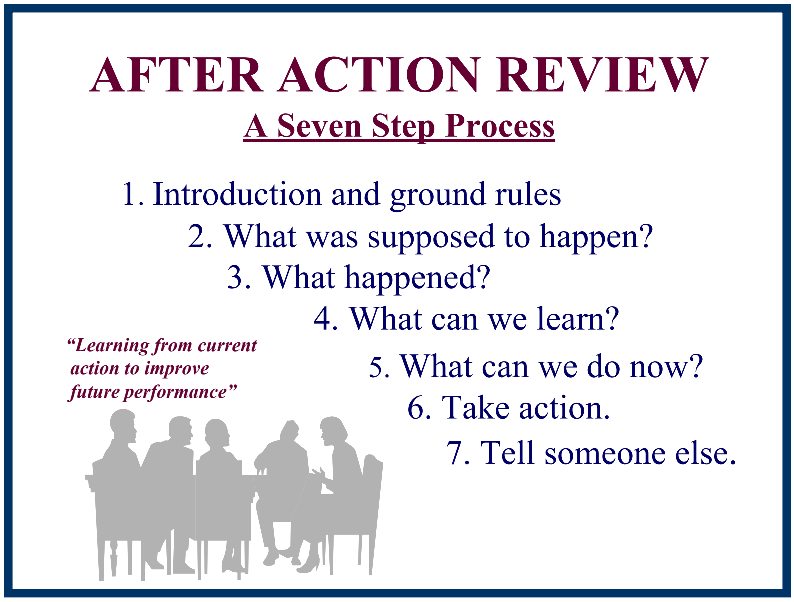
Stop and Reflect

Sometimes when a group, or a team, is meeting, there are issues or concerns that are affecting the work that the group needs to accomplish. Individuals know it, but are unwilling to raise the issue. "Stop and reflect" is a group reflection practice that helps surface these issues and concerns. It is like a caution light that requires the group to slow down and stop so that it can assess the situation, the action being taken, or the behavior being exhibited.

The purpose of Stop and Reflect is to surface and expose issues, or concerns that are in the way of progress or good open communications.

A group can use Stop and Reflect when it feels that it is "stuck." It could be that there is an issue or concern that several members of the group are avoiding. It could be that the group feels frustrated by its own behavior.

Stop and reflect is also a practice that a group can include on its meeting agenda. A group may decide to pre-plan a Stop and Reflect if it has encountered problems in the past, or if it wants to take the time to refocus its energies.



After Action Reviews

We can use also reflection to focus on a project, or an event. The Army's After Action Review is a good example of this. If you listen to members of the military discuss their military actions, you will hear them talk about how they spent time reviewing each action after is it over. What they are doing is learning from the event so that in the future they will be able to improve performance.

The following are key characteristics of an After Action Review:

- The review includes the whole group.
- The group focuses on performance and not upon setting blames.
- The group does not grade the success of failure of the actions.
- The review is part of, or takes place immediately after action.
- The group applies the lessons learned as it continues to act.
- The review helps the group adapt and respond in new ways.
- By learning from current action, the group improves future performance.

You can use After Action Reviews as part of:

- Committee meetings
- Staff Meeting
- Project meetings and reviews
- Team meetings

The After Action Review has seven steps:

Introduction and Ground Rules

The participants should:

- Support having a focused, open, safe and reality-oriented discussion.
- Present “just the facts.”
- Be objective.
- Encourage hearing a wide variety of views and perspectives.
- Avoid advocating or selling a position.
- Make sure that everyone clearly understands in the same way, the ideas being presented before drawing inferences or making conclusions.

What was our intent when the action we were planning the action?

Ask the following questions:

- What was the action’s purpose?
- What were we trying to accomplish?
- How was it to be accomplished?

Find out what actually happened.

Answer the following questions

- What occurred?
- Why did it happen that way?
- What were the results?

Identify what the group and each participant can learn from the action.

Answer these questions:

- What do we know now that we did not know before the action took place?
- What lessons did we learn?
- If someone else were going to do something similar, what advice would we give that person?

Identify the next steps to take.

Answer these questions:

Based on what we learned, what should we do?

What are our:

- Short-terms actions?
- Mid-term actions?
- Long-term actions?
- What will each group member personally commit to do?
- What will the group commit to do?

Take action based on what was learned.

This is an important step since you demonstrate that you have learned something when you change your behavior. A work unit or group changes when enough people in the group decide to change how they are acting, how they are behaving. For change to occur, there must be a critical mass of people who commit to and take the action.

Tell other people what the group learned.

Answer these questions:

- Who else needs to know what we learned?
- What do they need to know?
- How are we going to tell them?

Telling other people about what happened, about the lessons learned and about the actions resulting from these lessons, is critical in helping organizations learn. If we want to share learning so that everyone in the organization benefits, we have to take the time to tell other people. We also need to tell them as quickly and as often as possible.

Huddles

Huddles are short (5 minute) standing morning meetings (if you sit down the meeting will last 20 minutes). The small group should discuss three questions:

- What happened yesterday that we need to celebrate?
- What do we need to do today – absolutely no excuses?
- What do we need to pay attention to over the next week so it does not become a problem?

The meeting begins on a positive note – there is always something to celebrate. It then turns to a commitment – a shared understanding of what is essential today. Then the conversation turns to what issues might present a problem in the near future.

Knowledge Management Best Practices

This section provides examples of various agencies that have effectively incorporated knowledge management and sharing principles into their organizational culture.

Government Accountability Office (GAO): Succession Planning at GAO. Recognizing the impending departure of key leaders and other critical personnel, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) sought to capture and retain critical "institutional knowledge that would otherwise be lost with the departure of these key leaders. To assist in the accomplishment of this task, the GAO instituted a program would allow select retirees to become reemployed annuitants to facilitate the transfer of knowledge in critical areas and allow for a smooth transfer of responsibilities to new leaders.

NASA: NASA Lessons Learned Information System (LLIS). The LLIS is an online automated data base system that serves as NASA's principal mechanism for collecting and sharing lessons learned from programs, projects and missions agency-wide. The goal of LLIS is to ensure that NASA does not have to keep "relearning" the lessons of the past. NASA leadership frequently reviews and disseminates lessons through periodic updates to policies and guidance.

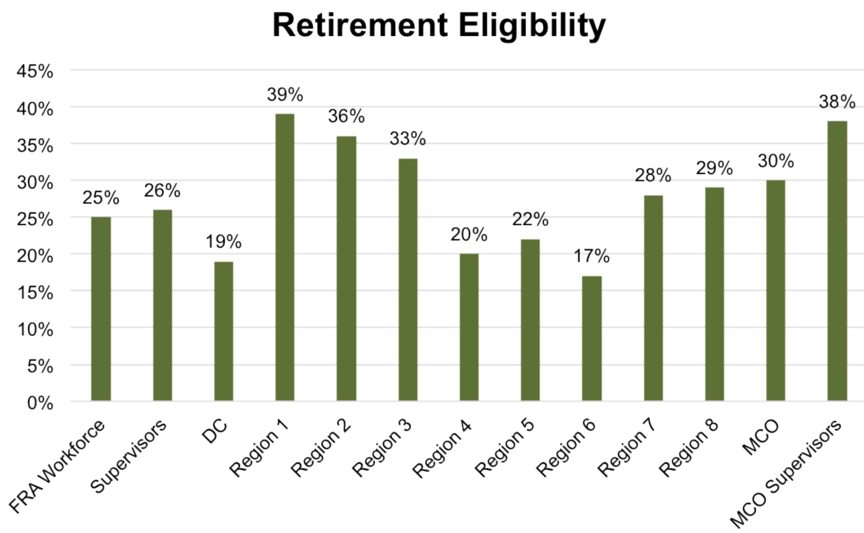
Nuclear Regulatory Commission: Knowledge Management Framework. The NRC is considered to have a model framework for an organization-wide knowledge management program. It has a designated champion for overall leadership, direction and integration of the knowledge management programs. Each Office Director has named a senior manager to lead implementation of knowledge management activities within his or her organization. Furthermore, it has formed a steering committee with members from each office, and has designated the Human Resources office to provide program support, coordination and evaluation. NRC staff has also developed a set of KM standard practices and techniques from which the offices and regions can select the tools that best suit their individual needs. These tools include content management systems, information portals and "Google-like" indexing and search program designed to make existing information available to all staff in a more user-friendly manner.

Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA): Crossing Boundaries. Crossing Boundaries is a forum in which employees can present solutions directly to the DIA director. It includes monthly sessions designed to address organizational problems and prompt immediate feedback from agency leaders and employees. The Program eliminates the need to go through the chain of command to present complex solutions, and instead, gives the employees the opportunity to collaborate across organizational lines and present solutions directly. Employees who submit ideas become the owner of the solutions. If their ideas are approved, the Director gives them permission to act as agents for change.

Succession Planning

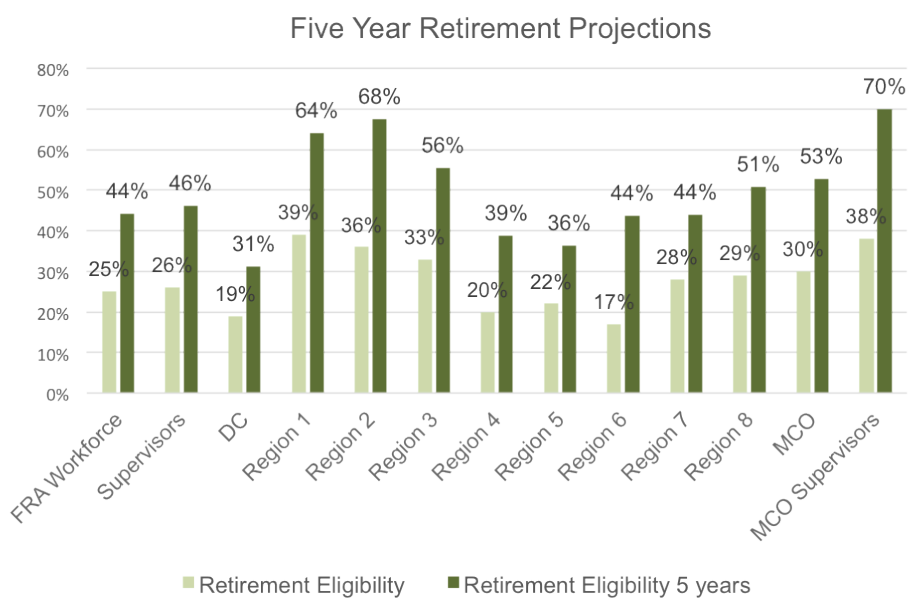
Why Succession Planning?

FRA faces a large number of retirements in the next 5 to 10 years, especially among those in leadership positions. Twenty-five percent of the FRA workforce is eligible for retirement at this time. Among Rail Inspectors in Regions 1 and 2 the percentage eligible to retire today is 39% and 36% respectively.



Over the past few years, those who retired remained employed for about four years beyond their first date of retirement eligibility. The increases in returns among many TSP Investment Funds over the past five years may reduce the period after eligibility when those eligible decide to leave. It seems reasonable to assume that those current eligible to retire will leave with the next five years.

Over the next five years, the number of employees eligible to retire almost doubles. In five years, 44% of the workforce will be eligible to retire, with 70% of the Supervisors in the MCO 2121s having eligibility for retirement and Regions 1 and 2 with 64% and 67% retirement eligibility. Here again, if FRA assumes that they will leave approximately four years after first being eligible, the number of those who will retire by 2024 represent 40 – 50% of all those currently employed.



What is Succession Planning?

Succession planning is the process used to proactively develop the technical and leadership skills required for successful performance in the future.

Succession planning acknowledges that staff will not be with an organization indefinitely and it provides a plan and process for addressing the changes that will occur when they leave. Most succession planning focuses on the senior leaders, however, all key positions should be included in the plan. Key positions are those positions that are crucial for the operations of the organization and, because of skill, seniority and/or experience, will be hard to replace.

A succession plan should involve nurturing and developing employees from within an organization and incorporates a recruiting plan to acquire skills that cannot easily be developed. Employees who are perceived to have the skills, knowledge, qualities, experience and the desire can be groomed to move up to fill specific, key positions. Organizations should:

- Assess their current and future needs based on either their strategic plan, goals and objectives, or priority programs and projects
- Match these to the capabilities of the existing workforce
- Develop a plan to manage the gaps that will arise when individuals in key positions leave or are promoted

Effective succession planning results in the following two outputs:

1. A **succession plan** summarizing the technical and leadership skills required for successful performance in the leadership position; skills gaps between the requirements of the leadership and feeder positions; and high-level strategies for closing the identified skills gaps (e.g., formal training course, mentoring, etc.). One succession plan should be created for each key and leadership position that summarizes the status of the collective pipeline for that position.
2. An **implementation and evaluation plan** summarizing how the succession strategies, identified in the succession plan, will be implemented and evaluated. One implementation plan should be created for each feeder position in the pipeline that is tailored to the proficiency gaps of that feeder position.

An example of a position specific succession plan is presented below; it has been annotated to provide a definition for each component. An example implementation and evaluation plan is presented later in the report.

1. Leadership Position	
Leadership Position Title, Series, Grade:	**Current Incumbent:**
Office:	**Date Incumbent Entered Position:**

1. **Likelihood of Retirement:** What is the likelihood that the incumbent will retire? To determine this, consider the following criteria: a. Is the incumbent of the target position currently eligible to retire? Will the incumbent become eligible to retire in the next 5 years? b. How likely is the incumbent of the target position to retire? Retirement is likely in: [ ] Less than 1 Year [ ] 1-2 Years [ ] 2-4 Years [ ] 4+ Years
Key Competencies Needed for the Target Position: What are the critical leadership and technical competencies required to perform in the leadership position? Use the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) to define key leadership competencies; for technical competencies, use an existing competency model or have incumbents identify the most critical technical competencies for the position.
2. Feeder Positions
Critical Competency Gaps by Internal Talent Pool: Compare the competency requirements for all feeder positions to the competency requirements of the leadership position to identify and prioritize the critical gaps in leadership and technical competencies. **Note that this analysis should center on the proficiency requirements associated with the successor positions, not the names of the current incumbents of these succession positions.**
Potential External Candidates: Do the key leadership and technical skills required by the leadership position exist in other agencies or industries? How effective have recruitment initiatives for these positions been in the past? This section is not applicable if external recruitment pools do not exist, or if a diverse group of internal candidates exist.
Readiness of Internal Candidates: Assess the readiness of internal agency positions and indicate the number of positions in each category below. If a reasonably precise number of "ready" internal candidates cannot be determined, enter a qualitative judgment such as "there are a high number of "ready now" candidates." [ ] Ready Now [ ] Ready in 1-2 Years [ ] Ready in 3-5 Years [ ] No appropriate internal feeder positions
Succession Developmental Techniques Action Plan: What kind of developmental assignments are required to develop internal candidates? These will be elaborated on in the implementation plan. Potential options include: *Special Assignments or Details:* Employee temporarily moves into an existing position or through a series of existing positions; *Coaching and Mentoring*: Formal or informal relationship between senior and junior employees for the purpose of providing ongoing support, advice and career direction to an employee *Learning Groups*: Gathering of employees who meet to focus on their own learning and development; and *Shadowing Assignment:* Observing another person perform tasks and demonstrate competencies.

Who Benefits from Succession Planning?

Effective succession planning can lead to the following benefits:

FRA will be positioned to:

- *Retain key institutional knowledge* – FRA executives possess a wealth of knowledge gained through years of federal and rail industry service. By proactively engaging in succession planning, FRA ensures that this knowledge can be captured and relayed to future leaders.
- *Demonstrate its commitment to developing future leaders* – As current leaders become eligible to leave the workforce, FRA must demonstrate commitment to future leaders by providing them with developmental opportunities required to succeed in the executive position. This demonstrated commitment is likely to lead to improved retention at the senior level.
- *Increase collaboration and communication among future leaders* – Various succession and knowledge management strategies require collaboration between senior leaders across the organization. This allows future leaders to begin to build a rapport with one another.

Future leaders will be positioned to:

- *Acquire new skills and knowledge* – Leadership development opportunities help employees build skills that can lead to even greater opportunities throughout their careers.
- *Demonstrate commitment to learning* – Those who are willing to participate in leadership development opportunities show that they are serious about contributing to the organization's culture and mission, and desire to be an active participant in FRA's leadership culture.
- *Network with the current and future FRA leaders* – Leadership development will allow participants to come into greater contact with employees across the organization.

Characteristics of a Good Succession Management Strategy

The effectiveness of succession planning efforts is based primarily on the following four factors:

1. Processes are simple and flexible

Like most successful programs, effective succession planning has processes that are simple, flexible and utilize technology to create an efficient succession planning system.

2. Integrated with existing organizational processes

The best succession planning systems rely heavily on existing process, tools and technologies to minimize the natural reluctance to change. Aligning succession planning efforts with current practices also provides for an effective evaluation process, as organizations are able to accurately monitor the progress of an employee through the succession plan using existing practices.

