



# City of Bellevue Succession Plan

Using competencies to measure  
employee development.

September 2015

# *What is Succession Planning (SP)?*

Succession Planning (SP) is a process that will provide managers, supervisors and employees with a framework for effective human resource planning and employee development.

# *Why is Succession Planning Important?*

City of Bellevue will encounter dramatic changes in the workplace over the next several years.

- Baby Boom generation reaches retirement eligibility
- Continuous technological changes impacting services, work environment and work processes
- Increasing diversity in citizen and workforce population
- Escalating demand for services due to population increases
- Full emergence of the multigenerational workforce
- Tight labor market for managerial and technical employees

# *Roles in Succession Planning*

To be successful, Succession Planning requires commitment from all levels of the organization:

- Department Management
- Employees
- Managers and Supervisors
- Senior Management Team

# *Two Perspectives Considered*

- 1. Manager's Perspective:** Initially managers will be encouraged to focus on key positions in order to develop strategies to ensure a pool of employees are qualified to fill these positions as vacancies occur due to retirements or other means of attrition such as promotion, reassignment or resignation.
- 2. Employees' Perspective:** From the employees' perspective, the succession planning process will provide information and tools that will help them assess their competencies and determine what steps they can take to enhance their qualifications and become competitive for advancement to key positions.

# *Implementation of SP*

- Will be open, fair, and flexible
- Within current policies governing recruitment, hiring, promotion, training and development
- Will place an emphasis on developing competencies aligned with SP strategy
- Will establish a developmental pool of employees for key positions

# *Establishing a Developmental Pool*

Developmental pools will be based on their ability to meet a position's minimum qualifications and their measurable levels in the following areas:

- Experience
- Education
- Training
- Job performance
- Interest and commitment to self-development and possible assumption of greater responsibility

# *SP Developmental Pool is **NOT** . . .*

A guarantee of advancement into a key position:

- Employees in developmental pools will receive focused guidance on their development
- Employees *will* be required to compete for promotions using the established hiring process
- ***There will be no pre-selection for any position***



# *SP Tools and Resources*

- **Consultation** - DHR and administration will provide guidance and mentorship to department leadership.
- **Spreadsheets** - The city will help develop spreadsheets that will serve as a tool to support SP tracking efforts.
- **Training** - DHR and administration will provide training on:
  - SP process and guidelines
  - Competency models
  - How to develop technical competencies
  - Spreadsheets usage and other resources

# *SP is designed to be flexible*

- Department Directors will have the flexibility to implement SP based on their assessment of future staffing needs and tailor their approach in order to meet specific department requirements
- SP will help ensure continuity of operations necessary to provide consistent, quality services to citizens while recruiting, retaining and developing valued employees

# *Step 1 – Identify Strategic Needs of Department*

- **SWOT Analysis**

- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

- Estimating changes that are likely to occur in the workforce due to normal attrition or super attrition due to a surge of employees becoming eligible for retirement.
    - Considering the extent to which additional competencies, or increased proficiency of current competencies, will be needed to support:
      - » New/changed work processes.
      - » New technology.
      - » The need for increased productivity due to increased workload without commensurate staff increases.

