



United States of America

Workforce and Succession Planning for Mission Critical Occupations

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OPM's Organizational Structure

- **Strategic Human Resources Policy**

Leads the design, development, and implementation of innovative, flexible, merit-based HR policies and strategies.

- **Human Capital Leadership & Merit System
Accountability**

Provides technical support to Federal agencies and measure their results so they can better accomplish their missions through effective human capital programs and practices.

- **Human Resources Products and Services**

Provides high quality, cost-effective services and products to client agencies on a reimbursable basis to help recruit and retain the best talent and to develop and maintain a results-oriented leadership capacity.



Current Federal Environment

- Looming mass retirements
- Increased competition for talent
- New workforce values and expectations
 - Tenure/mobility
 - Training and development
 - Work/life balance
 - Flexibilities
- ***Recruitment, Retention and Development***



Workforce Planning

- Much attention has been placed on succession planning for leadership positions. However, less emphasis has been paid to mission critical professional level positions.
- Increasing this focus can:
 - Align entire workforce with agency mission and goals
 - Develop a comprehensive picture of where gaps exist
 - Identify strategies to close the gaps
 - Make informed decisions on how to structure and deploy the current workforce



Workforce Planning Defined

- A systematic approach to:
 - determining staffing needs
 - analyzing the current workforce
 - addressing gaps in numbers and competencies
 - ensuring continuity in mission critical occupations
- A critical part of ensuring organizational effectiveness
- Putting the right people in the right place at the right time

OPM Workforce Planning Model





Competency Framework

Competency

A measurable pattern of knowledge, skill, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that are needed to successfully perform work-related tasks

- General and Technical competencies
- Proficiency Levels – defines range of the competency
- Behavioral Examples – further define proficiency levels

Competency Model

A framework that describes the full range of competencies required to be successful in a particular occupation

Subject Matter Experts

Current Incumbents and Supervisors

Assessing Competence

Competency

Broad Definition

**Proficiency
Levels**

Range of Proficiency

Proficient

**Highly
Proficient**

Mastery

**Behavioral
Examples**

**Behavior Indicative of a
Specific Level of
Proficiency**





Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF)

Background

- President's Management Agenda (PMA) – strategic management of human capital
- Human Capital Scorecard

Purpose

- Offers guidance and evaluation of human capital strategies
- Provides opportunity for agency self-assessment

Benefits

- Determine strengths and weaknesses
- Link to a library of resources and information to track improvement



Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF)

HCAAF Sections

- Standards for success – results to be achieved
- Critical success factors – actions that help reach standards
- Questions – more detailed guideposts to reach a standard
- Elements of a ‘Yes’ – reality checks to confirm a positive response to a question
- Suggested performance indicators – evidence of progress toward a standard



Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF)

Establishes and defines 5 human capital systems to provide a consistent definition of HCM across the Government

1. Strategic Alignment – human capital plan aligned with agency mission and goals
2. Leadership and Knowledge Management – effectively manage people & sustain a learning environment
3. Results-Oriented Performance Culture – high performing workforce & effective performance management system
4. Talent Management – identified and taken steps to close mission critical skill, knowledge, and competency gaps
5. Accountability – HC decisions guided by data-driven, results oriented planning and accountability system



HCAAF and Workforce Planning

- Strategic Alignment – system that promotes the alignment of HCM strategies with agency mission goals and objectives
 - Are human resources professionals and key stakeholders involved in the agency strategic and workforce planning efforts?
 - Is the HR function adequately staffed and prepared, in competencies and resources, to actively partner and consult with line managers?



HCAAF and Workforce Planning

- Talent Management – system that addresses competency gaps in mission critical occupations by implementing programs to attract, acquire, develop and retain quality talent
 - Does the agency identify mission-critical occupations and competencies?
 - Does the agency conduct business forecasting to determine what changes are expected in the work of the agency and how these changes will affect the agency's workforce?
 - Does the agency develop and use recruitment and retention strategies to close anticipated workforce competency gaps?



