



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

## 2010 Annual Awards Program

### Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

**Deadline for Nominations: March 12, 2010**

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

#### SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Succession Planning

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Sedgwick County, Kansas

Jurisdiction population(s): 450,000

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2009, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: January Year: 2007

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in San José, California, October 2010. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Mr. William Buchanan

Title: County Manager Jurisdiction: Sedgwick County

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact**

Name of contact: Anthony Swartzendruber  
Title: Management Analyst Jurisdiction: Sedgwick County  
Street address: 525 N. Main, Ste.1150  
City: Wichita State/Province: Kansas  
Zip/Postal Code: 67203 Country: US  
Telephone: 316-660-7141 Fax: 316-660-7622  
E-mail: aswartz@sedgwick.gov

Succession Planning  
ICMA 2010 Annual Awards Program  
Supporting Narrative

**Introduction**

Professional development is paramount to sustaining the organizational knowledge of any local government. Perhaps just as important is that all good leaders encourage personal development from each employee. The delicate resulting balance is what Sedgwick County has achieved through the succession planning process.

In 2006, based on research and discussion regarding other organization's initiatives to combat the expected Baby Boomer retirement, Mr. William Buchanan, County Manager, requested the Division of Human Resources develop a strategic plan to sustain organizational knowledge. Human Resources brought together a cross-section of the organization to serve on a Succession Planning Committee. This Committee then began researching several state and local organizations' programs and from those, developed a succession planning process for the organization. Sedgwick County's succession planning process has three goals: 1) identify critical positions within the organization requiring a higher level of leadership development; 2) identify individuals who have the potential and/or desire to develop the skills necessary for these critical positions; and, 3) develop the identified individuals for these positions by offering various programs for organizational development.

**Problem Assessment**

In 2006, age demographic information was collected by the Succession Planning Committee on senior management (Division and Department Directors) assigned to the highest level of administration within the organization. From this statistical information, a database was constructed illustrating a timetable for potential retirement dates based upon age and service

time. This analysis took into consideration these were potential dates of the earliest eligibility, not an indication of imminent retirement.

The information showed that over 50 percent of senior managers were over 50 years of age. More shocking was that of the 50 percent, over 40 percent of the individuals were 55 years or older. The Committee recognized over half of the leadership team would be either retired or close to retirement within 10 years. From this information, a color-coded organization chart was constructed to highlight the positions of the incumbent's retirement eligibility. Each position was charted into one of three categories: 0-2 years until retirement eligibility (Red), 3-5 years until retirement eligibility (Green), or 5+ years until retirement eligibility (White). The Committee was understandably concerned at the amount of red and green positions within the upper administration levels at Sedgwick County. From the data, the Committee developed a plan to address the future needs of the organization in preparation for the Baby Boomer's exodus from the workforce. By preparing for these vacancies prior to the retirement of the incumbents, the organization would be able to identify the leadership and management competencies needed to fulfill the responsibilities of senior management positions both now and in the future.

### **Program Implementation and Costs**

The first step in creating a personalized succession plan was to interview senior management members, including elected and appointed officials, to develop an understanding of current leadership skills. From these interviews, the Committee was able to identify characteristics needed for leadership roles. The Committee also developed a process for identifying individuals for leadership growth for the identified positions. Beginning in 2007, each senior management member began filling out a Critical Position Summary (CPS). The purpose of the CPS was to identify the most prominent administrative positions within the

organization and the skill sets needed for the job. The CPS consists of completing simplified questions about the nature of management competencies required for each position. The management competencies were established through discussion of the County culture and included concepts from the mission, goal and value statements. These statements address accountability, commitment, equal opportunity, honesty, open communication, professionalism, and respect – all of which are ICMA core beliefs.

The senior managers were then asked to list names of employees who “have the potential” to develop into the identified positions. Senior managers were also asked to list how many years the individual has been in their current position, related experiences, education/training certifications and any additional notes they have about the individual. Each individual’s skill set was classified as “ready now,” “ready with development,” or “individual to watch long-term.” Once each CPS was completed, Human Resources bound them into notebook form and distributed them to the County Manager, two Assistant County Managers and all Division Directors. The notebooks for the Assistant County Managers and Division Directors only included the succession plans for their own positions and any department directors of direct report. The County Manager retains a completed notebook with all plans.

The next step relied on senior managers to communicate development opportunities to their identified individuals. Senior managers complete an Individual Action Plan (IAP) with each individual to identify appropriate development opportunities. The individual drives the action plan; however, the incumbent is encouraged to meet with the individual periodically to update the IAP and discuss the development process.

A number of development opportunities are available to Sedgwick County employees. These opportunities include: tuition reimbursement, volunteer opportunities, county-wide

committees, facilitation of and participation in internal training classes, mentoring program, organizational development projects, career development certificates, and the Sedgwick County Leadership Academy. The career development certificates include diversity, professional development and supervisory/management development. To obtain these certificates, employees must complete 16 required courses and 14 elective courses that amount to more than 75 hours of training. Only employees identified on a succession plan are invited by the County Manager to apply for the Sedgwick County Leadership Academy, an internal opportunity for leadership development. The Academy is limited to 20 individuals per year and consists of 32 classroom hours. The topics studied include: Sedgwick County leadership, organizational leadership, political leadership, ethical leadership, community leadership and relationship leadership. The ICMA Emerging Leaders Development Program has proven to be a successful development opportunity for four Sedgwick County staff. As a result, ELDP will be incorporated as another development tool available for those on a succession plan.

### **Tangible Results or Measurable Outcomes of the Program**

Succession planning has developed into an important process of identifying individuals for opportunities within the organization. The goals of this program are to identify critical positions within the organization, identify individuals for leadership roles, and provide developmental opportunities for the identified employees. In essence, the program has opened communication between employees and senior managers regarding future development needs and opportunities. Individuals have the opportunity to take charge of their future and self-identify their professional goals. The organization gains developed leaders and the employees gain self confidence and skill development through each of the organizational development

opportunities. The chart below describes how the succession planning process has been used to fill vacancies with individuals identified under CPS.

	<i>Identified Positions</i>	<i>Number of Vacancies</i>	<i>Number filled from CPS</i>
<b>2007</b>	65	11	7
<b>2008</b>	38	3	0
<b>2009</b>	35	1	0

### **Lessons Learned During Planning, Implementation, and Analysis of the Program**

In 2007, during the first year of succession planning, each Division Director was given the responsibility to complete a CPS on themselves, any Department Director of direct report, and any critical position. However, after one year of planning, it was established that each division director would fill out the CPS on their own position and work collectively with their direct reports to complete the Department Director CPS; all other positions were not deemed critical for this process. The reason for this change was that Division Directors might have different perspectives than department directors for identifying individuals for the Department Director position. The conclusion was that Sedgwick County currently is not seeing a mass exodus of upper level administration; however, it is expected that in 5-10 years, more than half of the currently identified positions will have vacancies due to retirements.

### **Conclusion**

Sedgwick County is on the leading edge of anticipating future leadership needs and developing workers into leadership roles. Through implementing a succession planning process, Sedgwick County will be able to adapt to the exodus of the Baby Boomer generation while continuing the level of excellent service customers have come to expect. The organization is preparing for the future by developing its most valuable asset...its employees.