

Phase 2: Analysis

The purpose of this phase is to identify key positions for succession planning and analyze how well the current talent pool is prepared to compete for those key positions (bench strength).

Relevant Tools

- **Identification of Key Positions**
- **Identification of the Talent Pool**
- **Competency Modeling**
- **USGS Succession Planning Pipeline Assessment Tool**
- **Succession Profile Worksheet**

Phase 2: Analysis – Identification of Key Positions

There are many reasons why a position may be considered key or critical. Some of the reasons include:

- Organizational structure (key contributor in achieving mission)
- Key task (performs critical tasks that would stop or hinder vital functions if missing)
- Specialized or unique skills sets (hard to replace)
- Geographic challenges (difficult for someone located elsewhere to carry out functions)
- Potential high turnover (‘knowledge drain’ due to high turnover)

The table below lists categories for identifying key positions. The succession planners decide which categories to focus planning efforts on. There is no right or wrong category.

<i>Categories for Identifying Key Positions</i>	
1. Executive and Senior Leadership Positions	<p>Positions designated by the organization for succession planning <u>and</u> senior-level positions with senior leadership or executive management responsibilities.</p> <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Director and Deputy Director ▪ Associate Directors and Regional Directors
2. Administrative Leadership Positions	<p>Positions that provide administrative leadership in carrying out the business activities of the organization in support of its mission.</p> <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Center Directors ▪ Senior Management Officer/Regional Management Officer ▪ Administrative Officer
3. Mission-Essential Positions	<p>Positions where considerable professional, scientific or technical expertise is required to carry out the work. These positions make a unique contribution to the organization’s mission. Incumbents of these positions may be considered hard to replace.</p> <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emergency Response Coordinator ▪ Hydrologic Technicians
4. ‘Stand-Alone’ Positions	<p>Positions where expertise is concentrated in one or a small number of incumbents, or where an important role/area of responsibility is assigned to a single incumbent. These positions typically have limited or no bench strength, may which negatively affect the organization’s capacity to backfill, should the need arise.</p> <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Scientist • Research Scientist
5. Incumbent on Extended Assignment	<p>Any position where an incumbent is <u>or</u> will be temporarily staffed to another position such that his/her position of record will be vacant for an extended period.</p> <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incumbent on detail to another organizational unit or to another federal agency. ▪ Incumbent on a rotational assignment to learn a specialized skill or to provide expertise.

6. Incumbent on Extended Leave	<p>Any position where an incumbent is expected to be out for an extended period due to a planned or unplanned leave situation.</p> <p><u>Examples</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incumbent on extended leave for long-term illness or on maternity leave. ▪ Incumbent serving on jury or military duty.
7. High Potential for Staff Exits	<p>Positions where there is a higher likelihood the current incumbent may leave in the near term.</p> <p><u>Examples</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positions where staff turnover is known (anecdotally or statistically) to be high. ▪ Positions where a large proportion of staff (>40%) is/will be retirement-eligible near term.
8. Hard to Fill Positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positions where there is a limited pool of high quality candidates.

Phase 2: Analysis - Identification of Talent Pool

The identification of the talent pool occurs during the second phase of the succession planning process. The purpose of identifying a talent pool is to define a population of employees to be selected for development. This can be based on one or more criteria, such as grade level, pay plan, occupational series, or location. The talent pool can be determined by management definition or by employees responding to a survey or invitation.

In the first situation, when management determines the talent pool, the succession planners define the population of that pool. For example, at USGS, the Executive Leadership Team determined the talent pool for senior executive positions is all direct reports to the executives at General Schedule (GS) level 14 and 15, Senior Level (SL) employees, and other senior management positions.

In the second situation, inclusion in the talent pool is determined by employees themselves, self-nominating to be considered for inclusion in the talent pool. If an employee wants to be considered, he or she may self-nominate in response to an email from management. For example, during a succession planning process conducted in the USGS Office of Human Capital, all employees in the Office of Human Capital were considered for inclusion in the talent pool for a set of career paths (rather than positions) in the Office Human Resources. All employees in the office received an email invitation to express their interest in selection. In another example, management at a U.S. Intelligence Agency determined the talent pool population for senior leader positions to be all employees who were several grade levels below the senior leaders. Those employees received an email invitation to express interest in development for the senior positions.

In an example that crosses both approaches, at the Department of Interior, all qualified individuals at the GS 14 and 15 levels may compete to be selected for the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SESCDP).² In this case, management first determined that employees at GS 14 and 15 are the talent pool and then employees self-select by applying to be included in the program.