3. Integrated with strategic plans and organizational requirements

To ensure buy-in from senior leaders, succession planning must be related to an organization's key priorities, as outlined in the organization's strategic planning documents.

4. Performed on an on-going basis

Succession planning is cyclical in nature. Strategies for closing leadership pipeline skills gaps should be periodically evaluated to ensure their success in meeting their stated goals, with residual succession gaps informing future planning efforts.

Leading Practice: FDIC Succession Management Program

The FDIC's human capital vision, strategic goals, and strategic objectives are integrated in the FDIC's corporate-level planning documents: the Strategic Plan, Diversity Strategic Plan, Annual Performance Plan, and Corporate Performance Objectives (CPOs). These plans collectively provide an agency-wide vision and framework to guide the FDIC's succession planning. The FDIC has developed a Human Capital Blueprint, which illustrates the relationship between FDIC strategic planning documents and human capital initiatives. Corporate Performance Objectives are a compilation of specific performance targets and measures developed during the annual planning and budget process and approved by the Chairman.

In August 2006, FDIC announced that approximately 18 to 34 percent of the Executives and 8 to 20 percent of the overall workforce would be eligible to retire in the next 5 years.

The FDIC took steps to determine the critical skills and competencies that would be needed to achieve current and future programmatic results. The FDIC has a Key Leadership Competency Model that defines leadership competency as the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that an individual must have to lead successfully. The FDIC's executive leaders have identified 5 to 10 key leadership competencies by grade band that are needed for successful leadership.

The Division of Finance (DOF) prepares annual retirement projections to provide the FDIC with fact-based workforce information. DOF found that although a number of FDIC employees were eligible to retire between the ages of 55 and 57, they were not retiring and were following the same trend as the rest of the Federal population, which indicates that the average federal employee retires at age 61.5. DOF makes two projections each year: a conservative projection using the 61.5 age retirement assumption, and a more aggressive, "incentive" projection that estimates retirement projections if the FDIC offered a buyout or early retirement incentives.

In addition, DOF conducts an analysis to determine how many of the next lower graded employees would be available to replace higher graded retirement-eligible employees.

The HR Committee determined that many of the support division executives (e.g., human resources and information technology) could be filled by personnel outside of the FDIC. However, the more specialized positions (e.g., economists and large bank specialists) were positions that presented greater replacement risk.

The Succession Planning Team interviewed FDIC division executives and used a criticality matrix to identify 100 individual positions of concern and found that:

- Most of the 100 positions were not in the driver divisions.
- Many of the EM positions identified were due to a concern that eligible CMs did not have the necessary technical or leadership skills.
- External hiring was possible for over 50 of the identified positions.
- The competitive external market was a concern for 26 of the 100 identified positions.

The team recommended that the FDIC:

- Develop a corporate-wide, formal succession management program that targets key areas of vulnerability.

- Promote mid-career outside recruitment and interdivisional development opportunities involving meaningful work, lasting at least 1 year, and requiring accountability for real business results.
- Pursue leadership development as a critical component of succession management.
- Track and evaluate succession management program success rates and costs.
- Provide strong FDIC senior management commitment to the program.

The FDIC has developed strategies to address gaps in mission-critical and other key positions through a number of internal programs: Talent Review Program, a career development level through the Corporate Employee Program, the Honors Attorney Program, the Professional Learning Account Program, and the Mentoring Program.

- The Talent Review Program is a confidential and constructive forum for evaluating the executive leadership cadre in the areas of business results, key leadership competencies, demonstration of corporate values, and risk of loss due to retirement or separation from the Corporation. The purpose of the talent review is to assess the current executive leadership by identifying strengths and gaps and to develop specific strategies for succession planning.
- Corporate Executive Development Program is designed to identify high-performing, high-potential employees for development as future executive managers and provide the Corporation a mechanism to create a pipeline for executive positions.
- The Mentoring Program is designed to support a productive workplace by enhancing employees' job skills, empowering employees, and promoting good corporate citizenship. Participation in the program gives employees the opportunity to broaden skills, knowledge, and perspectives so that they are better prepared for career opportunities and challenges. Since 2000, on average, 180 employees have participated as mentors or mentees each year.

The FDIC has several internal and external programs that give employees the opportunity to develop and enhance leadership skills.

- The University College of Leadership Development sponsors required leadership and supervisory programs for team leaders, supervisors, and managers.
- The FDIC also has an internal job rotation program that enables employees to undertake rotational assignments in other operational areas of the Corporation.
- The Corporation's Diversity Web site offers opportunities for employees to participate in details with Expression of Interest postings. For example, employees at the CG-11 and CG-12 to apply for a 180-day detail to serve as a management analyst on the large bank training program development effort.
- The FDIC has an external job rotation program for executives that enables them to take an assignment in a public agency or a private sector company. The purpose of the program is to expose FDIC executives to the nation's leading corporations and organizations. It provides these executives with the opportunity to transfer their skills and talents to new situations, observe and engage in challenging programs and projects, and increase the FDIC's knowledge base by bringing enhanced skills, knowledge, and best practices back to the FDIC.
- The FDIC also gives employees at all levels the opportunity to participate in external leadership development programs.
- Professional Learning Account Program is an important component of the FDIC's succession planning efforts, related to developing employees. A PLA is a specified annual amount of money and/or hours that each employee manages in partnership with his/her supervisor for use towards the employee's learning goals. The PLA allows the employee to train within his/her current occupation, as well as in other areas related to the FDIC's mission and work, to develop skills and

knowledge in areas of interest to the employee and of value to the FDIC. All permanent, full-time, or part-time, term and temporary employees are eligible to receive PLA funds ranging from $1,500 to $2,500 and a maximum of 48 training hours per year. In order to participate in the PLA program, an employee is required to prepare an individual career development plan collaboratively with his/her supervisor to identify goals, developmental needs, and activities.

Example Process: Succession Planning

Phase 1 – Identifying and Prioritizing Leadership Pipeline Skills Gaps

Definition of Phase

The purpose of Phase I is to determine the capacity of the organization's leadership pipeline to meet the requirements for successful performance in the target position. Specifically, the purpose of this step is threefold:

1. Identify and analyze critical key and leadership positions across the organization in terms of required technical and leadership competencies;
2. Identify successor positions that can potentially serve in those positions; and
3. Evaluate the proficiency requirements of the successor positions against the technical and competency proficiency requirements of the leadership position and prioritize existing succession gaps.

Phase Inputs, Steps and Outputs

The graphic below summarizes the inputs, process steps and outputs associated with the identification and prioritization of critical skills gaps in the leadership pipeline:

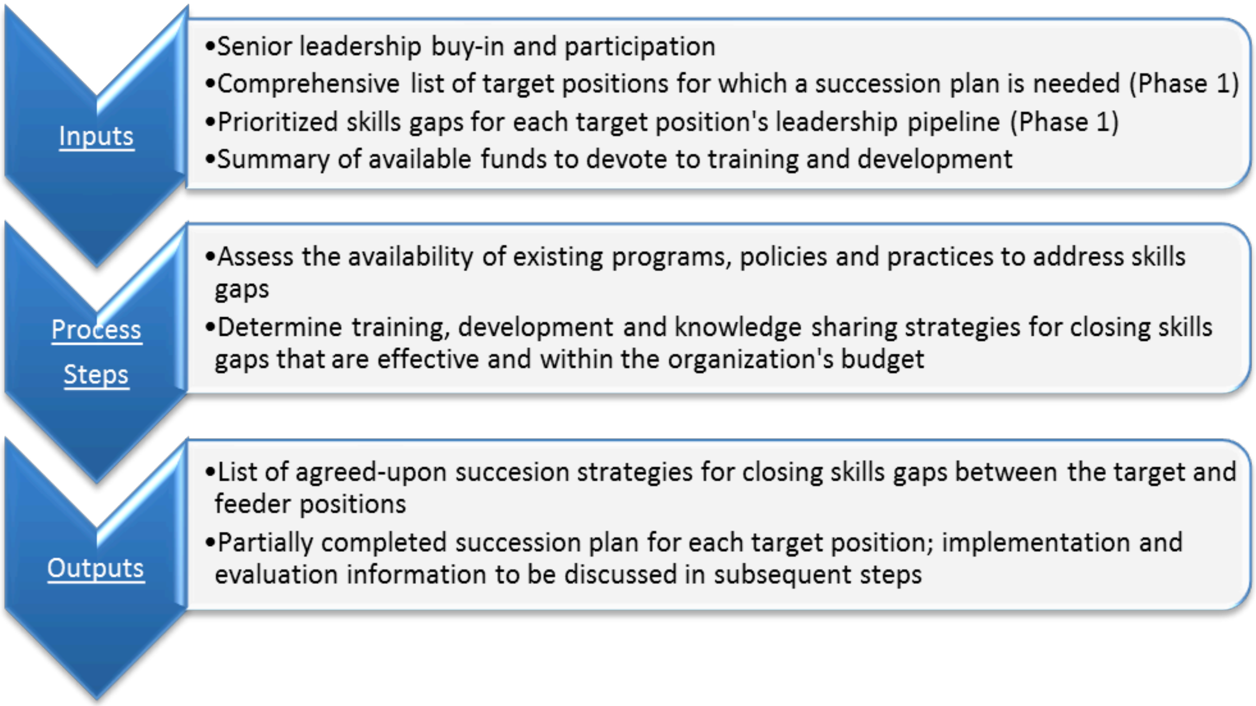
Phase 2 – Developing Tailored Strategies for Closing Skills Gaps

