



## SUCCESSION PLANNING: KEY TO AGENCY STABILITY, LONGEVITY, AND LIABILITY RESILIENCE

Every organization can benefit from identifying essential job tasks, key relationships, and organizational practices while ensuring that such knowledge is passed on to the next generation of personnel. A well-established succession plan is vital to an agency's current and long-term success. A well-structured, fair, and consistent process of preparing personnel for future positions is vital to long-term goal achievement, fulfilling the agency mission, and protecting the agency and its members from many risks. Additionally, governing body officials might be less likely to begin a lengthy and costly search for a Chief of Police when the law enforcement agency has implemented a comprehensive succession planning process.

Succession planning should not be limited to identifying and developing potential candidates to lead the agency. Identifying positions to include in the succession planning process might be agency-specific, but some general considerations are:

- Supervisory positions at all levels within the agency, including front-line leadership.
- Leadership positions central to strategic agency goals or special programs.
- Positions in the agency that require detailed specific knowledge or an extended learning curve.
- Identify key positions where cross-training assists in long-term staffing needs and ensures greater communication and organizational efficiency.
- Positions that are dependent upon strong relationships with individuals outside of the organization. Such relationships might include other agencies, community organizations, civic groups, and vendors.

Succession planning is beneficial to agencies of all sizes. Larger agencies can utilize the process to appropriately identify personnel from a larger pool of candidates for future positions. In contrast, smaller law enforcement agencies, with fewer resources and staff, might benefit from succession planning as a valuable process for the professional development of its members.

Some resources and considerations when creating a succession planning process:

- Consult with the Municipal Attorney to ensure that any succession plan and the promotional process are fair, legal, consistent, and supported by the Governing Body.
- Implement a Training and Succession Planning Policy. A Sample Training Policy and Succession Planning Policy can be found [HERE](#).
- Enroll leaders and future leaders in the [MEL Leadership Academy](#) and courses offered through the [MEL Safety Institute Leadership Skills Training](#).
- Include the New Jersey State Chiefs of Police [New Police Chiefs Orientation Program](#) and the International Association of Chiefs of Police [Leadership Development Resources](#) in your succession planning program.
- Utilize the resources from the MEL Safety Institute Law Enforcement Team, such as:
  - [Career Survival for First-Line Supervisors](#)
  - [Law Enforcement First Line Supervisor Training Program](#)
  - [Law Enforcement Bulletins](#)
  - [Law Enforcement Risk Analysis](#)
  - [Law Enforcement Video Messages](#)

There can be a massive risk of organizational instability, liability exposure, and rendering an agency unable to achieve critical goals when there is no succession planning process.

If you have any questions, please contact your Law Enforcement Risk Control Consultant.

Sources:

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