# *Step 1 – Identify Strategic Needs of Department (continued)*

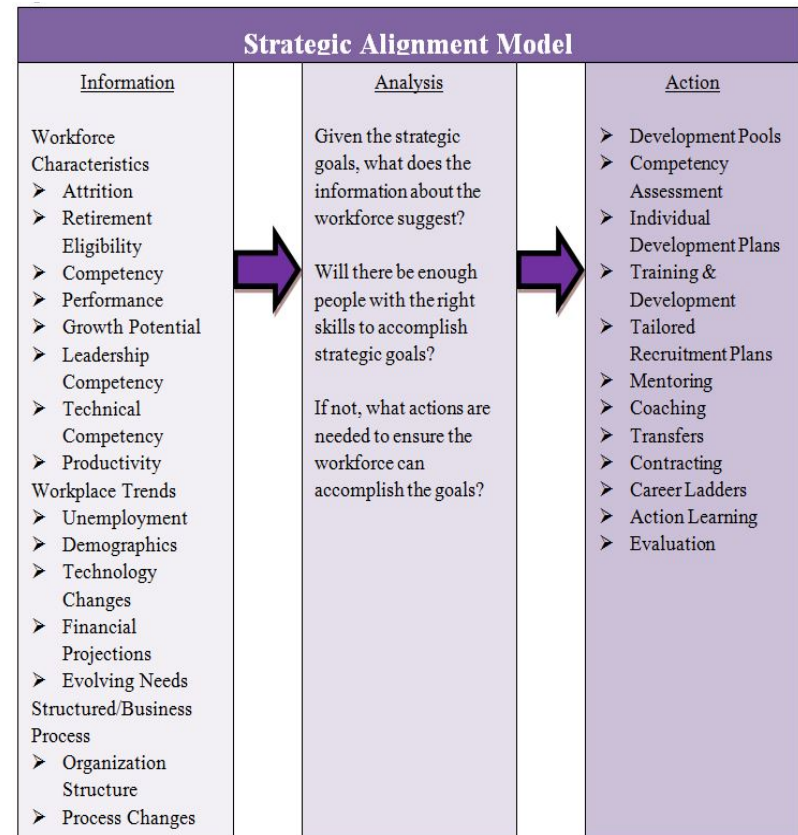
- **Environmental Scan**

- Typically conducted by senior managers with appropriate staff support to assess the internal and/or external environment for trends that may drive the need for new strategies.

# Step 1 – Identify Strategic Needs of Department (continued)

## Strategic Alignment Model (Bellevue Succession Plan, p. 10)

- Information
  - Workforce Characteristics
  - Workplace Trends
  - Structured/Business Process
- Analysis
  - What
  - Who
  - How
- Action



# *Step 1 Critical Criteria*

After completing the alignment model, a number of findings should result and certain situations taken into consideration, such as:

- Strategic and operational goals
- Minimum requirements
- Workforce competencies
- Attrition and turnover
- Personnel policies
- Performance tracking

# *Step 2 - Identify Key Positions*

## **Why is this important?**

Succession planning focuses on those positions where sufficient attrition is anticipated so as to create a risk of a decline in mission performance or organizational capacity to respond to unanticipated demands.

## **What is meant by a key position?**

“Such positions, determined by management, that exert critical influence on the organization’s activities – strategically, operationally or both.”

# *Factors to Consider*

**Critical Task:** Positions that would stop critical action from taking place if they were left vacant.

**Specialized Expertise:** Any position that requires a specialty or unique expertise.

**Strategic Importance:** What are the functions to be in the future? Where is the organization going and what type of skills or leadership will it need to get there?

**Citywide vs. Organizational Perspective:** Key positions should be assessed from a citywide perspective, or a departmental perspective.



# *How are Key Positions Identified?*

## STEP 1:

Identify positions within the organization that would cause a mission performance decline if vacant for an extended period. Consider two perspectives when identifying key positions:

- The **short term** to fill immediate needs and operations of the organization (retirements, turnover, changes in project workload)
  - The **long term** strategic needs (total talent management)
- 
- Also, consider mission support positions in addition to positions assigned direct mission tasks.
  - Address gaps between the workforce of today and workforce needs of tomorrow.
  - A position not currently a key position may be so in the future, due to changes in qualifications or mission scope.

# *How are Key Positions Identified?*

## STEP 2:

Assess whether staff is available in other city departments that are now fully qualified to fill the position. If so, the position, while important, may not be considered key within the succession planning context.

# *How are Key Positions Identified?*

## STEP 3:

Prioritize key positions based on risk to mission performance and/or inability to perform key mission support activities. Those positions with the highest risk should receive top priority for inclusion in the succession plan.

## *Step 3 – Complete Profile of Key Positions*

A position profile should include the following kinds of information:

- Job classification and working title
- Supervisor's name and job classification
- Major roles and responsibilities, duties/tasks of the position (from the current position description)
- Budgetary responsibilities
- Supervisory responsibility
- Accountability level
- Citywide competencies required
- Technical/professional job specific competencies required
- Education requirements
- Experience requirements

# *Create a 'Key Position' Profile*

## **STEP 1:**

Ensure the *Position Description* (PD) for a key position is current and approved by the City Administrator. Also assess whether changes are anticipated in the future that will impact the duties and responsibilities of the position.

# *Create a 'Key Position' Profile*

## **STEP 2:**

- Identify employees who have an understanding of the position, can represent the key position and who have experience working in the job of the key position.
- Recommendations include:
  - Incumbent currently in the key position
  - Manager of the key position
  - Upper management who have a vested interest in the key position
  - Subject Matter Professional (SMP) who have experience and knowledge about the job performed in the key position

# *Create a 'Key Position' Profile*

## **STEP 3:**

Develop a complete profile of the key position. The incumbent currently in the key position and the manager of the key position can work together to create this position profile.

- Citywide assessment should be established prior to identification of a key position.

# *Create a 'Key Position' Profile*

## **STEP 4:**

Identify technical/job-specific competencies necessary for success in the key position.

- The Citywide Competency Model is a valuable diagram which can help identify critical competencies.
- It may be possible that employees identified in Step 2 can be leveraged as needed during the creation of the key position profile for their expertise and knowledge of the key position.

**Note:** It is important to focus on the competencies required for the key position, not the competencies of the person in the position.