Definition of Phase

The purpose of Phase 2 of the succession planning model is to create tailored, practical and comprehensive training and development solutions to address critical skills gaps of the target position's leadership pipeline. These solutions should be based on the prioritized leadership pipeline skills gaps that emerged during Phase 1.

Inputs, Steps and Outputs

The graphic below summarizes the inputs, process steps and outputs associated with the development of succession plans for all target positions.



Key Actions Supporting Success

This section elaborates on the process steps in Phase 2 of the succession planning model. Additional resources are available in the appendices, where noted.

Step 1: Assess the availability of existing programs, policies and practices to address skills gaps

When seeking to identify strategies for closing succession skills gaps, begin by searching for existing resources that can be adapted by FRA to address leadership pipeline skills gaps. This ensures that valuable human capital and financial resources are reserved for developing unique succession planning strategies. Additionally, consider the degree to which internal policies and practices promote effective succession planning.

FRA does not currently have a structured succession program. Budget reductions over the past few years have severely limited funds for travel and training. Program offices receive small training budgets but there is no tracking system in place to evaluate the effectiveness of those expenditure.

Training for Rail Safety Inspectors and Specialists seems well structured. The Railroad Safety Technical Training Standards Division has five trainers, one for each of the five rail safety disciplines. The office provides literature and training materials to the field offices, conducts three days of face-to-face training each year using a blended approach of classroom work, simulations, and online training. The training focuses on how to apply current regulations during inspections.

Neither of these initiatives is designed to meet future needs.

Step 2: Determine training, development and knowledge management strategies for closing skills gaps that are effective and within the organization's budget

After confirming that action is required to close leadership pipeline skills gaps, the next step in Phase 2 is to identify specific training, development and knowledge management strategies for addressing these gaps. The key actions associated with this step are highlighted below, along with a range of available resources for closing skills gaps and effective knowledge management practices.

- Decide which developmental strategies are appropriate for rising leaders (these strategies are outlined in the "Identifying Appropriate Resources for Closing Skills Gaps" section below).
- Clarify how developmental opportunities will be communicated from leadership to the feeder positions.
- Where needed, recognize hiring flexibilities and incentives (e.g., relocation bonuses, retention bonuses, work-life balance factors including telework and flexible schedules) that can be used during the recruitment process to attract future leaders.
- Where needed, determine where the organization should focus external recruitment efforts.
- Ensure the organization has a robust individual development planning (IDP) process that is supported by senior leadership.

Identifying Appropriate Strategies for Closing Skills Gaps

A variety of strategies exist for addressing leadership pipeline skills gaps; these strategies are listed below. For each strategy, a description is presented, and examples of how the strategy can be used to support the succession planning process are provided.

Tool	Description
Formal Training Courses	Formal training courses offer professional guidance for developing the skills required to close critical leadership pipeline gaps.

How training can be used to support succession planning:

Formal training courses can be used to develop both technical and leadership skills with equal effectiveness. Due to budget and travel restrictions, FRA has devoted limited resources to employee development over the past 3 years. There appears to be a need for a broad range of supervisory skills related to performance discussions, communicating across organizational silos, and IT skills at the non-supervisory employee level in the field.

Tool	Description
Planned Job Assignments coordinated through Individual Development Planning	Planned job assignments, facilitated through Individual Development Plans (IDPs), involve the identification of a future leader's career goals and the pairing of job assignments to help facilitate the achievement of these goals.

How individual development planning can be used to support succession planning:

In the context of succession planning, individual development planning can (1) encourage communication between the executive and employees with leadership potential regarding developmental opportunities, (2) demonstrate an organization's commitment to developing its future leaders and (3) increase the transparency of what is required for successful performance at the next level. Examples of planned job assignments that can be coordinated through the IDP process include:

- *Detail assignments* – Employee temporarily moves into an existing position or through a series of existing positions; useful for assisting an employee in gaining a systems perspective.
- *Shadowing assignments* – Employee directly observes a target position for a period of time to better understand the responsibilities of the position.
- *Learning Groups* – A collection of employees convene to discuss a strategic topic or challenge. Employees can be convened from one office or across all offices.

> ***Tip: Form Learning Groups***
>
> *A cross-office learning group is an effective way to simultaneously develop future leaders, increase collaboration between offices, and generate discussion on critical strategic organizational issues. Senior employees from each office can hold multiple meetings to discuss a priority strategic issue facing the organization. Solutions to the strategic issue can then be presented by the members of the learning group to leadership and other stakeholders for discussion.*

Tool	Description
Feedback Assignments	Feedback assignments involve the active solicitation of performance feedback regarding a future leader's performance from his or her peers.

How feedback assignments can be used to support succession planning:

The most effective feedback assignment is a 360 leadership assessment, which involves the collection of feedback from all employees that the future leader interacts with, including peers, supervisors and subordinates. When coupled with implementation plans or executive coaching engagements, feedback assignments promote effective succession planning by identifying the tailored development needs of future leaders in a constructive manner and pairing these needs with developmental opportunities.

Feedback assignments are typically geared towards developing leadership skills. To that end, OPM offers a leadership 360 assessment tool, based on the Executive Core Qualifications, that can be found on OPM's website. This tool also allows the developmental needs of the future leaders to be benchmarked against other Federal organizations.

Though 360 assessments can be administered at any point throughout the fiscal year, to maximize their utility, these assessments should be administered early in the fiscal year so that results can be incorporated into IDPs and performance plans. The most effective 360 assessments include a coach to review the results with the employee and assist the individual to develop an action plan to address any identified competency gaps.

Tool	Description
Mentoring	Mentoring is a formal pairing between an employee who has expressed an interest in developing new skills or opportunities in a particular area, and a more experienced internal employee (mentor) who has expert knowledge or experience in the employee's area of interest.

How mentoring can be used to support succession planning:

Mentoring is a structured process that includes a formal pairing of a mentor with an employee based on developmental need and expertise; the establishment of formal objectives for the relationship; program training sessions; and a collaborative and interactive mentoring relationship.

Mentoring is a versatile strategy that can be used to address the following:

- Career Development: Assist an employee in developing a specific technical or leadership skill.
- Exposure to Executives: Provide a diverse group of employees with the opportunity to form supportive relationships with executives.
- Evolving Job Responsibilities: Assist employees with new or expanded job responsibilities.

Tool	Description
Executive Coaching	Similar to mentoring, executive coaching involves the pairing of a future leader with a subject matter expert to enhance the future leader's leadership skills and expand his or her advancement opportunities. However, rather than pair a future leader with an internal employee, an employee is paired with an executive coach with expertise in the developmental needs of the future leader.

How executive coaching can be used to support succession planning:

In support of succession planning, an executive coach can be paired with a future leader, following the identification of his or her skills gaps, to help facilitate their development. It is critical that an executive coaching engagement not be seen as remedial, but rather, as an investment in an employee's advancement. Executive coaches are typically most appropriate for assisting the executives develop strong leadership skills.

Phase 3 – Ensuring Accountability for the Selected Strategies

Definition of Phase

The purpose of Phase 3 of the succession planning model is twofold:

1. For each target position, develop a comprehensive implementation plan that summarizes how succession strategies will be executed to close related skills gaps; and
2. Generate buy-in for succession strategies from executives.

Together with Phase 4, the actions performed in support of this phase ensure that FRA creates an implementation and accountability system that (1) is in line with OPM recommendations, and (2) ensures the succession solutions are properly executed. OPM requires that an implementation and accountability system:

- Is formal and clearly documented;
- Is fully supported by top management;
- Ensures managers are held accountable for their human capital decisions and programs;
- Evaluates human capital results in relation to mission, goals, objectives and programs; and
- Evaluates specific human capital programs (e.g., succession management).