Development of a Workforce Planning Strategy

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Overview

- Context for the study
- Methodology
- Results
- Considerations/challenges
- Benefits of the approach



Context for the Study

- An organization with approximately 1,600 civilian employees in five mission-critical series within the Department of the Air Force
 - 0501 – Financial Specialist
 - 0855 – Electronics Engineers
 - 1101 – Acquisition Program Manager
 - 1102 – Contract Specialist
 - 2210 – Information Technology Specialist
- Gap analysis conducted as part of a comprehensive workforce and development project
- 27 to 34 competencies associated with each occupational series



Organizational Objectives

- Attract and retain quality candidates
- Target development opportunities to Air Force needs
- Lessen impact of institutional knowledge loss as current workforce retires
- Gain organizational economies, efficiencies and effectiveness
 - Close mission-critical competency gaps
 - Increase communication and flow between occupational series



Project Components

- Organizational Analysis
- Workforce Analysis
- Competency Modeling
- Gap Analysis ←
- Assessment Development
- Recruitment and Retention Strategies



Methodology Overview

- Identified 7 strategic core (fundamental) competencies across the 5 mission critical occupations
 - Systems Acquisition
 - Customer Service
 - Planning and Evaluating
 - Problem Solving
 - Interpersonal Skills
 - Creative Thinking
 - Flexibility



Methodology Overview (continued)

- Identified current proficiency levels of workforce through online self-report survey
 - From employees (rating themselves)
 - From supervisors (rating number of their incumbents at each proficiency level)
- Identified required proficiency levels for core competencies
 - To meet current goals and objectives at work unit level (through on-line survey)
 - To meet future goals and objectives (next 3 years) at the organizational level (through SME focus group)



SME Panel Methodology

- SME panel conducted to develop behavioral examples for each strategic core competencies
- A separate SME panel (senior management) conducted to identify minimum proficiency levels for each competency



Employee Instructions

- Read each Competency Definition.
- Read the Level Descriptions and Level Examples (Behaviors) for each of the five levels, considering your experience in demonstrating this competency in work and other professional settings. Together, the Level Descriptions and Level Examples define the 'rating scale' or the range of proficiency that an individual may demonstrate on a competency.
- Make your Level Rating by selecting the ONE level that most accurately characterizes your overall level of demonstrated capability. Consider your experience in other civilian, military, volunteer, task force, committee or other professional situations, in addition to your current civilian experience, when selecting the level that best characterizes your demonstrated capability for each competency
- Use the Level Examples as a guide as to the types of behaviors that would be expected at each proficiency level. You may exhibit similar behaviors that are indicative of the proficiency level of the target competency. Do not overstate or understate your level of experience when selecting your Level Rating.

Sample Proficiency Rating Scale

Planning and Evaluating: I organize work, set priorities, and determine resource requirements; determine short- or long-term goals and strategies to achieve them; coordinate with other organizations or parts of the organization to accomplish goals; monitor progress and evaluate outcomes.

Level Rating	1	2	3	4	5
Level Description	I have not demonstrated or had the opportunity to demonstrate...	...to some extent but would require additional guidance	...at a satisfactory level but could benefit from additional experience...	...effectively on a consistent basis across variety of situations...	...at an exceptional level across complex situations... recognized expert...coach others
Level Examples		Submit list of work to be completed	Establish a project schedule with timeline	Establish priorities for a team and monitor progress	Supervise others in carrying out large projects



Supervisor Instructions

Directions. In this section, you are asked to:

1. Evaluate your employees on a set of core competencies,
2. Estimate projected attrition at each competency level, and
3. Identify the minimum level of each competency that is required to meet the current goals and objectives of your unit.