## *Step 4 - Identify Competencies for Key Positions*

*What does the term competency mean?*

A measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully.

*Why are competencies important?*

Competencies are used to measure proficiency in the various components (i.e., knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors) necessary for successful job performance.

*What/who is the best resource to identify competencies common to key positions?*

- Subject Matter Professionals (SMP) sometimes known as high-performers, are individuals recognized as being top performers who have successfully demonstrated the application of knowledge & experience within a key position.
- By capturing and leveraging the SMP's knowledge, managers can ensure institutional knowledge and competencies for critical work are identified.

# *Managers can identify SMP's by doing the following for each key position:*

- Identify individuals located within their departments, in other departments and/or throughout the city, who have demonstrated successful job performance in the key position.
- Identify other individuals throughout the city who have *in-depth knowledge* of responsibilities and operational context of key positions.
- Using SMPs to identify competencies 'common' to key positions, ensures *validity and defensibility* of information captured. SMP's offer departments a depth of knowledge that includes competencies focused on:
  - ***Explicit knowledge***: Knowledge that is 'rule-based', meaning knowledge that usually refers to practices, procedures or processes. Explicit knowledge includes *technical knowledge*, which is knowledge that relates to particular career fields or occupations.
  - ***Tacit knowledge***: Knowledge that is 'cultural,' meaning knowledge that usually rests in one's mind that is intuitive, gained through experience and typically not part of capturing the 'facts' of experiences.

# City-Wide Competency Model

(Bellevue Succession Plan, p. 18)



# *How do you identify competencies common to key positions?*

Use the succession planning process to identify competencies common to key positions:

- Review the citywide competencies in the Citywide Competency Model.
- Determine which city-wide competencies are common to key positions by seeking input from the subject matter professional identified in *Step #3 – Complete Profile of Key Positions*.
- Determine which technical or job specific competencies are common to key positions by leveraging the input from the subject matter professional (SMP) identified in *Step #3 – Complete Profile of Key Positions*.
- Identify technical or job specific competencies common to key positions.

# *How do we rank the importance of various competencies?*

- Use position descriptions to identify essential functions of the job and link the competencies to essential functions of the job. Consider changes that may occur as a result of strategic plans.
- Review organizational and strategic planning goals and determine which key positions are essential to meet those goals.
- Use SMPs and appropriate managers to determine the relative importance of common competencies. This will establish priorities for competency development strategies.

## *Step 5 - Identify the Development Pool*

- Throughout the SP process, emphasis should be placed on employee competency development and key positions' minimum requirements.
- Remember the requirement to have full and open competition for promotion will remain in effect for all employees, whether or not they participate in the SP process.
- It is important to exercise care during this step to avoid any appearance of pre-selection or favoritism.

# *Employee Self-Nomination*

Based on personal career goals, individual employees may aspire to a particular position or job class.

Employees may identify the competencies associated with target position and work either individually or with their supervisor on Individual Development Plans (IDPs) to develop these competencies once the minimum requirements for a target position are met.



# *Employee Development*

Some minimum requirements to be considered when determining development needs for employees include:

- Relevant experience
- Education
- Certifications and licensures
- Language and other pertinent skills
- Demonstrated performance in current and previous positions
- Demonstrated ability, or potential, to meet the competency and proficiencies identified for target key positions
- Track record of self-development
- Commitment to service in the development plan over a reasonable period

# *Selection Process*

- All employees who meet a position's minimum requirements and self-nominate will be placed in the development pool.
- It is necessary to obtain sufficient information to accurately predict the probable success of participants to meet the competency requirements of the targeted key position.
- Standard procedures such as questionnaires, interviews and other assessment tools may be used when necessary.

## *Step 6 - Complete Profile of Individuals in Development Pool*

Employees in the development pool will participate in an assessment of their competencies compared to the key position. Individuals will complete a competency assessment survey.

After employees have completed their competency assessments, the employees' supervisors will then review completed surveys and complete their own assessment of the individuals in the development pool.

# *Profiling the Competencies of the Development Pool*

## STEP 1:

- Meet the key position minimum requirements.

## STEP 2:

- Assess pool participants' competencies. Be very rigorous and honest when assessing the individual's competencies so true development needs are identified.
- Employees and Supervisors should agree on realistic proficiency levels possessed by the employees.
- If the department has used the Citywide Competency Model, specific technical competencies will be included in the assessment. (See Appendix A for more information on technical competencies).

## STEP 3:

- In some cases, higher levels of management may be involved in the discussion as an option to help determine the level of proficiency of the potential successor.

#### STEP 4:

- DHR will produce a competency assessment of each employee in the Development Pool. This assessment will profile individual strengths and developmental needs in relationship to the key positions, job-specific competencies and technical competencies.