Inputs, Steps and Outputs

The graphic below summarizes the inputs, process steps and outputs associated with the development of succession plans for all target positions.

Key Actions Supporting Process

This section elaborates on the key considerations that should be taken into account when engaging in the development of an implementation plan.

Step 1: Collaborate with stakeholders to develop a detailed implementation plan that summarizes the action items, required resources, timelines and responsible parties for executing succession strategies.

Creating an implementation plan provides the opportunity to thoroughly consider the level of effort; responsible parties; timelines; and costs associated with the implementation of a succession strategy. Effective implementation planning also involves anticipating potential risks to the successful implementation of the succession strategies and proactively addressing these risks during the planning process. Additional considerations for developing an implementation plan include:

- Develop the major action steps and supporting financial resources that are needed to effectively implement the succession strategy;

- Identify the roles and responsibilities of all that must participate in the day-to-day implementation of the strategies, as well as the strategic oversight, to ensure success;
- Determine how the organization will link succession management to various HR processes, including performance management, individual development planning, recognition and awards and recruitment;
- Determine how the organization will ensure ongoing and adequate funding for leadership development to the degree possible; and
- Determine the key communication messages that will be given to the feeder positions.

The following page contains a template that can be used in support of implementation planning. The top portion of the table has been annotated to explain the purpose of each section; while the bottom portion contains an example succession strategy. One implementation plan should be created for each feeder position in the leadership pipeline that is tailored to the proficiency gaps of that feeder position.

Succession Planning Implementation Plan	
Target Position: Identifies the target position(s)	**Date**:
Critical Skills Gap(s): Lists the skills gaps (i.e., leadership and technical skills gaps) that emerged between the target position and one of the feeder positions during Phase 1 of the succession planning approach.	
Relevant Succession Strategies: Lists the strategies for closing the identified skills gaps (e.g., formal training courses, rotational assignment, etc.).	
Measures of Success: Summarizes the measures that will be used to track the progress of the succession strategies towards their stated goals (described in Phase 4).	
Accountable Parties: Lists all team members that will play a role in the implementation process. **Lead:** **Team Members:**	

Action Steps

Succession Strategy	Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/ Output	Target Completion Dates	Responsible Party or Parties	Budget, Resources and Approvals Needed
Attend formal training program on strategic thinking	Identify 2-3 potential strategic thinking training programs	List of potential training options		Target position to conduct research	N/A
	Review potential training programs and attend selected program	Agreed-upon course; course attendance		Obtain approval; target position attends training	$1,000 - $3,000
	Prepare formal write-up of lessons learned and post on community of practice	Summary of lessons learned	One week following the completion of training	Target position	N/A

To complement the implementation plan, it is recommended that the actions assigned to each party be summarized once the implementation plan for a target position has been completed. The template below can be used to complete this summary.

Responsible Party	Actions to be Taken	Action Completed
		□Yes □No
		□Yes □No
		□Yes □No
		□Yes □No
		□Yes □No
		□Yes □No
		□Yes □No
		□Yes □No
		□Yes □No

Ensuring Effective Implementation: Managing Roles and Responsibilities
Managing the implementation of succession plans is not a one-person job. A participatory approach to succession management should be taken that involves contributions from the full range of stakeholders needed to lead and manage the development and implementation of the succession management plans, as well as the resources and authorities needed to perform their roles. These stakeholders are described below.

Role	Responsibility	Who
Sponsor: An individual or a group that acts as a champion and provides overall vision, direction, and resource support in developing and implementing the plan.	Acts as a champion and provides leadership for others' efforts in making the plan happen; assists in the communication of the planning and implementation process.	Typically, an individual or group of leaders from the executive level.
Front Line: A high-level decision-making body that initiates and oversees the development and execution of the plan.	Co-develops the implementation plan, ensures the vision is incorporated and communicated, and orients the organization to the effort. Additionally, manages the performance feedback and communication process.	A cross-section of executives possessing the authority, expertise, credibility, and leadership skills to communicate and monitor the implementation plan to feeder positions.
Transition Monitoring Team: A group that supports the implementation by answering questions related to the succession strategies.	Serves as the organization's resource for questions related to the succession strategies; assesses how people are responding to the strategies.	**Recommended: HR Staff**

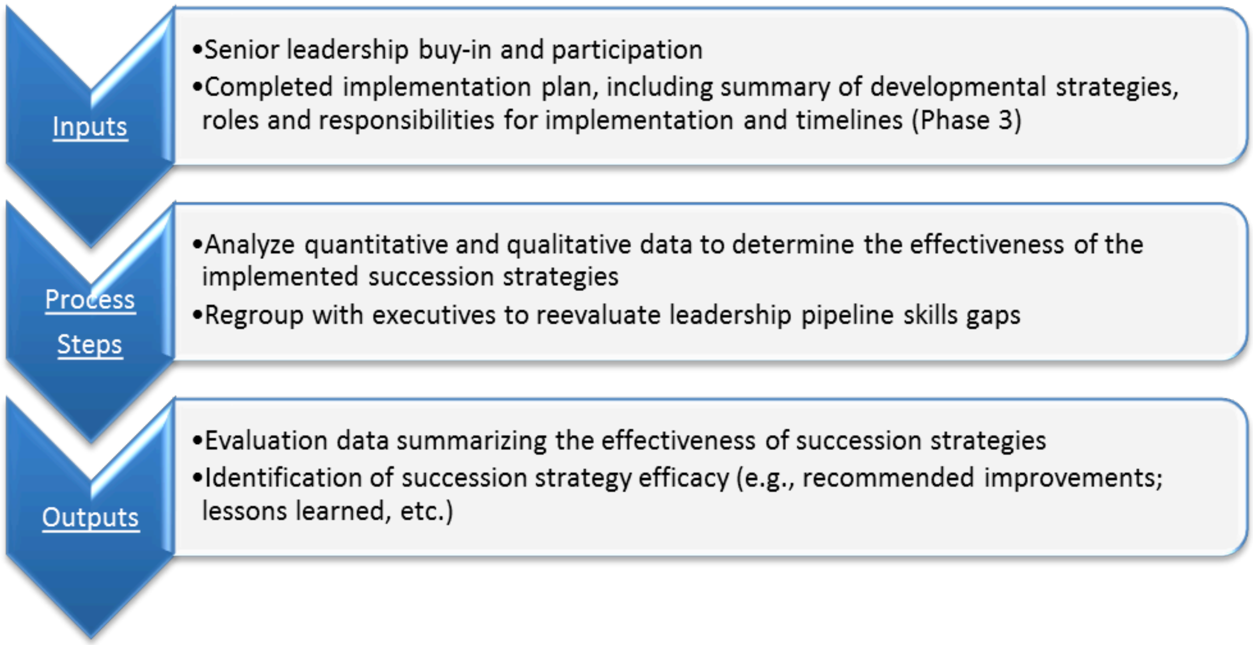
Phase 4 – Evaluating The Effectiveness of Gap Closing Strategies

Definition of Phase

The purpose of the fourth and final phase of the succession planning model is to (1) evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented succession strategies in closing the identified skills gaps and (2) make adjustments to the implementation plans based on the evaluation data, as needed.

Inputs, Steps, and Output

The graphic below summarizes the inputs, process steps and outputs associated with the development of an implementation plan.



Key Actions Supporting Process

This section elaborates on the key considerations that should be taken into account when engaging in the process step associated with Phase 4.

Step 1: Analyze quantitative and qualitative data to determine the effectiveness of the implemented succession strategies

Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data will allow FRA to (1) identify the effectiveness of the succession strategy in achieving its stated purpose, and (2) determine required improvements to succession strategies for current and future offerings, including changes in the stated purpose, communication strategies or evaluation procedures of a succession strategy. While performing this step, FRA should:

- Ensure the appropriate mechanisms (e.g., employee surveys, training evaluations, interviews, etc.) are in place to collect the data;
- Periodically identify early indicators of issues in the data where follow up action is required;
- Conduct a formal analysis of the data related to each succession strategy to identify key themes and areas for improvement; and
- Identify and document key lessons learned from each evaluation exercise for use in future succession management initiatives.

The table below presents a list of potential measures for evaluating the effectiveness of the succession strategies discussed in Phase 2 of this report. In addition to these measures, interviews and focus groups should be conducted with all employees that participated in the initiative to debrief on its effectiveness. Questions on the Employee Viewpoint Survey regarding leadership development opportunities can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership development opportunities.

