



BUILDING THE LEADERSHIP BENCH

Developing a Talent Pipeline for the Senior Executive Service

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PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

McKinsey & Company

The Partnership for Public Service is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to revitalize the federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The complexity of the challenges facing our federal government today places new demands on members of the Senior Executive Service (SES). As our government's senior-most career leaders, they must continue to be not only technical experts but also strategic thinkers and skilled problem solvers. These new demands, coupled with retirements looming large among this group of career civil servants, point to a stark need to strengthen the SES talent pipeline and prepare individuals to take over critical executive roles.

Over the past several months, the Partnership for Public Service and McKinsey & Company conducted interviews and focus groups with political leaders, senior executives, leadership-development program participants and human resources personnel from federal agencies across government, as well as with stakeholder organizations. Our research examined the current state of talent development for the SES, the phases of a cohesive SES pipeline strategy and options for strengthening that pipeline.

THE STATE OF TALENT DEVELOPMENT FOR THE SES

Without a central authority responsible for talent development government-wide, each agency has created its own methods for managing up-and-coming executive talent, some more comprehensive than others. Most agencies have components of a talent pipeline, but those are often not integrated into a cohesive talent strategy. We found that senior agency leaders, the top political and

career leaders, pay insufficient attention to identifying, developing, recruiting and selecting talent for the SES. And agencies usually end up hiring most of their SES members from their own ranks, often from the subcomponent in which those candidates were already working.

THE IDEAL PIPELINE: WHAT GREAT TALENT DEVELOPMENT LOOKS LIKE

We present four phases of a cohesive SES pipeline-development strategy. We found that some agencies excel in one or more of these phases and could serve as examples for other agencies to emulate.

Define leadership needs

To create a pipeline that meets their mission needs, agencies engage in workforce planning: They assess and plan for gaps in skills, capabilities and experience. They also conduct leadership assessments to identify high-potential individuals and provide them with development opportunities.

Build the pipeline of future leaders

Agencies then build a strong pipeline of potential SES candidates with the requisite capabilities and qualifications. Building the internal pipeline involves formal training programs such as Candidate Development Programs (CDPs), on-the-job experience and opportunities to learn from coaches, mentors and peers. Ideally, agencies also would seek outside talent, including from other government entities and from the nonprofit and private sectors.

Recruit and select SES members from the candidate pool

To broaden the candidate pool and encourage people to join the SES, agencies with solid pipelines have made efforts to simplify the hiring process: for example, making vacancy announcements less technical and agency-specific, and accepting resumes instead of requiring lengthy narratives for the initial application. They then rely on their Executive Resources Boards (ERBs) to help select the most qualified candidates and make a persuasive case to the Qualifications Review Board (QRB), run by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Assess and continuously improve leadership-development programs

As an ongoing part of the pipeline-development process, best-practice agencies assess how their programs are working and continually fine-tune them to produce the desired results. Ideally, they would use SES performance data to evaluate, over time, the effectiveness of SES members who went through leadership-development programs. They would also use this data, along with feedback from those executives, to make program improvements.

OPTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE SES PIPELINE

Create central responsibility and accountability for developing a strong pipeline of executives who serve as government-wide assets

The office of the deputy director for management at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), with support of the full President's Management Council (PMC), could assume central responsibility for developing the SES pipeline. It could collaborate with OPM to encourage agencies to identify, train, recruit

and select SES candidates who can serve as both agency and government-wide assets.

In addition, OPM could undertake a number of valuable initiatives: It could create a central resume bank of aspiring and current SES members, include rotational opportunities and interagency details in its online repository of SES vacancies, and expand its efforts to facilitate the sharing of best practices among agencies.

OMB and OPM could also consider requiring candidates to have broad experience and championing expansion of the Interagency Rotation Program. Congress, for its part, could ensure funding for leadership-development programs. The president could convene the SES as a community to show the administration's support for senior leaders and inspire those in the pipeline to join the SES.

Develop a comprehensive approach for developing talent for the SES, incorporating best practices

Federal agencies should design a comprehensive, integrated approach for developing individuals with executive potential. Agencies should tailor SES preparation programs in accordance with the view that SES positions require a broad perspective and exceptional leadership and management skills; positions that don't have such requirements should be recategorized into the Senior Level (SL) or Scientific or Professional (ST) designation. Agencies should track the costs and outcomes of their leadership-development programs, and gather and share feedback from program participants, supervisors and agency leaders. In addition, agency leaders and Congress can use the results of the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey to inform improvements to their leadership-development programs.

Prioritize the development of future executives

Senior agency leaders should be accountable for leadership development and succession planning, and they should model the behavior they wish to see cascade through the organization. They also should hold their senior executives accountable in performance plans for building the next generation of SES members. Top career and political leaders should serve on agencies' ERBs and actively participate in selecting talent for leadership-development programs, serving as advisers and mentors for participants in these programs and making sure that individuals selected for hire meet the agency's needs.

Open SES pipelines more fully to external candidates

Agency leaders should instill a culture that seeks talent from both inside and outside the agency and federal government. Executive resources staff, for example, should work with hiring managers to make sure that SES job announcements do not unintentionally exclude or discourage non-government applicants. Agencies also should pursue partnerships and short-term exchanges with business, academia, state and local government and others to give external candidates exposure to federal service.

For our federal government to secure the executive talent it needs for the future, agencies must bolster their talent pipelines and take a more strategic approach to developing the capabilities of potential leaders who can serve as government-wide assets. Such efforts will go a long way toward ensuring that our government will have strong and effective leaders who are well equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

INTRODUCTION

The complex challenges confronting government, from national security and healthcare reform to the debt crisis and unemployment, demand the best of government leaders. Because these challenges cut across agencies, sectors and government levels, dealing with them effectively requires executives with not only technical expertise but also strong leadership and management skills. Add to these issues the significant pressure from spending restrictions, fiscal uncertainty, pay and hiring freezes and the evolving financial and political ramifications of a sequester, and it's clear that the American government's senior-most leaders must be strategic thinkers and skilled problem solvers.

Indeed, those kinds of leaders are what the authors of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 envisioned. The law established the Senior Executive Service (SES), the cadre of career civil servants who hold the top managerial and policy positions in the federal government. Members of this elite corps were meant to be government-wide assets, helping to solve the nation's knottiest problems by lending their strategic expertise and management prowess across various agencies.