#### STEP 5:

- DHR will produce a *gap analysis* report that will show the gap between the desired competencies for the key positions and the current competency level of the individuals in the development pool.
  - Gap analysis will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this guide.
  - Information from the competency assessments will be used to chart employee professional development.

## **Employees in the Development Pool will have:**

- Met the minimum requirements
- Completed a Competency Assessment upon meeting minimum requirements.

## **Supervisors of the employees in the Development Pool will have:**

- Reviewed the Competency Assessment Survey of employees in the Development Pool.
- Completed their assessment of the competency levels of employees in the Development Pool.

## **The DHR will have:**

- Provided profiles of individual employees' competencies against the key position's technical or job-specific competencies.

# *Step 7 – Gap Analysis*

*What is a gap analysis?*

Gap analysis is a method used to define the difference between the current situation and the desired or ideal situation. A competency gap analysis provides information critical to the creation of an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

*Who is involved in the gap analysis process?*

Departmental leadership, first line supervisors and employees should be involved in the gap analysis process.

# *What are the steps involved in conducting a gap analysis?*

**Step One:** Identify target position.

**Step Two:** Review critical competencies of target position.

**Step Three:** Focus the gap analysis.

**Step Four:** Assess the employees' competencies against the key position's profile.

**Step Five:** Analyze the results of the Gap Analysis.



# *Step 8 - Establish Group and Individual Development Plans*

*Purpose of an Individual Development Plan (IDP):*

- Identify specific developmental experiences that will prepare employees to compete for key positions within the succession plan.
- The development and implementation of an IDP should be a joint effort of the employee, their supervisor, and a mentor if provided.

# *Employee Roles*

- Assess competency level compared to the competencies and proficiency levels required for the target position. Use the process described in Step 7 to perform a gap analysis.
- Identify specific developmental strategies necessary to improve competencies in areas where a gap exists between the level required in the target position and the employee's proficiency assessment. Read ahead for a list of possible developmental strategies.
- Complete development of the IDP and seek to apply knowledge, skills, and abilities gained through development to demonstrate proficiency.
- Continually update the IDP as competency development is completed and new competencies are identified for development.

# *Supervisory Roles*

- Assist the employee in assessing his/her competencies and proficiency levels in the context of the target position. Stress the need for realism in the assessment so that the resulting development plan will be effective in addressing proficiency gaps.
- Assist the employee in selecting appropriate developmental strategies and support the time needed to complete the needed development.
- Monitor the completion of the IDP on a regular basis, at least every quarter and make adjustments as appropriate.

# *Key Question*

The *key question* in selecting the appropriate developmental strategy for an employee is:

*What are the learning and growth opportunities that will achieve the desired proficiency level to prepare the employee for the target position?*

# *Developmental Strategies*

Classroom Training

Experiential Learning

Action Learning

Shadowing

Mentoring

Self-study

Feedback

# *Monitoring Learning*

The employee and mentor should meet on a regular basis, typically at least monthly, to assess progress.

A formal progress meeting between the employee and his/her supervisor may be held less frequently but a quarterly meeting is recommended.

Depending on progress made the IDP may be updated following formal meetings. Progress reports and revisions should be recorded with DHR assistance (if needed).

## *Step 9 - Integrate Development Plans into Strategic Plan and Budget*

Some factors that impact strategic and operational plans may include:

- New or expanded programs and/or facilities
- New technology used to support the mission
- New service delivery models
- Changes to resource levels or staffing models
- Reorganizations

# *Resource Implications*

Changes such as the previous examples have shown have obvious resource implications. Position changes may need to be addressed through workforce planning.

Technical competencies may be added as a result of analysis. Resources for development of new competencies should be identified as discussed in Step 9 of this plan.

Funding to support positions and competency development should be addressed during the normal budgeting process.



# *Step 10 - Evaluating Succession Planning Implementation*

The evaluation process should be completed by a team made up of the various stakeholders involved in the succession planning process including the following:

- City Succession Planning Coordinators
- Departmental Directors and Supervisors
- Key line managers who are involved in the succession planning process
- Employees who are being developed through the succession planning process

# *Measures*

Developing information to determine whether the process measures or outcome measures are being met can be obtained through one or more of the following techniques:

- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Review of training and development activities

# *Key Position Progress Report*

It is necessary to produce a formal report assessing the process and results measures and action plans needed to move toward succession goals.

The report will be presented to the department director and others in the chain-of-command.

Action plans will be assessed for budgetary impact and considered during resource planning activities.



## Questions & Contacts:

Larry D. Burks

Assistant City Administrator

Ph. 402.682.6632

Larry.Burks@Bellevue.net

Karen Jackson

Director of Administrative Services

Ph. 402.682.6601

Karen.Jackson@Bellevue.net