² <https://doiu.doi.gov/programs/sescdp.html#>

Phase 2: Analysis –Competency Modeling

Competencies and competency modeling is used during the succession planning process to identify and confirm the competencies essential for success in the position(s) targeted for succession planning.

What is a competency?

A competency is a measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics necessary for success in a position.

What is competency modeling?

Competency modeling is a methodology that establishes a common language for analyzing and describing the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors for success in a position or set of positions. The model typically links to the business goals and strategies of the organization. Developing a competency model is an adaptive and iterative process that includes extensive stakeholder involvement. The model may group together types of like positions into categories such as leadership, professional, or technical. This grouping is determined by the organization using categories and language that resonate with the organization.³

To identify a competency model for the position targeted for succession planning, start by looking at existing competency models and competency model dictionaries. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) maintains competency models for select occupations. They also maintain a lengthy competency dictionary. The models and dictionary are available at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/competencies/> The National Institutes of Health Office of Human Resources is another source for competency information and occupational competency models: <https://hr.nih.gov/working-nih/competencies/occupation-specific/suggested-competency-models-job-series>. In the event that competencies or a competency model does not exist, OPM offers tips on how to write competencies at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/competencies/writing-competencies.pdf>

For example, the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) are an example of a competency model that is used across the government to express what competencies are essential for success in senior executive positions. These competencies are Leading Change, Leading People, Business Acumen, Results Driven, and Building Coalitions.

³ Campion, M., Fink, A., Rugeberg, B., Carr, L., Phillips, G., and Odman, R. (2011). Doing competencies well: best practices in competency modeling. *Personnel Psychology*, 64, 225-262.

Phase 2: Analysis - USGS Succession Planning Pipeline Assessment Tool

The purpose of the USGS Succession Planning Pipeline Assessment Tool is to support evaluation of the talent pool for the position(s) intended for succession planning, and provide results that will inform training, development, recruitment and retention strategies. The assessment tool is designed to walk the assessor through a series of assessment points. Those assessment points are aggregated to produce ratings on the following elements: ability, engagement, aspiration, and barriers.

The assessment results are captured at the aggregate level, and not at the individual employee level. A significant decision was made by the USGS Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to collect employee assessment results for succession planning at the aggregate level in order to avoid misuse of individual-level assessment data, be it actual, potential, or perceived misuse.

The tool was designed to guide the rater through a series of analyses of like elements at a sufficient level of detail that will promote a thorough and consistent rating process across all employees, and across all raters, as well as minimize subjectivity, preexisting perceptions, and unconscious favoritism.

Benefits of the assessment include:

- **Flexibility:** The tool can be adapted to succession planning at different organizational levels and different occupations.
- **Consistency:** The tool uses a format with consistent elements that allow data to be aggregated to bureau, sub bureau, and cost center levels.
- **Commonly available software:** The tool is based in EXCEL.
- **Repeatable Results:** The results of the tool capture data in sufficient detail to inform planning training, development, recruitment, and retention. Results can be gathered and compared at multiple time intervals, and results will be generally comparable against other organizational units (for the static elements).

The elements and the associated rating scales are defined below.

ELEMENT	DEFINTION	RATING
ABILITY Flexible element; can be customized.	Ability captures the competencies needed for the target position. Competencies may be “soft skills” or technical skills. Rule of thumb: assess on no more than 8 competencies.	Expert or High Level (3) Competent or Solid Level (2) Needs Improvement Level (1)

ELEMENT	DEFINTION	RATING
ENGAGEMENT Static element; do not replace.	Engagement rates (1) the degree to which employees give discretionary effort and (2) are committed to and intend to stay with the organization.	Expert or High Level (3) Competent or Solid Level (2) Needs Improvement Level (1)
ASPIRATION Static element; do not replace.	Aspiration rates (1) the degree to which employees desire advancement and (2) are motivated to do what is required at the next level of responsibility.	Expert or High Level (3) Competent or Solid Level (2) Needs Improvement Level (1)
BARRIERS Flexible element; can be customized based on other perceived barriers regarding the position.	Barriers are aspects that hinder development of employees, aspiration or engagement of employees, ability to hire or manage the workforce, etc. Mobility is an example of a barrier where a location change may be required for the position.	Example of rating levels for the Mobility barrier: Yes, Willing To Move (3) Willing to Move Only to Certain Locations (2) No, Not Willing to Move (1)

The Assessment Tool has been used for executive succession planning at USGS. The example shown below can be modified to address the relevant competencies and barriers; however aspiration and engagement should be addressed in all types and levels of succession planning.