The need for savvy, well-trained government leaders to fill executive positions will only become more acute: Nearly two-thirds of the members of the SES are eligible to retire in the next five years. While the loss of such experienced talent and institutional knowledge creates a challenge for the federal government, it also presents an opportunity to take a deliberate approach to developing talent and equipping future executives with the skills they will need. Are federal agencies prepared for the potential turnover? Are they grooming high-performing individuals to fill some of the government's most important executive positions? What exactly are agencies doing to ensure they have a healthy pipeline of leaders?

Building on our 2012 research on SES mobility,¹ the Partnership for Public Service and McKinsey & Company embarked on a second study—this time to examine how federal agencies are building a talent pipeline for the SES. In this report, we discuss the current state of executive preparation at federal agencies. We describe the ideal process for building a leadership pipeline and highlight promising agency practices that can be replicated across government. Finally, we offer a set of steps that agencies could take in their ongoing efforts to attract and nurture the best talent for SES positions.

In researching this report, we reviewed current pipeline-management practices at major federal agencies and examined how people are being prepared to join the SES. We did an extensive review of articles, publications, guidelines and policies related to SES pipeline development. In addition, we analyzed data from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for civilian federal employees from 2002 through 2012. We interviewed executive-development program managers, chief human capital officers (CHCOs), HR staff, agency assistant secretaries and senior leaders from 22 federal agencies, and we conducted three focus groups composed of aspiring, current or retired SES members. We also spoke with leaders and staff at the key central management agencies, including OPM and the office of Management and Budget (OMB), as well as stakeholder organizations such as the Senior Executives Association (SEA). In total, 77 individuals from 27 organizations participated in our research (see Appendix A for a full list).

We hope our report sparks debate and action; we firmly believe that a robust SES pipeline is critical to ensuring our government's future effectiveness.

¹ *Mission-Driven Mobility: Strengthening Our Government Through a Mobile Leadership Corps*, McKinsey & Company and the Partnership for Public Service, February 2012.

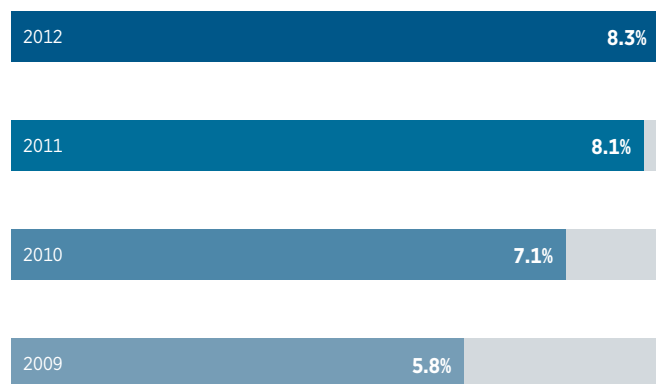
THE STATE OF TALENT DEVELOPMENT FOR THE SES

Any organization that has had vacancies in leadership positions knows firsthand how crucial building a leadership pipeline is. For federal agencies, the need for a pipeline is taking on even greater urgency in light of the large number of potential SES retirements. In the next five years, nearly two-thirds of SES members will be retirement eligible (Appendix B). As Figure 1 shows, actual SES retirements also have been on the rise since 2009, suggesting that the federal government should prepare for considerable turnover in its executive ranks (also see Appendix C).

While a wave of retirements—and the accompanying loss of deep institutional knowledge—can be worrisome to an agency, retirements could give the federal government an opportunity to reshape the SES as a mobile corps of versatile leaders. But agencies, as well as OPM and OMB, know that it will require a concerted effort and sustained attention. Over the course of our research, we identified four factors hindering agencies from building robust SES pipelines. These factors aren't trivial, but some agencies have found ways to build a strong SES pipeline in spite of them.

FIGURE 1
Government-wide trend in SES retirements

Percent of career SES who retired by end of fiscal year



Source: FedScope (fedscope.opm.gov) from the Office of Personnel Management for career senior executives in full-time, non-seasonal, permanent positions.

1 EACH AGENCY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING ITS OWN TALENT FOR EXECUTIVE POSITIONS, WITH LITTLE CENTRAL OVERSIGHT OR ACCOUNTABILITY

OPM provides oversight and assistance to agencies on executive development through its Executive Resources and Employee Development office. It also disseminates best practices and facilitates information sharing among agencies—for example, by collaborating with OMB, the President’s Management Council (PMC) and the CHCO Council to develop tools and resources on hiring, selection and onboarding. It oversees the certification of agencies’ CDPs, which are designed to train potential SES members. In addition, OPM coordinates the Qualifications

Review Board (QRB), an independent board, staffed by SES members across government, that is responsible for assessing the qualifications and approving the final selection of SES candidates.

These efforts have been helpful to a number of agencies, but OPM doesn’t have the capacity, resources or authority to take charge of executive development government-wide. No federal entity holds agencies accountable for developing potential executives who can become government-wide assets. There’s no standardized approach for preparing

executives for the SES—and because every agency independently develops its executive pipeline, quality varies markedly and little attention is given to government-wide needs.

Furthermore, there’s little transparency into the SES candidate pool. Information about the background, skills and interests of aspiring or current SES members is not widely collected or shared. “If there were a centralized list of high-potential pre-SES folks, I would check to see what the pool was for filling our slots,” one interviewee said.

2 MANY FEDERAL AGENCIES HAVE STRONG ELEMENTS OF SES TALENT DEVELOPMENT IN PLACE, BUT THESE ELEMENTS ARE SELDOM PART OF A COHESIVE STRATEGY

Agencies with a solid leadership pipeline rely on leadership-development programs that pull in promising employees early in their careers. These programs—which can include rotation assignments, coaching, mentoring and other opportunities—build upon one another and often have a CDP or an equivalent program as the capstone.

Although many agencies have elements of a strong pipeline in place, such as workforce planning or training, we found that those elements often are disconnected from one another rather than functioning as parts of a cohesive strategy. Some interviewees said they took part in programs at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, American University or the Federal Executive Institute, or in the Excellence in Government Fellows program run by the Partnership, but their participation in those programs wasn’t part of a broader SES talent-development strategy.

The CDP is the one program expressly designed to focus on the five Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) on which SES applicants are evaluated: leading change, leading people, being results-driven, hav-

ing business acumen and building coalitions. OPM certifies CDPs, but because agencies design and implement them on their own, they vary significantly in content and quality. Agencies also vary in how they view their CDP: Some rely on it as the primary feeder for the SES while others view it as one of many ways to develop talent. Still others place people in CDPs without much expectation they will rise to the SES ranks.

