Succession Planning

Guide for Employees

Revised: 02/08/2021

Introduction

Succession Planning is the process of identifying internal candidates for leadership or other key roles with an organization. It is a talent management strategy that has evolved to focus on critical, hard-to-fill positions in an organization. Generally, there are two types of succession planning:

- Role-based, which focuses on helping employees compete for the roles they seek in the organization and matching those interests with key positions that are difficult to fill and/or are critical to business success.
- Pool-based, which focuses on building a leadership pipeline by identifying employees with the potential to move into any of several positions within the organization.

The University of Tennessee System has opted to pursue the pool-based plan. This involved engaging campus and institute workgroups in the adoption of the latest succession planning practices that complement and enhance existing actions to prepare internal candidates without compromising sound and ethical hiring practices.

The process involves several steps as:

- Identify Key Positions for Succession Planning
- Confirm Commitment to Succession Planning
- Develop and Validate Position Competencies for Each Position
- Identify Potential Successors for Each Position
- Assess Readiness of Each Potential Successor for Each Position
- Create Development Plan for Each Potential Successor
- Review Development Plan Action Completion/Readiness Periodically

The Institute for Public Service has dedicated resources toward the succession planning initiative and welcomes leadership and employee participation in the process. The succession planning content, resources, and online tools were developed and created by the IPS Succession Planning Strategic Planning Team, the Oliver Group (https://olivergroup.com), and Digital A/V (https://www.digitalav.com).

Overview

While any position can be considered for succession planning, a strong emphasis and prioritization is suggested for the most 'critical' positions, otherwise known as 'key positions.' As a manager/leader at the University of Tennessee endeavoring to prepare possible successors for one or more positions at UT, it is important that each position is assessed in the department or work unit area to determine which positions are most critical.

This does not mean some positions are unimportant or less valuable, rather some are more difficult to find replacements for, or may have a more significant impact on the mission of the organization when suddenly vacated or left vacant for the period of time needed to effectively fill those positions. Critical positions for which succession planning is conducted may also be those for which the current incumbent is, or soon will be eligible for retirement.

The agency executive director is responsible for identifying key positions based on a position assessment form which drives the process. It is strongly encouraged to review the inventory of critical positions annually.

Agency Director Engagement

Below you will find an outline of the Succession Planning Process that will be used by agency directors. However, employees are encouraged to click on the documentation links for more detailed information about the Succession Planning process.

1.1 – Initiate Succession Planning Process (Position Information should be updated first.)
1.2 – Introduction (documentation)
2.1 – Critical Position Identification Guidelines (documentation)
2.2 – Position Assessment
2.3 – Review Position Priority Ranking
3.1 – Commitment Confirmation Guidelines (documentation)
3.2 – Agency Leader and Supervisor Commitment
4.1 – Potential Candidate Identification Guidelines (documentation)
4.2 – Potential Candidate Profiles
5.1 – Potential Candidate Competency Assessment Guidelines (documentation)
5.2 – Potential Candidate Competency Assessment
6.1 – Potential Candidate Development Plan Guidelines (documentation)
6.2 – Potential Candidate Development Plan

Employee Engagement

There are several instances in the succession planning process in which the employee may become engaged. This guide outlines those instances with instructional steps.

An employee may participate in the succession planning process by:

- Updating your personal profile
- Reviewing a list of nominations if nominated for a critical position
- Nominating himself/herself or another IPS colleague for a critical position
- Accessing a development plan if selected to participate in the process long-term

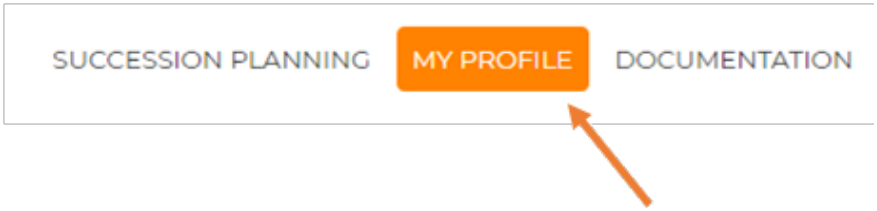
Access the Strategic Planning Portal

Navigate to https://sp.ips.tennessee.edu. You will need your UT NetID and password to access the portal.

Updating Your Personal Profile

As the succession planning process is implemented at the Institute for Public Service, all employees are strongly encouraged to review, update and complete their employee profiles in the succession planning portal. Once you assess the portal, you will be able to view and edit your profile.

Click on 'My Profile' from the main menu in the upper part of the screen.

