Succession Planning Overview

Succession planning is an important part of a jurisdiction’s strategic efforts. Succession planning involves how jurisdictions are preparing for the future; understanding where key vacancies will occur (e.g. leadership, subject matter experts); what key competencies are needed for these positions, and how best to prepare for these potential vacancies through effective recruitment, knowledge transfer and/or training.

In some jurisdictions, more than 50% of the IRP program workforce can retire in the next five years.

Of the jurisdictions that were polled during this virtual roundtable series, key vacancies are occurring at the following levels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Vacancies</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Subject Matter Expert</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrator/Program Manager</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auditor</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customer Service Representative</td>
<td>42%</td>
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Key competencies:

For Administrators/Program Managers: Leading with strengths, team building, strategic budgeting, organizational change management, experience with external stakeholders. Potential solutions to address development in these categories- Leadership Development programs. Partnerships with jurisdictional-based universities to provide further training for administrators. Examples: California Leadership Development Academy, Lead Tennessee Leadership Academy.
Training/Development:

New Employees:

Having a training plan for new employees is key to ensuring successful knowledge transfer.

IRP, Inc. training to get bigger picture: Use of the IRP Education Certificate program and related webinars.

Invest in the time to ensure that all processes are documented and placed into a manual/guide for employees. Some jurisdictions post their manual into an online repository or on an internal Wikipedia-type page.

Ensure employees are aware of changes and new occurrences in the IRP community, not just issues directly impacting jurisdiction. Distribute IRP updates.

Create a development environment for your IRP operating system to allow for brand new technicians to key into a non-production environment.

Hire a new employee at least 60-90 days before a person retires so the new employee shadows existing employee.

For decentralized IRP or audit offices, technology tools like instant messaging, webinars and weekly conference calls provide support for new employees.

Develop a coaching and mentoring program for new employees: A jurisdiction shared this model-

   New employee is assigned to a trainer. Trainers are junior level staff who have some experience with the program but are not at the level of senior level customer service level representatives. The junior level staff guides the new employee through the easier transactions and has the new employee shadow him/her on the telephones before answering calls. This approach gives the brand new employee confidence when they begin to answer phones and process transactions.

   Senior level representatives serve as mentors to the junior employee. Representatives who handle the most complex IRP transactions. Senior representatives often promoted into management roles. Each level can participate in the mentoring/coaching effort and aids in succession planning.

Refresher Training:

Training hour each week: Open operations to the public an hour later so operations team can meet to discuss any items of interest, including policy concerns.
Online Repository: each situation encountered in operations is documented in a repository, categorized by subject, and continually updated. Employees can search by keywords and do their own research on issues in real time as they are working with customers.

Engage employees in decision making; help them with test taking and upward mobility; involve them in projects; keep them informed. Look for areas/subject matter/projects that are suitable for employees that play to their strengths.

Final Takeaway

The key to a good plan is to ensure it is tailored to meet the needs of your jurisdiction. Where are the key vacancies going to occur? What key competencies associated with those positions? Understanding these needs allows the jurisdiction to focus efforts on recruitment, knowledge transfer and training.