Often, there is a mismatch between candidates’ and agencies’ expectations for the program. Even in agencies that view CDPs as a feeder for the SES, programs aren’t always aligned with the workforce-planning process, resulting in low SES placement rates for graduates (Table 1). Government-wide, between fiscal 2005 and June 2012, slightly more than half of CDP graduates had been placed in SES positions, but those graduates make up a small part of the SES overall. In total, only 12 percent of the new SES executives hired in the first three-quarters of fiscal 2012 had graduated from a CDP (Figure 2; Appendix D).

Many agencies can describe the strengths and weaknesses of their

CDP’s or produce data on the number of courses offered and people participating; some collect feedback from participants. However, several interviewees mentioned how difficult it was to calculate the return on investment from leadership-development programs. “I don’t think anyone knows how to do it. It’s asking the question of whether you’re a better leader than you were a year ago, which is hard to get at,” one interviewee said.

Not all agencies collect and analyze data on the costs and impact of training and development activities, according to a 2012 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report.² Nor are there routine checks to determine if current executives possess the skills and expertise the agency needs now. “There are people who were hired 20 years ago that have skills we don’t need anymore,” an interviewee said.

² U.S. General Accountability Office, *Federal Training Investments: Office of Personnel Management and Agencies Can Do More to Ensure Cost-Effective Decisions*, (Washington, D.C.: September 2012).

TABLE 1

CDP placement rate Between fiscal 2005 and June 2012

Agency*	Total CDP graduates	Entered SES		
		Within 1 year	Within 2 years	By June 2012**
Government-wide***	1,117	32.1%	45.6%	54.1%
Department of Agriculture	75	13.3%	32.0%	42.7%
Department of Commerce	74	8.1%	12.2%	18.9%
Department of Energy	24	8.3%	12.5%	20.8%
Department of Health and Human Services	45	26.7%	42.2%	55.6%
Department of Homeland Security	169	18.9%	39.1%	48.5%
Department of Housing and Urban Development	10	30.0%	40.0%	60.0%
Department of the Interior	71	28.2%	32.4%	46.5%
Department of Justice	45	11.1%	20.0%	42.2%
Department of Labor	18	22.2%	38.9%	55.6%
Department of Treasury	169	60.9%	78.1%	79.9%
Department of Veterans Affairs	56	28.6%	39.3%	51.8%
Environmental Protection Agency	28	39.3%	67.9%	78.6%
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	82	26.8%	41.5%	51.2%
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	108	63.0%	75.9%	78.7%
Office of Management and Budget	22	59.1%	72.7%	81.8%
Social Security Administration	69	30.4%	42.0%	46.4%

*Refers to the agency that employed the graduate while he/she was participating in the CDP, which may or may not be the agency that hosted the CDP. **Refers to anyone who participated in a CDP between fiscal 2005 and June 2012 and was then placed in the SES. Some of these individuals may have graduated from a CDP within the past year. ***Includes all CDP graduates. While agencies with very few CDP graduates are not listed in this chart, executives at these agencies are included in the government-wide total.

Source: Office of Personnel Management analysis of the Central Personnel Data File (now called EHRI-SDM) for career senior executives employed at agency as of June 2012.

FIGURE 2

Source of new career SES members* by CDP participation Fiscal 2012**

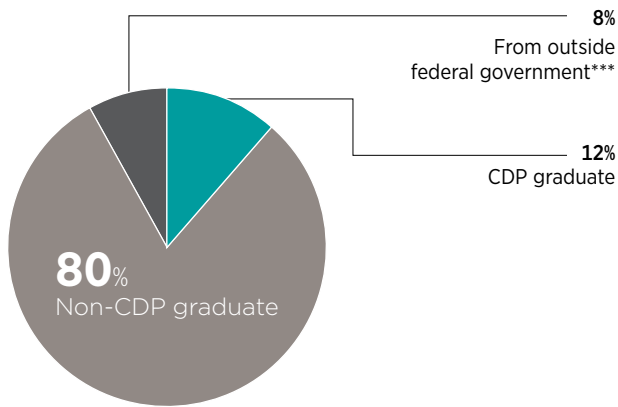
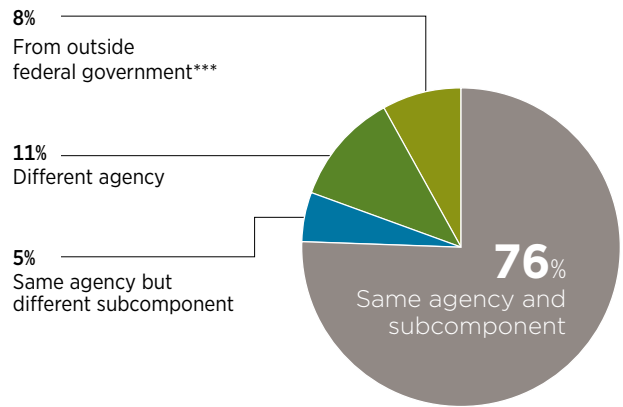


FIGURE 3

Source of new career SES members* Fiscal 2012**



*N=562. **Through June 2012. ***Includes the private sector, nonprofit sector and agencies that do not report their data to OPM.

Source: Partnership analysis of the Central Personnel Data File (now called EHRI-SDM) for career senior executives converted or newly appointed to career SES positions as of June 2012.

3 MANY SENIOR AGENCY LEADERS PAY INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION TO EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

We found that senior agency leaders, for the most part, pay insufficient attention to ensuring that their agency identifies, develops, recruits and selects the best executives. “I’m struck by the inability of organizational leadership to look at their SES corps critically,” said one senior agency leader, observing that most of his peers at other agencies don’t think of developing SES pipelines as their core responsibility.

Our interviewees suggested that even while senior agency leaders see lack of SES “bench strength” as an issue, they often treat development of talent for the SES as a process-oriented function rather than a strategic one. Senior agency leaders—political appointees in particular—may feel

they have little choice given competing demands on their time and the difficult policy issues they face on a daily basis, and thus tend to delegate talent-related duties and decisions to their HR staff. One consequence of this lack of senior-level attention is a disconnect between agency leaders’ and HR leaders’ perceptions of the quality of their agency’s executive talent, the effectiveness of their leadership-development programs and the strength of the SES pipeline. The HR leaders we interviewed struck a generally positive note on these topics, whereas the agency leaders we spoke with raised concerns. One senior agency leader said, “We have about five ‘fixers’ [out of more than 100 SES members]—people who can

move from one unit to another to manage projects or solve problems. I don’t think it’s a bad group, but I don’t have a lot of stars.” The disconnect between senior agency leaders and HR leaders could hinder agencies from identifying the mix of skills they need and, ultimately, from getting the best talent.