Formal Training Courses
➢ Number of training courses completed per employee ➢ Pre- and post-training self-assessment of an employee’s proficiency against the training learning objectives ➢ Employee satisfaction with the training structure, instructor, facilities and content, as reported on a five point scale ➢ Improvement of on-the-job performance in related areas, as reported by the employee and supervisor
Planned Job Assignments (Individual Development Planning) and Feedback Assignments
➢ Percentage of employees in the leadership pipeline who are satisfied with learning and growth opportunities ➢ Percentage of planned development opportunities that are accomplished ➢ Percentage of employees for which an IDP has been completed ➢ Assessment of leadership pipeline skills gaps compared to baseline data
Mentoring and Executive Coaching
➢ Employee satisfaction with the structure and content of the coaching/mentor relationship, as reported on a one to five point scale ➢ Percentage of employees that desire to continue their coaching/mentor relationship

Use the checklist below to determine whether the succession strategies meet compliance requirements.
Reference: 5 CFR 412

Compliance Requirement (Reference in Parentheses)	Compliance (Yes/No)
Agency conducts succession planning for supervisory, managerial and executive positions (412.102(b)(2)).	□Yes □No
Agency has clear policy for leadership development (412.103).	□Yes □No
Agency has a minimum training requirement for supervisors and managers (412.103).	□Yes □No
Selections are fair, open and comply with laws, rules and regulations (412.103(b)).	□Yes □No
New supervisors receive supervisory training (412.103(c)(1)).	□Yes □No
Supervisors receive periodic refresher training to enhance leadership skills (412.103(c)(2)).	□Yes □No

Agency has an executive candidate development program and program has been approved by OPM (412.104).	□Yes □No
Agency leadership recruitment and development activities are tied to the executive core qualifications (412.104(e)(1)).	□Yes □No
Records review and interviews indicate efforts to create and develop a diverse SES applicant pool (412.104(b)).	□Yes □No
Agency provides continuing learning experiences throughout an employee's career, such as details, mentoring, coaching, learning groups, and projects. These experiences should provide broad knowledge and practical experience linked to OPM's Federal leadership competencies, as well as agency-identified, mission-related competencies, and should be consistent with the agency's succession management plan (412.201).	□Yes □No
Agency establishes a program or programs for the continuing development of its senior executives. Such agency programs must include preparation, implementation, and regular updating of an Executive Development Plan (EDP) for each senior executive (412.401).	□Yes □No

The table below contains specific activities that can be used when evaluating the success of FRA's succession planning system. To help determine whether FRA's succession management initiative is fulfilling these requirements, indicate whether each of the associated activities and products has been achieved.

Key Activities: Identifying Targets & Analyzing Talent Pool	Product/ Output	Achieved?	NOTES (if achieved, evidence to support it; if not achieved, strategies to correct it)
1. Set time-bound succession management targets (i.e., numbers of leaders needed for critical leadership roles with required competencies).	Succession Targets Description	□Yes □No	
2. Complete bench strength analysis describing the readiness gap (i.e., the difference between the succession targets and the numbers of leaders and potential leaders at various levels and within subgroups who have critical competencies).	Bench Strength/ Readiness Gap Analyses	□Yes □No	
3. Identify potential sources of talent for meeting targets (including identification of high performers and/or those with high potential among the current workforce, as well as external sources of talent).	Talent Source Description	□Yes □No	
4. The agency has demonstrated its	Dedicated	□Yes	

Key Activities: Identifying Targets & Analyzing Talent Pool	Product/ Output	Achieved?	NOTES (if achieved, evidence to support it; if not achieved, strategies to correct it)
commitment to leadership development through dedication of resources to develop current and future leaders that address the needs of the leaders.	Resources to Leadership Development	□No	
5. Training and development needs are identified in Individual Development Plans by obtaining input from multiple sources (e.g., customers, peers, subordinates and supervisors). IDPs are monitored and include training and experiential development.	Leadership training needs captured in IDPs	□Yes □No	
6. The agency conducts regular assessments of leadership policies and performance of employees in its leadership pipeline to ensure that succession planning goals are being met. The analysis is documented and used by senior management to make decisions about leadership development issues and resource allocation.	Regular Evaluations of Leadership Development	□Yes □No	
7. Employee survey results, including the Employee Viewpoint Survey, indicate that employees believe that leadership development receives appropriate emphasis and dedicated resources and results in effective leaders who are a source of motivation.	Favorable Employee Viewpoint Survey results related to leadership development	□Yes □No	

Step 2: Regroup with executives to reevaluate leadership pipeline skills gaps

Succession planning is a cyclical process. Therefore, periodic check-in meetings should be conducted with senior executives to understand their satisfaction with the succession strategies – any lingering succession gaps should be used to inform future iterations of the planning process.

Leadership Development

A carefully considered Leadership Development Program (LDP) is a key component of organizational success, as organizations look to successfully execute succession management and grow the pipeline of future leaders. The table below outlines success factors and implementation recommendations for consideration in designing such a program.

Success Factors	Recommendations for Implementation
LINK TO THE BUSINESS	
Tie the program to achievement of Strategic Plan	Reference strategic plan in program documents and communication
COMMUNICATION	
Consistent, regular messaging to create awareness	Develop a communication plan for the LDP that informs people about the importance of leadership development Once the LDP is built, continue to communicate about the program at appropriate intervals Ensure LDP materials and communications are easily accessible
EXECUTIVE SPONSORSHIP	
Identify an influential champion	Select a champion to shape, promote, and support the LDP through its lifespan
Involve leaders in program development and delivery	Continually solicit feedback from leadership regarding LDP content Train leaders on how to teach LDP content Encourage leaders to serve as instructors in selected leadership courses
Build the program around an agreed-upon definition of leadership	Conduct interviews and working groups with leaders and other stakeholders to develop a shared definition of leadership for the Agency
PROGRAM DEFINITION	
Clearly define the target audience	Identify focal career level(s) and target program appropriately
Clearly define the leadership competencies	Utilize currently available leadership competency models to develop an Agency-specific model Conduct focus groups to help define the leadership competencies and build upon above mentioned competency models
PROGRAM STRUCTURE	
Incorporate multiple elements	Consider incorporating a variety of program elements such as 360˚ leadership assessment, leadership coaching, mentoring,

Success Factors	Recommendations for Implementation
	on-the-job training, classroom learning, action learning, developmental assignments, rotations, and shadowing
Treat leadership development as a process rather than a series of events	Design the program so that learning opportunities are planned for and build on each other throughout the course of participation Clearly illustrate linkages and interdependencies of all program elements
Allow cohorts to go through the program together	Rotate cohorts of individuals through the program to encourage networking, peer mentoring, and group learning
ASSESSMENT	
Measure the program's success	Identify methods to track the impact of the program on individuals and the organization Success measures might include retention rates, job satisfaction (through Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey), Shared Supervisory Competency data
Enable continuous improvements	Designate checkpoints for data and feedback collection Make program adjustments as needed
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT	
Align the program with organizational culture	Culture should be considered when developing the program (e.g. pace of participation and impact on workload, classroom-based vs. computer-based learning, length of time to complete the program, program elements to include)
Clearly link participation to individual development and performance management	Participation in program should be linked to individual development process Measure impact on performance, growth and development as a result of participation in the leadership program
Dedicate program support to the LDP	Assign a program coordinator to ensure that the LDP is communicated and implemented effectively

OPM Leadership Development Matrix:

OPM developed the following Leadership Development Matrix is part of OPM's ***Effective Learning Interventions for Developing ECQs*** report. The Matrix lists a range of leadership development activities for each of the twenty-two (22) core competencies and seven (7) fundamental competencies within the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs).

Listed in the Matrix are five classes of leader and leadership development interventions:

- *Instructor-led* (e.g., degree programs, courses, seminars, workshops, case presentations and discussions, distance learning, passive computer-based instruction)
- *Experiential activities* (e.g., on-the-job training, action learning, service learning, team projects, simulations and games, scenario planning)
- *Developmental relationships* (e.g., coaching, mentoring, networking, supervisor support, peer-to-peer learning partners, shadowing)
- *Assessments and feedback* (e.g., self-assessments, assessment tools, developmental assessment centers; multisource and 360-degree feedback)
- *Self-development* (e.g. individual development plans, self-guided learning activities)

OPM's research suggests that the most effective leadership development programs will likely be those that combine and integrate leader learning activities from one or more of these classes. The following matrix summarizes recommended developmental activities for each ECQ competency.