For more in-depth information on assessing employee potential, the following two sources may be of interest:

Linkedin - The 3 Indicators Corporations Use to Identify High-Potential Employees, May 29, 2015
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/3-indicators-corporations-use-identify-high-potential-michael-scott>

Harvard Business Review: Leadership Development – “How to Keep Your Top Talent”, May 2010
<https://hbr.org/2010/05/how-to-keep-your-top-talent>

**USGS SES Talent Pool Assessment Tool
(Count Version)
EXAMPLE**

ORGANIZATION NAME:	XYZ Region			
Number of SES Pipeline Employees Rated	12			
RATINGS: Provide a count of employees for each Ability, etc., according to level of performance exhibited (3, 2, or 1)	"Expert" or "High" Level 3	"Competent" or "Solid" Level 2	"Needs Improvement" Level 1	Total
ABILITY - ECQ 1: LEADING CHANGE Creativity & Innovation, External Awareness, Flexibility, Resilience, Strategic Thinking, Vision	7	4	1	12
ABILITY - ECQ 2: LEADING PEOPLE Conflict Mgmt, Leveraging Diversity, Developing Others, Team Building	5	5	2	12
ABILITY - ECQ 3: RESULTS DRIVEN Accountability, Customer Service, Decisiveness, Entrepreneurship, Problem Solving, Technical Credibility	5	5	2	12
ABILITY - ECQ 4: BUSINESS ACUMEN Financial Mgmt, Human Capital Mgmt, Technology Mgmt	3	5	4	12
ABILITY - ECQ 5: BUILDING COALITIONS Partnering, Political Savvy, Influencing & Negotiating	10	2	0	12
ABILITY - USGS IDENTIFIED: Cultural Savvy	8	3	1	12
ENGAGEMENT: Discretionary effort shown Effort above and beyond	12	0	0	12
ENGAGEMENT: Committed to organization and intends to stay	11	0	1	12
ASPIRATION: Desires advancement, recognition, and future rewards	7	1	4	12
ASPIRATION: Motivated to do what is required at next level of responsibility	8	3	1	12
	Yes, Willing To Move	Willing to Move Only to Certain Locations	No, Not Willing to Move	Total
MOBILITY: Employees have indicated willingness to relocate (Y / N)	2	3	7	12

Example: USGS Succession Planning Assessment Tool

Data is collected by counts for each element.

Results are then computed into percentages for easy assessment and comparability with other results.

Phase 2: Analysis - Succession Profile Worksheet

What: The Succession Profile Worksheet is a document which captures the required competencies and recommended developmental activities for key positions. It helps organizational leadership understand the readiness of the current workforce. It assists in the process of assessing and developing staff for leadership and other key positions. It should consider and inform the development of training and development programs.

Who: Each leadership or other key position completes a Succession Profile Worksheet (i.e., first line supervisors to executives, as well as other key positions as identified by the organization).

When: A Succession Profile may be prepared or updated at any time. It is recommended that organizations complete them for key positions and keep them updated as a way to identify training needs for current development.

Why: It is recommended to create Succession Profiles for positions starting at the first-level supervisor to the top executives of the organization. Profiles may be used to further target training programs and hiring initiatives to increase readiness for key positions. These profiles capture information on *positions*, not on individual employees. Assessments of the readiness of individual employees for advancement are captured during Individual Development Plan (IDP) process. The creation and maintenance of Succession Profiles keep organizations ahead of developmental gaps and attrition. The Succession Profiles allow managers to keep a simple inventory of select positions that they can review when missions, organizations, and skill requirements change or need updating, or when there is a change-over of supervisors.

How: See example and template on the following pages.

Instructions: Each incumbent should fill out the Succession Profile for their own position. This will allow individuals in key positions to begin thinking within the succession planning framework and outlining strategies to identify and develop pools of well qualified staff for future vacancies. The boxes below should be completed where Box 1 “Position, Title, Series, Grade” refers to the incumbent’s own position; the same is true for Box 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Box 8 gives an outline of USGS Succession Planning Pipeline Assessment Tool results, if results are available, and associated developmental activities.