Executive Resources Boards (ERBs), which are panels of agency executives responsible for making SES selections, are meant to serve as the direct link between agency leaders and the HR function. However, we found great variation in how involved the ERBs actually are in identifying and selecting SES talent.

4 AGENCIES SHOW A STRONG PREFERENCE FOR A PIPELINE OF INTERNAL TALENT

Most agencies do well at appropriately rewarding and promoting high-performing employees. Indeed, many outstanding organizations lean toward promoting from within. However, as government’s challenges increase and new skills are required, agencies may need to open a broader set of opportunities to outside candidates. In general, senior agency leaders see the value in bringing in external talent—either from other government agencies or from the private or nonprofit sectors—to offer different perspectives and additional skill sets. But a number of factors serve to stem the flow of outside candidates.

The vast majority of SES members not only come from within their agencies, but data from the first three quarters of fiscal 2012 show that about three of four new SES members were hired from within the agency subcomponent in which they were already working (Figure 3; Appendix E). Today, 20 of 28 agencies

hire fewer than 10 percent of their SES members from outside the federal government (Appendix F).

Most agencies simply prefer individuals who already know the organization well. One interviewee said SES members typically come up through the ranks and “are selected because of their knowledge of the content, not because of their management skills.” Agencies normally don’t think about hiring external candidates unless the circumstances are unusual—an emergency backlog, a desperate need for new skills, the need to create a new agency from scratch.

The application process itself favors internal candidates over external ones. Several focus group participants talked about how the process is nearly impossible to navigate without insider knowledge. Job announcements often are written in a way that favors those with agency-specific technical skills rather than general leadership and management compe-

tencies. In addition, many agencies still do not accept resumes, requiring instead that applicants write lengthy narratives demonstrating their proficiency in the Executive Core Qualifications, the standards used to evaluate SES candidates. One focus group participant who came from outside government said ECQs “seemed almost irrelevant to the task of figuring out if what I can do matched with what they needed.” Some agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), have taken action, adopting resume-based hiring for SES positions and assisting other agencies that want to do the same.

A few interviewees observed that it can be challenging to get QRB approval for external candidates. The QRB, they said, often asks for additional information or rejects external candidates outright.

SES Pipelines

The Senior Executive Service (SES) has been recognized as an elite cadre of the government's top leaders. Though the number of career senior executives is relatively small—7,198 members in 2012, representing 0.4 percent of the 2.1 million member federal workforce—these executives have the potential to effect significant change across government.

Ten years ago, in 2002, the federal workforce included 6,086 SES members and 260,063 employees who were in GS-13 to GS-15 positions, typically feeder positions for the SES. A decade later, nearly 29 percent of those SES members from 2002 remained in SES positions, and 1.4 percent of those who had been in the GS-13 to GS-15 cohort in 2002 had moved up to join the SES.

If every one of the 6,086 SES positions occupied in 2002 had been vacated and filled by an individual from inside government, the total percentage of GS-13s to GS-15s that could possibly have moved into SES positions would have been 2.3 percent. However, many of the SES positions never opened, and a small number were filled by people from outside government.

On average, 767 career SES jobs are filled in any given year. The small number of SES positions available for internal talent who seek to enter the SES ranks underscores the importance and selectivity of the SES. And it makes it imperative for agencies to fully prepare their future leaders and make sure their talent pipelines produce the exceptional leadership the government needs.

NOTES

For the mobility numbers, our analysis looked at the agency subcomponents of individuals in 2002 and 2012. It does not account for movement between those years. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was not in place at the start of the 2002 timeframe. If DHS subcomponents as they existed within other agencies in 2002 are matched to current DHS subcomponents, the mobility numbers would show lower rates of mobility than those displayed in this analysis.

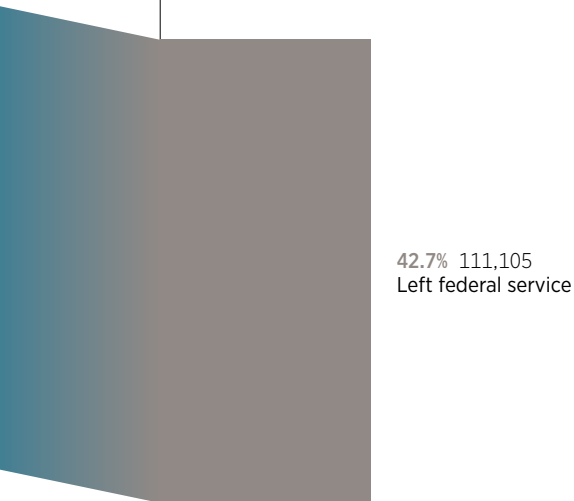
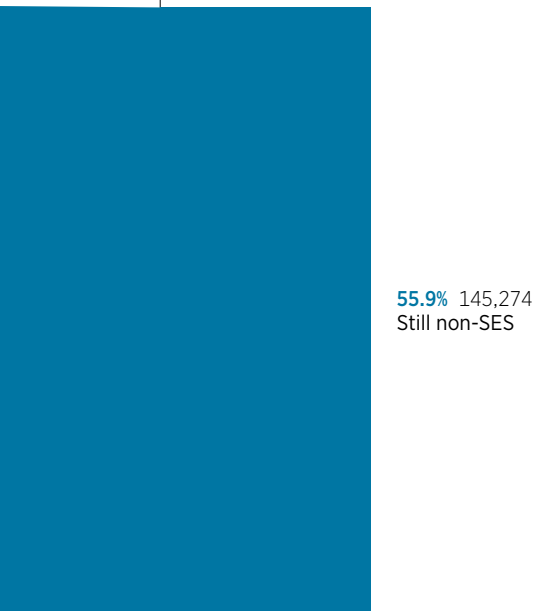
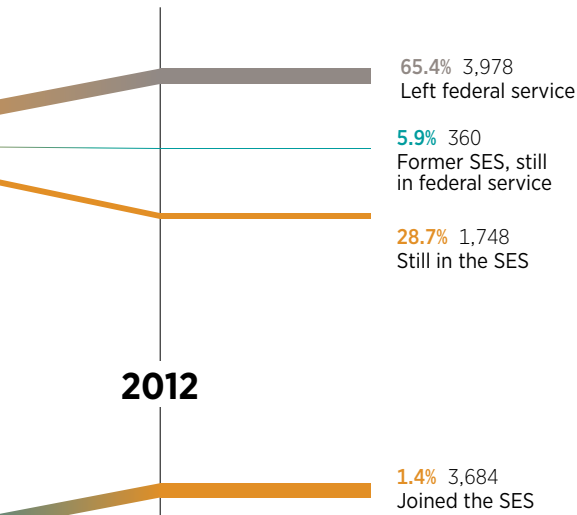
Reasons why individuals are no longer in the SES but still in federal service could include: moving to an agency that does not use SES appointments for senior executives; returning to more technical, less managerial positions; or choosing or being asked to step back from the SES due to performance or skills mismatch.