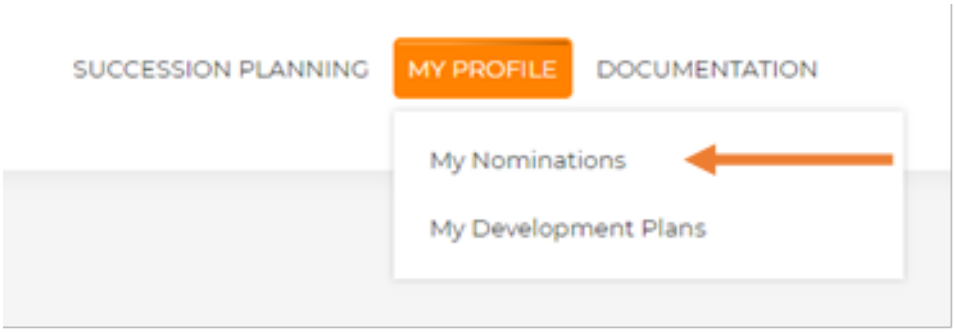


Click on the corresponding link to either view or edit your profile. When you edit your profile, you can complete tasks such as uploading a resume, highlighting your skills, or choosing not to participate in Succession Planning. Please note that some items are pre-filled from the university's HR information system. If changes need to be made, please contact your supervisor and IPS Human Resources Manager.

My Nominations

After a position is identified as critical and included in the succession planning process, you may view a list of positions for which you have been nominated (if applicable).

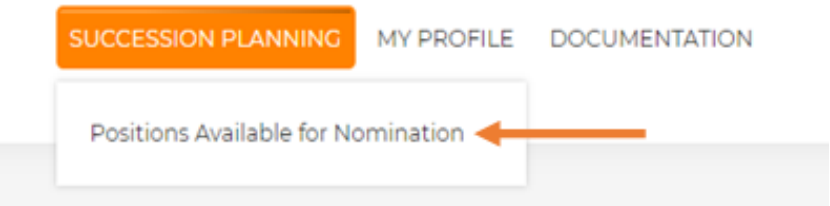
Under the 'My Profile' tab, click on 'My Nominations.' If you chose not to participate in the Succession Planning process, you cannot be nominated for a position.



Positions Available for Nomination

An employee has the ability to nominate himself/herself or nominate another IPS colleague for a critical position.

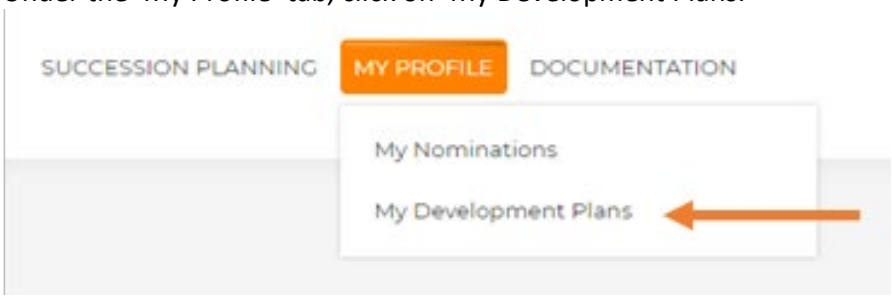
Under the 'Succession Planning' tab, click on 'Positions Available for Nomination.' You may make nominations within this section.



My Development Plans

Once an employee has been successfully identified and accepted to participate in the Succession Planning process for a critical position, the employee will have the opportunity to help create and access their development plan. The plan is used to design development activities for the highest priority positions in the Succession Planning process.

Under the 'My Profile' tab, click on 'My Development Plans.'



Succession Planning Model – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Is succession planning something new for the University of Tennessee?

Actually departments and work units at various levels and on multiple campuses have used succession planning as a means of identifying and preparing future leaders for several years. However, in 2016 the Board of Trustees (BoT) asked President DiPietro to establish a consistent model for UT use across the state, resulting in this new model.

2. Which positions are considered for succession planning at UT?

While any position in a department or work unit could be considered for succession planning, those positions that are deemed critical hard-to-hire or hard-to-fill (difficult to find a suitable replacement in an average time) are given highest priority.

3. What is the real purpose of succession planning if a potential successor must still apply through the normal search process?

Succession planning, sometimes referred to as leadership planning, is about identifying and developing talent within the organization to help enhance their readiness for future open positions. By focusing attention on development for critical positions, it helps create a pool of talent for those positions, and possibly others.

4. If I'm identified as a potential successor for a specific leadership position, does that mean I will be appointed to that role as soon as it's vacated by the incumbent?

Even candidates identified as potential successors will need to complete the normal search process to ensure consistency of our policies and practices.

5. How does a potential successor get identified for a position during succession planning?

Potential successor for a position may be identified through nomination by their organizational leader, other leaders, or through self-nomination.

6. How long will the succession planning program last?

The succession planning process at the institute will be ongoing as executive directors identify critical positions in their respective agencies. Any development plans for employees engaged in the process will generally have a development plan which could last over a 1- to 2-year time span.