Succession Profile Form - EXAMPLE

1. Position Title, Series, Grade: (Your Position) Leader of the Group, Title GS-0000-14	2. Current Incumbent: (You) Name						
3. Division/Office, Center, Group, etc.: Human Resources Division	4. Current Incumbent's Supervisor: Name						
5. Date Incumbent Entered Position: December 15, 2008	6. Likelihood of Turnover: (Likelihood of you leaving) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HIGH = Likely in the next 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> MODERATE = Likely within 1 to 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> LOW = Likely within 3 to 5 years						
7. Key Competencies Needed for Position: (List applicable competencies. These may be edited. The competencies here were chosen from the OPM's Competency Dictionary https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/competencies/) Leadership: <i>Leading Change, Leading People, Results Driven, Business Acumen, Building Coalitions</i> Technical: <i>Knowledge of transactional HR processes and automated systems; HR operations such as staffing, position classification, labor relations, performance management, and training. HR consulting.</i>							
8. Readiness of Talent Pool: Refer to the USGS Succession Planning Pipeline Assessment Tool results (if results are available) on staff readiness and developmental needs. For example, what competencies had the highest percentage of Needs Improvement; what are the levels of engagement and aspiration; what barriers exist; and to what degree do the barriers discourage the talent pool from aspiring to the position. If results are not available, anecdotal information is also appropriate. <i>For example, succession planning results for leadership positions could show that a talent pool is strongest in the following leadership competencies: Results Driven (50%) and Building Coalitions (48%) and Needs Improvement in Leading Change (25%) and Leading People (22%). 70% of the talent pool gives discretionary effort (engagement) and 75% are committed to and intend to stay with the organization (engagement). However, 40% of the talent pool desires advancement (aspiration) and 30% are motivated to do what is required at the next level of responsibility (aspiration). Mobility is a barrier with 60% not willing to move to obtain a leadership position.</i>							
9. Successor Developmental Techniques Action Plan: Developmental Assignments: <i>Ready Now and Ready 1-2 years candidates developmental assignments include:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receiving guidance from assigned mentors. 2. Completing a 30 day rotational assignment at a policy level office. 3. Writing a 10 page Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Technical Competency. 4. Facilitating a round table discussion to determine strategies to improve processes. <i>Ready 3-5 years candidates will continue OJT, informal mentoring and coaching. Where opportunities exist or if required, formal classroom training will be provided.</i> Formal Training: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical Writing – Provided at the Agency School 2. Motivating Others – Provided by Leadership Council 3. Influencing Change – Provided by the Local University 							
10. Ability to Recruit and Attract Candidates: (Mark one rating within each time period.) <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Within 12 Months</th> <th style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Within 1 to 2 years</th> <th style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Within 3 to 5 years</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> HIGH = The quality and quantity of candidates is outstanding. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MODERATE = The quality and quantity of candidates is average. <input type="checkbox"/> LOW = The quantity and quality of candidates is insufficient. </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HIGH = The quality and quantity of candidates is outstanding. <input type="checkbox"/> MODERATE = The quality and quantity of candidates is average. <input type="checkbox"/> LOW = The quantity and quality of candidates is insufficient. </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HIGH = The quality and quantity of candidates is outstanding. <input type="checkbox"/> MODERATE = The quality and quantity of candidates is average. <input type="checkbox"/> LOW = The quantity and quality of candidates is insufficient. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Within 12 Months	Within 1 to 2 years	Within 3 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH = The quality and quantity of candidates is outstanding. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MODERATE = The quality and quantity of candidates is average. <input type="checkbox"/> LOW = The quantity and quality of candidates is insufficient.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HIGH = The quality and quantity of candidates is outstanding. <input type="checkbox"/> MODERATE = The quality and quantity of candidates is average. <input type="checkbox"/> LOW = The quantity and quality of candidates is insufficient.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HIGH = The quality and quantity of candidates is outstanding. <input type="checkbox"/> MODERATE = The quality and quantity of candidates is average. <input type="checkbox"/> LOW = The quantity and quality of candidates is insufficient.
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Discuss Activities to Find or Attract Candidates: <i>Candidates are limited due to the shortage of qualified workers or leaders in the local geographic area. Possible recruitment pools include nearby colleges and universities in the surrounding area.</i>							
11. Outlook for Recruiting in the Future: <i>Once the initial recruits are successfully brought into the agency, more potential applicants will apply for positions at the agency, increasing the talent pool. Potential leaders are very committed to their positions and willing to acquire new leadership skills.</i>							

Succession Profile Form

1. Position Title, Series, Grade: (Your Position)	2. Current Incumbent: (You)	
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