6,086
career SES members

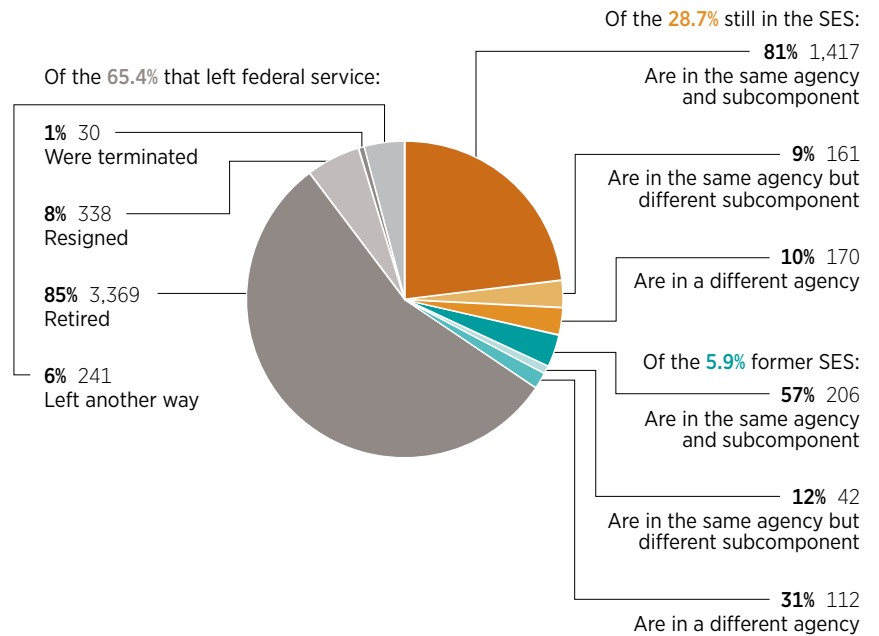
2002



260,063
GS-13 to GS-15
level employees



SES COHORT



GS-13 TO GS-15 COHORT

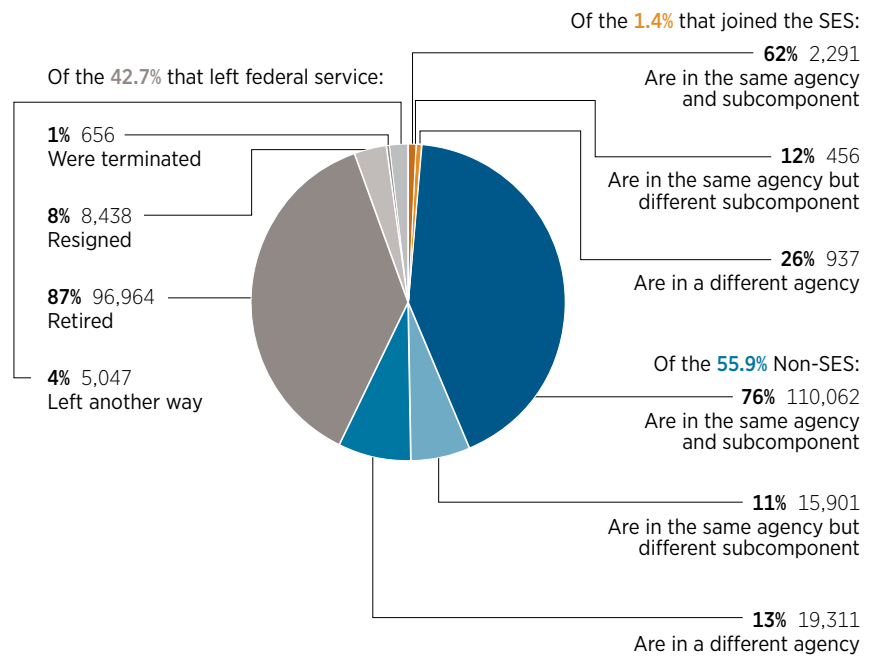
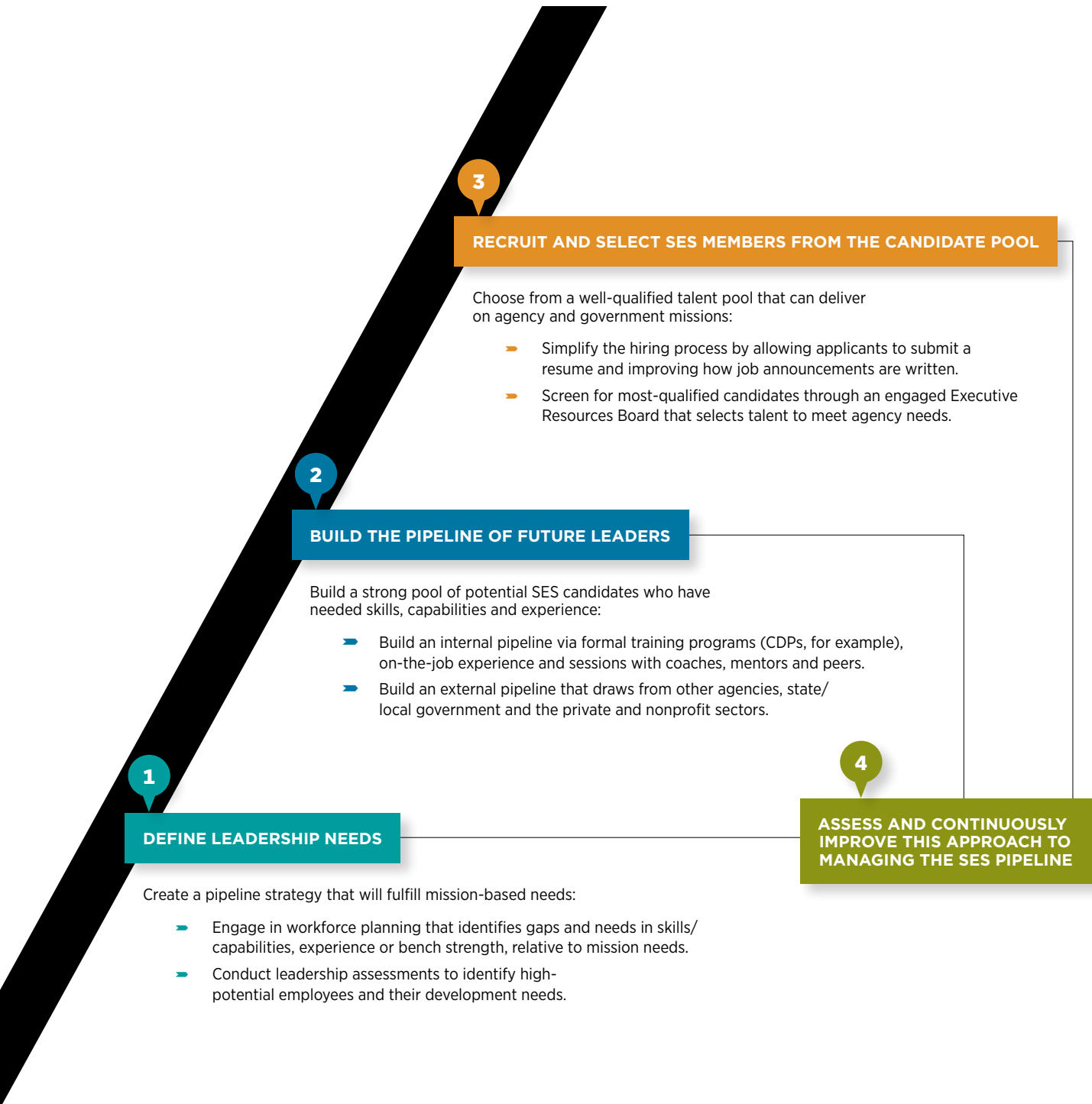


