



Succession Planning

Succession planning is an essential process in all workplaces because it ensures the organizational structure is sound and the right people are in place and/or at the ready to be in place at any given time.



Why Succession Planning Matters

Succession planning offers a variety of benefits to current community corrections executives and to those intending to assume a probation executive role in the future. Below are a few key benefits of succession planning:

- Intentional training and professional development
- Fiscally responsible—reduces recruitment costs
- Identifies and grows future leaders within the organization
- Continuity in administration and service delivery

Succession planning is one of several strategic plans that agencies should develop to ensure they are ready for those moments when team members step aside, temporarily or permanently, and other team members must step in and/or step up to maintain operations and offer seamless transitions of employment.



By taking a few simple steps, and regularly reviewing them to align with current organizational priorities and budget, succession planning can be a fairly easy process for community corrections executives.

1. Review existing organizational structure
 - a. Identify core roles and the knowledge and skills needed to fulfill them
 - b. Reclassify roles as appropriate

- c. Request new positions as needed, and to align with caseloads and budget
2. Identify employees within the organization who have professional development potential and interests
 - a. Focus on emotional intelligence, experience, and adaptability
 - b. Emphasis on outward v. inward mindset
3. Establish and regularly offer professional development opportunities
 - a. Mentoring
 - b. Skill-building training
 - c. High-level assignments
 - d. Agency representation on boards, task forces, committees, etc.
4. Assess budgetary impact
 - a. Detail current personnel and operations costs
 - b. Forecast future personnel and operation costs to meet succession planning needs
5. Regularly review and update the succession plan and related organizational plans

Succession planning strengthens the workforce, organization, and the community. Additionally, succession planning demonstrates the executive's long-term commitment to the organization's mission and to developing tomorrow's leaders.

Related Reading:

[Forbes: Workforce Planning: Definition & Best Practices](#)

[FBI: Employee Growth and Succession Planning](#)

[Harvard Business Review: The High Cost of Poor Succession Planning](#)



Cobi Tittle

Director

Tarrant County Community Supervision and
Corrections Department, Adult Probation, TX

"While there is no perfect playbook for succession planning, experience has allowed me to understand the overall importance of simply having a plan. Even the best leaders will someday pass the baton to the next generation."

- Cobi Tittle

Almost ten years ago, I was offered the deputy director position for the agency in which I currently work. Over lunch that day, my director shared that his goal was to teach me everything he knew. I'm still not certain he was able to teach me everything, but his succession plan resulted in my appointment to the director position eight years later. I will forever be grateful for his investment in me.

As I move through this new phase in my career, it is obvious how much of my former director's legacy shines throughout our department. I find myself solving problems in much the same way, and I am much more prepared to accomplish the job than I would have been without his guidance. I am also reminded of my agency's history of placing value on succession planning. Over a decade ago, we created a mentorship program for staff at all levels, and in 2020 we created a year-long leadership development program for those

interested in promotion within the department. These programs have no doubt assisted in the preparation of staff to step into leadership roles and have taught us a great deal about planning for the future of the agency.

Through our efforts to prepare future leaders, I have learned that succession planning takes time and doesn't just involve a transfer of knowledge- it is a transfer of values, insight, and perspectives. At the same time, while it may be easy to focus on individuals that think, and make decisions like their predecessors, understanding the future needs of the agency is crucial in choosing a successor. I have also learned that once talent has been identified, assigning special tasks or projects provides the individual an avenue to build skills, and even make mistakes, in a safe environment. Finally, preparing future leaders for a specific role gives the individual time to learn what obstacles they may face, and how their strengths or weaknesses will assist or provide stumbling blocks.

While there is no perfect playbook for succession planning, experience has allowed me to understand the overall importance of simply having a plan. Even the best leaders will someday pass the baton to the next generation.



Award Nominations

NAPE is accepting nominations for two awards to be presented during the Annual American Probation and Parole Institute on June 30 in Indianapolis.

Sam Houston State University - Executive of the Year Award

This award recognizes an outstanding executive who is a NAPE member and has shown consistent exemplary performance in fulfilling the profession's goals.

George M. Keiser Award for Exceptional Leadership

This award recognizes exceptional leadership by an administrator, manager, or supervisor from a NAPE-represented department, who has provided value-added activity or service to their organization or community.

Nominations should be sent to Vanessa Farmer at vfarmer@shsu.edu and received by May 31, 2024. Nominations must include a biographical sketch and a detailed explanation of why the nominee deserves recognition.

For more information: [NAPE Awards Solicitation](#)

We invite members to share information about NAPE with other community supervision executives to help expand our network and strengthen our opportunities, data, and expertise. Affordable annual NAPE membership options are available and can be purchased/renewed at napehome.org

- Individual (recurring discount available)
- Retired
- Organizational
- Corporate

NAPE is dedicated to enhancing the professionalism and effectiveness in the field of community corrections by creating a national network for executives, bringing about positive change in the field, and making available a pool of experts in community corrections management, program development, training, and research.

Learn more: napehome.org

Contact NAPE

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