Results

- 62.7% (N=796) response rate for incumbent survey
- 44.3% (N=231) response rate for supervisor survey
- Survey respondents similar to population in demographics
- Identified percentage of respondents at each proficiency level for each competency based on self-ratings and supervisor ratings
- Computed gaps as the percentage of respondents below the required (current and future) proficiency level
 - Current competency gaps based on incumbent ratings
 - Current competency gaps based on supervisor ratings
 - Future competency gaps based on incumbent ratings
 - Future competency gaps based on supervisor ratings



Challenges/Considerations

- Procedural:
 - Self-report format combined with supervisory ratings
 - Development of behaviorally based benchmarks is resource intensive
 - Applicability of behaviorally based benchmarks across occupational series
- Application
 - Comparison of incumbent and supervisory ratings (individual self-ratings vs. estimates of number of employees at each level)
 - Data for recruitment, training and development purposes more limited



Benefits of the Approach

- Promotes integration and a common sense of purpose across mission critical occupations
- Communicates fundamental competencies
 - Helps to promote a culture that values these competencies
- Establishes a basis for identifying gaps in relation to those needed to meet strategic goals
- Provides a common focus for recruitment, training and development, and retention strategies
 - Reinforces importance of fundamental competencies and helps to close gaps at the most fundamental level
- Improved measurement through customized and behaviorally based proficiency scales and supervisory estimates of performance



Competency Gap Analysis

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Context for the Study

- An office of approximately 600 employees, within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- General guidance on gap analysis methodology provided by the Agency
 - 22 business lines/functional areas across the agency (20 present within the target office)
 - 5 to 129 competencies associated with each business line
 - 18 shared competencies applicable to all employees
 - Standard proficiency rating scale for use with all competencies
- Limited financial resources available



Methodology Overview

- Online self-report survey to identify current proficiency levels
 - Demographic items
 - Selection of relevant business lines (e.g., Project and Program Management, Land Redevelopment and Site Reuse)
 - Competency ratings—shared competencies and business-line specific competencies
 - Current proficiency level (1-5 scale specified by EPA)
 - Required to successfully perform current job (yes/no)
- 20 subject matter expert (SME) panels to determine required proficiency levels

Proficiency Rating Scale

Level	Name	Description
1	None	None
2	Conceptual	Basic training or education has been received. The only experience gained has primarily been in scenarios such as a classroom or as a trainee on-the-job. Basic knowledge of concepts and terminology. Can describe key features and functions.
3	Experienced	Repeated successful experiences have been completed. Some guidance or assistance may be required in complex situations. Can describe the key benefits and relative strengths of the skill.
4	Advanced	Applies the skill in complex situations; assists, consults, teaches and/or leads others (i.e., peers, coworkers or superiors) in the application of the skill. Can diagnose complicated problems and implement resolutions.
5	Expert	Widely acknowledged by peers, clients and/or external organizations as an expert in applying the skill. Can plan and manage enhancements as to how the skill is applied. Can answer any question about the skill and/or how it is applied.



SME Panel Methodology

- Office identified SMEs for each business line—supervisors and employees working in that area
- Separate panel conducted for each business line—2 to 7 hours in length
- SMEs individually completed rating forms indicating their perception of the required level of proficiency for each competency
- SMEs reported ratings
- OPM staff facilitated a consensus discussion for each competency



Results

- 48.8% response rate for survey
- Survey respondents similar to population in demographics
- Identified percentage of respondents at each proficiency level for each competency
- Computed gaps as the percentage of respondents below the required proficiency level
- Highlighted the 5 largest gaps in each business line (multiple gaps for every business line)



Challenges/Considerations

- Procedural:
 - Self-report format
 - Shared competencies—same or different proficiency requirements across business lines
 - Applicability of proficiency rating scale for both general and technical competencies
 - Understanding of the business line concept
 - Consistency across SME panels in setting required levels
 - Varying proficiency requirements within business lines, depending on job
- Application
 - Prioritization of gaps--large number of competencies resulted in a large number of gaps
 - Difficulty of comparisons across business lines



Benefits of the Approach

- Survey methodology provides collection of current proficiency data relatively quickly and in a non-threatening manner
- Use of a single proficiency rating scale allows for comparisons across competencies and is less expensive than developing benchmarks for each competency
- Determination of required levels in a panel setting rather than by survey allows for discussion and consideration of issues
- Analysis at the business line level rather than the occupational series level accommodates similarities for those in different jobs within the same business line
- Including a large number of competencies in the analysis provides a wealth of data to consider for training and development and recruitment and selection efforts



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