FIGURE 4
Phases of the executive talent pipeline



THE IDEAL PIPELINE: WHAT GREAT EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT LOOKS LIKE

Figure 4 shows the phases of a cohesive pipeline-development strategy: defining leadership needs, building the pipeline of future leaders from both internal and external sources, and recruiting and selecting SES from the candidate pool, with assessment and continuous improvement as an ongoing part of the process. These phases shouldn't stand in isolation but, rather should be part of an integrated approach to SES talent development. Senior-leadership involvement and support is crucial in every phase.

We found that some agencies—including the Department of Defense (DOD), the General Accountability Office (GAO), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)—excel in their execution of one or more of these phases and thus could serve as examples for other agencies to emulate.

While this report is focused on developing the pipeline for future executives, agencies shouldn't neglect ongoing development for SES members. After investing significantly in developing their SES pipelines and hiring and selecting SES talent, agencies should strive to retain top talent by providing good onboarding and continuing professional development.

1 DEFINE LEADERSHIP NEEDS

The first step in developing a talent pipeline is understanding and predicting the agency's workforce needs. Agencies must develop the capability to predict their SES vacancies accurately, define each position's roles and responsibilities and determine the skills and competencies required for each position. Agencies must then be able to analyze the gaps between the talent they have and the talent they'll need, and come up with a strategy for filling those gaps. The IRS, for instance, has established sophisticated processes for workforce planning and leadership assessment.

Engage in workforce planning

Agencies should plan for predictable leadership gaps, such as SES retirements. At VA, for example, employees are formally encouraged to give more than the traditional two weeks' notice when they retire, with assurance that sharing their plans early will not be detrimental to their career in any way. When employees reach out to the full-time staff member who is in charge of retirement and benefits counseling, he or she asks permission to share their retirement plans with VA leadership. Most employees

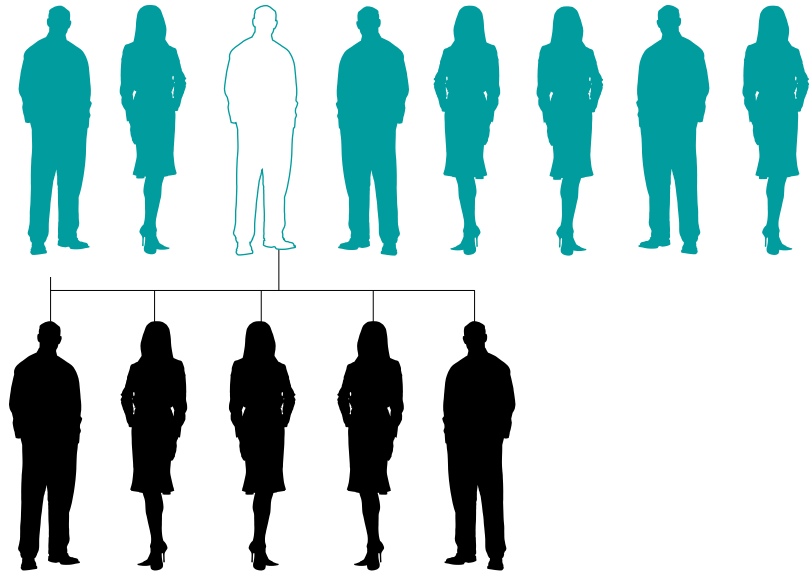
consent. With advance notice of retirements, VA has more time—often, at least several months—to recruit for positions and manage the transition.

In their succession planning, agencies will soon be able to take advantage of a phased retirement option that will allow executives to work part time as they transition into retirement. OPM is in the process of finalizing the implementing regulations, but once in effect, this option would give agencies time to determine if and how they want to fill the affected positions. Agencies also can recategorize SES positions as Senior Level (SL) or Scientific or Professional (ST), if appropriate—classifications that don't require the same type of management and leadership skills as the SES.

Workforce planning goes beyond planning for retirements or other vacancies. It should also reflect any shifts in an agency's strategic direction. Will an agency be doing new types of work that require different skills? Is its workload shifting, such that it needs less of one skill and more of another? Its workforce plan should include clear goals as to the number of leaders it is aiming to develop over a specified time frame and the particular set of skills they should have.