ECQ Competency	***Recommended Leadership Development Activities***
ECQ 1: Leading Change: *Creativity and Innovation*	• Engage in *action learning* projects with leaders from different functional areas within the organization. Projects should focus on development of new ideas, policies, and other activities that require creative and innovative thinking. *Action learning* projects should include *feedback* mechanisms, and *mentoring*. • Engage in a *developmental assignment* that entails such activities as brainstorming and refining new policies, leading a policy launch effort, assessing implications of new technologies on organizational processes, or turning around a failing policy or process. Such assignments should be paired with *feedback mechanisms* and *mentoring*.
ECQ 1: Leading Change: *External Awareness*	• Engage in *scenario planning* exercises where generating future scenarios for the organization requires consideration of key stakeholders, numerous external trends (political, economic, societal, technological, legal, environmental, and industry), and the uncertainties of the future. • Utilize a *mentor* who can serve as a source of additional information regarding the industry and its external strategic environment. • Work on a *developmental assignment* or *job rotation* outside the organization, or one that requires the leader to work with others from different organizations to set up a new policy or strategic direction

ECQ Competency	*Recommended Leadership Development Activities*
ECQ 1: Leading Change: *Flexibility*	• Engage in *job rotations* where the leader experiences different work environments and learns new perspectives. • Engage in multiple *developmental assignments* that differ significantly from one another in the nature of the challenges they present to the leader. Each assignment should require the leader to work with new and different frames of reference. • Work with leadership and peer *coaches* who promote considerably different ways and perspectives for understanding work problems. • Participate in leader development *workshops* that utilize complex work *simulations* featuring *active learning*, significant variety in experienced problems, and structured *feedback* and guidance.
ECQ 1: Leading Change: *Resilience*	• **Engage in *structured training programs* that emphasize stress management tools and stressor-coping mechanisms.** • **Work with a *coach* to identify and develop solutions to stress inducing work problems. Such *coaching* should be paired with *multi-source feedback.***
ECQ 1: Leading Change: *Strategic Thinking*	• Engage in *developmental assignments* that involve setting new directions, working on strategic formulation projects, and leading change. • Participate in a variety of strategically oriented *experiential* exercises, including (a) *active learning* projects that have a strategic focus; (b) group dialogue of strategic *case discussions*, and (c) strategic business *games* and *simulations*. • Attend *courses* and *workshops* that provide models of strategic thinking, and pair these models with *experiential* exercises. • Utilize a *mentor* who can guide the leader's cognitive development of more strategic frames of reference.
ECQ 1: Leading Change: *Vision*	• Engage in *developmental assignments* that entail long term planning and development of new directions for the organization. • Participate in team-based *workshops* comprised of *action learning* projects that create cross-functional exposure and include exercises aimed at future trends of the organization. • Engage in *scenario planning* with team members to create a shared vision towards the future.

ECQ Competency	*Recommended Leadership Development Activities*
ECQ 2: Leading People: *Conflict Management*	• Engage in *developmental assignments* that entail working in situations likely to be significantly conflict-laden (e.g., dealing with a problem employee, serving as a negotiator or mediator, working with people from different cultures, and leading groups with diverse members). • Participate in and/or lead an *action learning* project with teams composed of members from different functional areas and with different perspectives • Work with a leadership *coach* that helps identify leadership problem areas that can contribute to poor conflict management. Construct a leader development plan to address these areas. *Coaching* should be combined with conflict management *workshops*, and *development/ action learning* assignments. • Attend *workshops* that provide insight into conflict management styles and conflict resolution strategies. Such *workshops* should include not only lectures, but also discussions around conflict management case studies and role-play exercises.
ECQ 2: Leading People: *Leveraging Diversity*	• Engage in *developmental assignments* that entail working with groups containing members from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Such assignments should be paired with *feedback* providers. • Engage in *service learning* assignments paired with feedback and coaching. • Participate in extended *workshops* that utilize *behavioral modeling*, role plays, *cultural assimilators*, and reflective discussions to foster greater appreciation for diversity. Such course work should be paired with *mentoring* and *action learning projects*.
ECQ 2: Leading People: *Developing Others*	• Participate in a *coaching* relationship. The coaching should focus specifically on skills in providing *feedback* and opportunities to subordinates, active listening techniques, and asking open-ended questions. • Engage in a *mentoring* assignment -- such assignments should be paired with peer and leadership *coaching*. • Attend *workshops* that focus on active listening, providing *feedback*, and helping subordinates construct individual development plans. • Engage in a formal *self-development* intervention that requires diagnosis of self-learning needs, construction of a self-learning curriculum, and evaluation of learning gains. Practice with such an intervention can foster skills that generalize to developing others. • Solicit *multisource feedback* from supervisors, peers, and subordinates, focusing on skills in developing others, including active listening, providing feedback, and assigning developmental activities. Such *feedback* should be paired with *coaching*.

ECQ Competency	*Recommended Leadership Development Activities*
ECQ 2:Leading People: *Team Building*	• Lead a team-based *action learning* project. The *action-learning* project should also include *feedback* mechanisms, and *mentoring*. • Participate in *coaching* with *multi-source feedback*. These *coaching* exercises should focus on team management strategies such as the use of team charters and team process facilitation that motivates team members and increases team commitment. Such *coaching* should also be paired with *multi-source feedback* to increase the self-awareness of the team building skills that need improving. • Engage as a team lead in *challenge exercises*, adventure learning exercises, and team-based *simulations*. *Feedback* should be included to ensure that leaders grasp the purpose of these exercises and that their team's sense of cohesion will continue when they return to the organization.
ECQ 3: Results Driven: *Accountability*	• Establish a *coaching* relationship that emphasizes the importance of concrete goal establishment and responsibility for goal completion. Such *coaching* can also focus on delegation as well as time and project management skills. *Coaching* should include *multisource feedback* that focuses on these skills. • Establish peer *coaching* relationships to foster a climate of shared responsibility and accountability. Peer *coaches* create a higher level of self-awareness and reflection as well as a greater awareness of others' responsibilities and needs. • Take *workshops* and *courses* on time/project management skills, and performance management strategies. These *workshops* should include *role-play* exercises that utilize *scenarios* displaying low accountability by peers and subordinates.
ECQ 3: Results Driven: *Customer Service*	• Engage in an *action learning* project that focuses on improving internal and external customer service systems and processes. This project should be paired with *self -reflection* or *personal growth programs* to foster greater self-awareness • Take part in a *coaching* program that centers on growing self-awareness and on improving recognition of client needs and balancing those with the leader's own needs and constraints. This *coaching* should include guidance on how to set attainable goals towards the final product and on developing the leader's planning techniques • Take an interpersonal skills workshop that includes *role-playing* exercises reflecting both typical and non-typical internal customer service situations.

ECQ Competency	*Recommended Leadership Development Activities*
ECQ 3: Results Driven: *Decisiveness*	• Participate in *workshops* and *courses* that offer *simulation-based* training exercises requiring multiple complex decisions. Such exercises need to reflect novel and ill-defined situations leaders are likely to encounter on the job. Offer opportunities to work through appropriate solutions. Opportunities should be interactive in nature and accompanied by *feedback* and guidance. • Engage in an *action learning* project that focuses on solving multiple problems within a constrained time period. This will serve to foster decision making under time pressure and allow for increased comfort with making such decisions when a comprehensive evaluation of the problem scenario is not feasible. These projects can be paired with *coaching* and job assignments to reinforce learning gains. • Take on a *developmental assignment* that requires a solution to an ill-defined problem or one that has been outstanding in the organization for some time. Such assignments should be paired with *feedback* from supervisors, mentors, coaches, and/or other learning partners.
ECQ 3: Results Driven: *Entrepreneurship*	• Participate in *workshops* or *courses* that focus on entrepreneurship. The requirements of the class or workshop should include the leader's completion of a formal business plan for a new venture and its presentation to others. This program should be paired with catalytic *coaching*, where coaches/instructors encourage leaders to engage in more entrepreneurial thinking. • Engage in an *action learning* project that includes the exploration of new ventures and opportunities. Such projects should be paired with *coaching* and *mentoring*. • Engage in a *developmental assignment* that entails such activities as exploring, designing, and developing new ventures (e.g., policy, service-related tools and products). Such assignments should also be coupled with *coaching*, or *mentoring* for expert support and advice.
ECQ 3: Results Driven: *Problem Solving*	• Engage in problem solving experiences with co-workers. The intent is to help each other better understand problem approaches and solutions. • Participate in a *workshop* where external *case studies* are presented and discussed. These *case studies* should provide examples of the kinds of problems a leader is expected to confront in their leadership environment. • Participate in a *simulation* exercise where leaders have the opportunity to work through realistic problem scenarios. • Engage in an *action learning* project that entails working on existing problems within the sponsoring organization. Such projects should be paired with *feedback* mechanisms and *coaching* opportunities. • Engage in *developmental assignments* that entail opportunities to work on problems that are ill defined or reoccurring within the organization. Such assignments should be paired with *feedback* mechanisms and *coaching* opportunities.