Conduct leadership assessments

Forward-thinking agencies identify high-performing individuals early in their careers, evaluate their skills and competencies and provide them with appropriate development opportunities to meet the agency's long-term mission needs. A crucial first step in leadership assessment is to define a small number of leadership competencies and describe what "great" looks like for each. Agencies that conduct assessments, such as the IRS (see sidebar), can then get a detailed picture of the leadership potential in their organizations, which informs decisions about recruiting, training and succession planning.



The IRS's strategic approach to talent pipelines

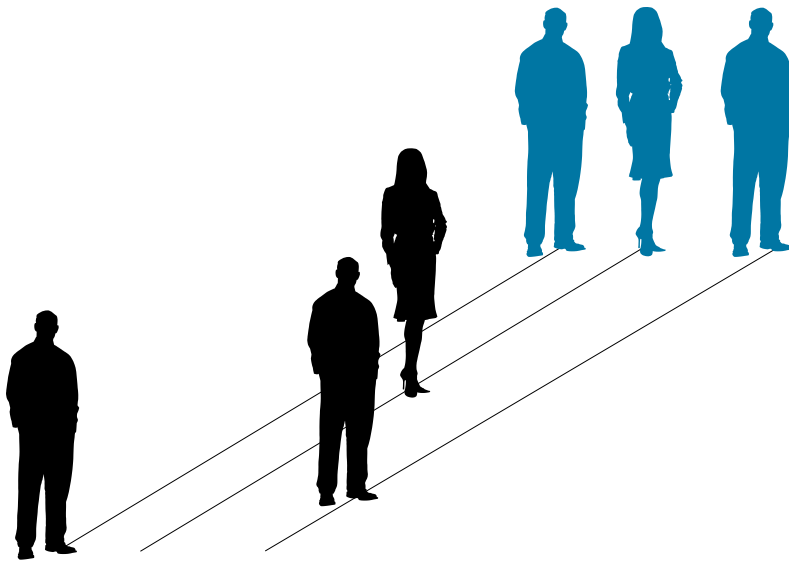
The IRS is widely cited by OPM and other agencies as excelling in leadership development. The agency runs a completely integrated set of leadership development programs, tightly linked to succession planning.

In recent years, the agency has refined its Leadership Succession Review (LSR) process. Conducted annually for non-managers, frontline managers, department managers and senior managers, the LSR allows the agency to collect valuable information about its rising leaders, such as what kinds of training they need to be ready to move to the next level. The LSR includes an individual self-assessment, as well as a manager's assessment of the employee's skills and competencies. Managers then sit down with employees to discuss their strengths and opportunities for growth and to put together a development plan.

The agency aggregates data from these assessments, yielding a wealth of information about its workforce. For example, the agency can see what percentages of employees are performing at or above their cur-

rent level and identify skill gaps in individual offices and across the agency. Data can also be used to select candidates for CDPs and gauge individual interest in leadership positions.

The LSR provides insights into the agency's bench strength. As of November 2012, the LSR data showed that the IRS had three candidates ready for every vacancy for frontline managers, 10 candidates for every department manager position and five candidates for every senior manager position. In addition, through the LSR, the agency found a 4 percent increase over a two-year period in the number of employees interested in leadership positions. The LSR also brought to light key skills gaps across the agency, such as critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making, and found a weaker leadership bench in certain geographic locations. Armed with this information, the agency has begun to take action to strengthen its talent pipelines. For example, it is refining the curricula for its IRS University, launched in 2012, to get better at addressing the skill gaps identified.



The NRC's offerings in leadership development

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) CDP has one of the highest placement rates in government. According to the agency, 93 percent of its CDP graduates have entered the SES since 2001.

The NRC begins cultivating potential executives well before they reach the senior level. The agency runs a leadership academy, with a set of leadership-development programs that build upon one another and prepare talent for leadership positions. For example, NRC offers a competitive Leadership Potential Program (LPP) for high-performing individuals with little or no supervisory experience. The 12-month program is targeted at individuals at the GS-13 to GS-15 level and combines formal classroom learning with activities such as action-learning projects and rotation assignments. The leadership academy also includes individual classes and full curricula for supervisors and team leaders. This extensive background in leadership development prepares top candidates for participation in the agency's CDP, providing a stronger foundation for SES placement upon graduation.

The NRC is careful about aligning its CDP with specific talent needs and succession plans. The agency doesn't run a CDP if it knows that graduates will have to wait a long time for

SES positions to open. "We don't go around and ask for retirement dates," said an interviewee. "We try to time it just right by relying on succession planning and executives' updates on their future plans." Between 2005 and 2008, the NRC ran a CDP every other year and then stopped for a few years, given the agency's projected talent needs. The agency typically gave special assignments—such as a position as an acting SES manager in a regional office—to CDP graduates who had not yet entered the SES, so they could continue to develop executive-leadership skills.

The agency's ERB plays an active role in managing the talent pipeline, specifically in selecting LPP and CDP candidates and approving program content. "A succession-planning list is taken to every ERB meeting so that members can comment on moves or vacancies," said an interviewee, adding that the ERB has "very engaged members." These members frequently serve as mentors to CDP participants, either formally or informally, and support CDP graduates by helping them secure special assignments or SES placements. "Leadership at the top truly cares about the employees and looks out for their development, which helps the organization," said an interviewee.

2 BUILD THE PIPELINE OF FUTURE LEADERS

Based on information from their workforce plans and leadership assessments, agencies can create a strategy for building their SES pipelines. They should make careful choices about how to develop internal leaders and when and where to recruit externally.

Build an internal pipeline

Agencies should be deliberate about building the skills they need for the future, rather than simply expecting employees to learn as they go or equating agency tenure with SES readiness. Ideally, agencies will prepare internal candidates for SES positions using a combination of training techniques, including formal classroom-style sessions, on-the-job experience and coaching from mentors and peers. They will also make a concerted effort to build interest in the SES, addressing the barriers that might prevent individuals from pursuing this career path.

Formal training programs

Most agencies with strong talent pipelines offer several leadership-development programs that employees can take long before they are ready to enter a CDP or equivalent SES preparation program. At the NRC, for instance, employees have already completed a number of development programs by the time they participate in a CDP (see sidebar).

In addition to honing technical, managerial and leadership skills, training programs also can help potential candidates understand what it is like to be in the SES and help them assess whether it is the right fit for them. OPM, for example, runs a one-week program for GS-15 employees called the Senior Executive Assessment Program (SEAP) that demystifies the SES and assesses participant readiness for executive positions. The program organizes

a panel of current SES members to talk about transitions and challenges in moving into the SES.