ECQ Competency	*Recommended Leadership Development Activities*
ECQ 3: Results Driven: ***Technical Credibility***	• Take *formal courses* or *workshops* on specific topics and areas where there is a need to develop technical competence. Such *courses* should be followed by job assignments that allow acquired skills to be practiced. • Develop a *mentoring* relationship with a senior (i.e., more technically expert) employee in the organization. The *mentor* should encourage open communication and be available to answer technical questions. • Engage in *job rotations* that entail work tasks utilizing targeted technical skills.
ECQ 4: Business Acumen: • ***Financial Management*** • ***Human Capital Management*** • ***Technology Management***	• Take *formal courses* or *workshops* on specific topics and areas where there is a need to develop business acumen. Such *courses* should be followed by job assignments that allow acquired skills to be practiced. • Develop a *mentoring* relationship with a senior (i.e., more technically expert) employee in your organization. The *mentor* should encourage open communication and be available to answer technical questions. • Engage in *job rotations* that entail work tasks utilizing targeted financial management, human capital management, or technology management skills.
ECQ 5: Building Coalitions: ***Partnering***	• Engage in *action learning* projects with a team of leaders from different functional and organizational areas. The project should involve extensive collaboration. • Engage in job assignments that entail working on cross-functional and cross boundary teams. • Develop a *mentoring* relationship with a more established and senior leader in the organization. The *mentor* should provide access to a wider professional network, and especially to "brokers" who can link to other professional networks. The organization should help match *mentors* to the appropriate mentees. • Join and participate in professional societies and organizations that foster *networking* opportunities among its members.
ECQ 5: Building Coalitions: ***Political Savvy***	• Take a *workshop* on organizational political dynamics that includes *case studies* of successful political climate navigation. The *course* should involve interactive and *role-play* exercises and *simulations* in which leaders need to evaluate political acceptance of decisions in several decision contexts. • Attend a *workshop* or forum of senior employees who share their experiences working within the organization. The sessions should provide opportunities for interaction and engagement between speakers and attendees. • Develop a *mentoring* relationship with a more senior employee in the organization, who can provide insight into organizational political dynamics. • Engage in *developmental assignments* that require navigation of different organizational areas and levels of management to reach successful solutions. Such assignments should be paired with *mentoring* and/or *coaching*.

ECQ Competency	*Recommended Leadership Development Activities*
ECQ 5: Building Coalitions: ***Influencing/ Negotiating***	• Engage in *simulations* in which leaders are required to influence someone's opinion or negotiate a position. This *simulation* should be paired with *feedback* that evaluates the leader's performance and provides recommendations for improved strategies. • Engage in a *role-play* activity in which influencing opinions or negotiation is a key component. This exercise should be paired with instructive *feedback* and facilitation. • Take a *workshop* that presents case studies of negotiation situations and explains the strategies involved. An important component of this session should be a direct comparison between different cases that highlights underlying principles of influencing and negotiation. • Engage in *developmental assignments* in which leaders must influence peers working on the same project or from whom they need to engender support. Ideally this exercise should be paired with *coaching* to help leaders uncover the strategies needed to be successful.
Fundamental competency: ***Interpersonal Skills***	• Take *workshops* that include *behavior modeling* or *role-play* exercises. *Modeling* exercises should target specific interpersonal skills with modeled skill displays and sustained practice with *feedback*. *Role plays* should be paired with *feedback* by trained facilitators. *Workshops* should be with *coaching* to extend the lessons learned to your actual behavior on the job. • Complete *multisource* or 360-degree assessments that evaluate interpersonal skills. Work with a *coach* to develop a learning plan to address identified gaps.
Fundamental competency: ***Oral Communication***	• Attend a *workshop* that covers techniques and strategies for effective communication. This introduction should be paired with interactive activities such as *behavior modeling* or leadership *simulations* that allow leaders to put the content of the workshop into action • Take on a *developmental assignment* that offers the opportunity to present to or communicate with areas of the organization with whom the leader normally does not interact. • Enter a *coaching* relationship in which oral communication abilities are the focal point of development. This relationship should be anchored in a skills audit and assessment or in *multisource feedback* results as the foundation from which the development plan is created.
Fundamental competency: ***Written Communication***	• Participate in a writing *workshop*, or a course on written communication skills. This *workshop* should be interactive in nature and allow for group discussion as well as direct instructor feedback on participant writing samples • Make use of learning partners and peer *coaches* to solicit *feedback* on written communications.

ECQ Competency	*Recommended Leadership Development Activities*
Fundamental competency: ***Integrity/Honesty***	• Develop a *mentor* relationship with a senior employee early on in the leader's career to serve as a *role model* for ethical conduct. This *mentoring* should be paired with a formalized organizational 'code of ethics' that clearly reinforces a climate of integrity. • Attend a *workshop* that provides heuristic decision-making tools for leaders to rely on in potentially challenging ethical situations on the job. These decision-making tools will help guide appropriate action in times of uncertainty. • Take a *course* or *workshop* that includes *case studies* involving poor ethical conduct. The discussion should emphasize what the ethical failures are, potential causes for the behavior, and recommendations for what should have been done in that situation • Engage in a *service learning* project with an organization to enhance contact with and understanding of the community in which the organization exists.
Fundamental competency: ***Continual Learning***	• Engage in *self-development* skills training. This training should be two-fold—identifying skills that should be developed and discussing how to effectively set goals to development these skills. This identification can be completed through *multi-source feedback*. Along with the evaluation of the leader's skills, there should be a formative evaluation so the leader understands why these activities are effective. Organizational support is also important to encourage these self-developmental activities. • Participate in a *coaching* relationship that can facilitate *self-development* efforts. *Multi-source feedback* from supervisors, peers, and subordinates can be used as part of *coaching* to identify self-learning objectives.
Fundamental competency: ***Public Service Motivation***	• Engage in *service learning* activities, where leaders apply skills learned in the classroom to actual problems in the community. • Engage in *behavioral modeling* paired with *mentoring*. The *behavioral modeling* should consist of actively portraying public service values of the organization. Leaders should use *mentors* as support and as experts who embody and model organizational values.

Leading Practice: Leadership Development Program VA Medical Center, Milwaukee WI

For the past thirteen years, the VA Medical Center in Milwaukee, WI, has had a leadership development program that includes a number of best practices. The program includes a 6 - 8 hour session each month over 10 months. The 24 participants are identified through a competitive process that includes recommendations by supervisors and a rigorous performance based interview process. Initially, the participants ranged in grade from GS-6 through GS-11 although recently the participants have generally been at the GS-9 through 12 levels. There are 6 coaches (carefully selected from current managers and prior graduates of the program), who are required to participate with their cohort of 4 participants during each session and then meet with the cohort during the month to reflect on and discuss implementing the ideas discuss in the session. A senior leader is the champion of the program, presents a session on story telling, and participates in most of the monthly sessions. At the end of each year, a committee composed of the coaches, the champion and the individual who manages the program meet to review evaluations, discuss what went well and what could be improved, and plan the sessions for the next year.

Although there is no promotion at the end of the program, employees realize that the experience and exposure puts them on a fast track for future promotions. In 2013, there were 120 applicants for the 24 slots.

This program is designed to develop leadership skills within current or future leaders. The content promotes learning in a set of core employee and leadership competencies identified by VA as essential to the success of the organization. The six core All Employee competency categories include: Communication, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Critical Thinking, Organizational Stewardship, Veteran and Customer Focus, and Personal Mastery. The six core Leadership competency categories include: Leading People, Building Coalitions, Leading Change, Results Driven, Global Perspective, and Business Acumen.

The selected participants must commit to:

- Attend all sessions and a monthly 2 hour coaching sessions
- Reschedule AWS and vacations to ensure attendance
- Create a Personal Development Plan
- Complete of on-line training modules as assigned
- Additional time between sessions for homework and reading. Reading assignments include:
  - The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, book by Stephen R. Covey
  - One Minute Manager by Ken Blanchard
  - Difficult Conversation by Stone, Patton and Heen
  - Others to be determined
- Complete the following assessments:
  - Leadership Practices Inventory
  - Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
  - EQi Assessment