In agencies with CDPs, HR leaders tend to see the program as critical for preparing executives for the SES. The most effective agencies align their CDPs with their workforce plan to ensure the program is emphasizing the right mix of skills and to increase the chances that CDP graduates will be placed in SES positions within a reasonable time period (often one or two years). These agencies put CDP candidates through a rigorous assessment process to ensure the best talent is selected for the program.

OPM requires agencies to provide each CDP participant with mentorship opportunities, a rotation assignment of at least four months in another office and 80 hours of training related to the ECQs. We found that successful CDPs exceed these requirements. For instance, they give longer rotation assignments—six months or more—to help maximize participants’ contributions. “We’ve seen over time that you are just getting your feet wet in 120 days, so we’ve extended it to six months,” one agency official said. Other interviewees stressed that the best CDPs pair candidates with strong mentors, provide carefully chosen executive-level rotations and give ample opportunity for networking with and learning from senior executives. Importantly, senior-level involvement shows an agency’s commitment to the program. At the IRS, for example, deputy commissioners meet with CDP participants several times during the training period. In addition, participants meet with executives in each division for in-depth discussions, action-learning exercises and presentations, giving each participant a sense of the work and challenges of all IRS divisions.

Agencies also stressed that CDP participants benefit when ERB members are actively involved in

advising and mentoring them and, ultimately, in helping connect high-performing individuals with SES opportunities.

Some agencies don’t offer CDPs but have leadership development programs that have similar success characteristics: selectivity, a balanced curriculum that offers both classroom-style training and on-the-job experience, and support from senior leaders. DOD, for example, has a robust program for preparing employees for senior leadership positions (see sidebar).

On-the-job experience

Several agencies we interviewed supplement formal classroom training with on-the-job learning opportunities that go beyond simply performing daily tasks and honing skills along the way. These opportunities are structured offerings that integrate skill development with employees’ day-to-day activities.

One example is the Interagency Rotation Program for GS-13 to GS-15 employees, created in 2011 by the PMC and the CHCO Council. Participants spend six months at another agency to get broad exposure, meet their counterparts and build their professional networks. They participate in monthly meetings with program peers, which facilitates skill development and encourages inter-agency collaboration. More than 150 people from 15 agencies have taken part in the program. The number of participating agencies—as well as the size of the cohorts—has grown steadily each year. Participants say the program has helped them gain new perspectives, develop new skills and expand their networks. Host supervisors feel that agencies also have benefited; some say they’ve been able to accomplish work that they couldn’t have otherwise.

Some agencies provide short-term, on-the-job stretch assignments, which a number of focus group participants found valuable

and even “challenging and fun.” Interviewees said such assignments forced them to rely on a different set of skills, allowed them to work on something new and, in some cases, gave them the opportunity to build teams.

Several agencies integrate action-learning projects into broader leadership-development programs. In these projects, participants collaborate on designing and implementing a solution to a challenge. One interviewee said that her action-learning project led to the creation of an agency’s first telework policy. She and other interviewees highlighted the importance of choosing projects that contribute to the agency’s mission, have visible impact and are supported by leadership. Regular communication with agency leadership during the course of the project also is crucial to success.

Learning from coaches, mentors and peers

Mentoring and coaching can have a tremendous impact on future executives. These activities helped some of our interviewees decide whether to apply for the SES and, in some cases, helped shepherd them through the process. Interviewees said that the most effective mentors provide honest feedback and challenge mentees to venture into new areas. One interviewee characterized mentoring as his “very best experience” in leadership development. Another said coaching “gives you some time to talk about what you’re dealing with, and sometimes you need to do that with someone who’s not within your agency.” She added that she would strongly consider investing more in coaching if her agency’s budget were to increase.

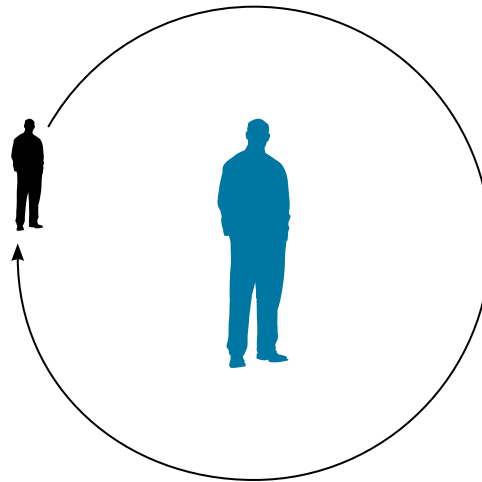
Another effective way to impart skills is through peer learning. The IRS is taking an innovative approach to promoting peer learning: It created Geographic Leadership Communities (GLCs) across the country, de-

signed to break down organizational silos among IRS offices. Through GLCs, executives from different operating divisions within a given geographic area come together—either in person or in virtual meetings—to network, discuss common challenges, share solutions and even learn about positions they could apply for within the agency. In 2012, leaders at various levels of management below the senior-executive level participated in GLC meetings in each of the 40 cities where these communities are located, allowing for collaboration and informal leadership development among peers, at minimal cost to the agency.

NASA also relies on peer learning. At NASA, “shadowing”—joining in a senior colleague’s nonconfidential meetings and activities for a few hours or a full day—is a requirement for participating in the agency’s core leadership-development programs. Individuals are responsible for identifying whom they would like to shadow, but often receive suggestions from mentors or other colleagues. Shadowing gives participants a view into the world of senior agency leaders and helps them connect to the agency’s broader strategy.

Build an external pipeline

Because most agencies promote from within, we found few examples of best practices for building an external pipeline. Some agencies do seek out external candidates on a more ad hoc basis. For example, some agencies said they advertise their vacancies in trade magazines or technical journals; others said they cultivate relationships with people and organizations familiar with their agency’s business, including retired military officers, state and local governments, and private-sector organizations with related missions or expertise. VA, for example, has been able to attract retired flag officers as well as hospital directors from the private sector.



The DOD’s emphasis on enterprise-wide experience

The Department of Defense’s (DOD) core program for executive preparation is the two-year Defense Senior Leadership Development Program (DSLDP), which is distinctive in its emphasis on helping participants gain a department-wide perspective instead of focusing exclusively on a single subcomponent or agency.

The program has three core elements. The first is a 10-month Professional Military Education in residence at one of the DOD’s war colleges: the Army War College, College of Naval Warfare, Air War College or National Defense University (National War College or Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy). To broaden their experience, participants are expected to attend a college that is not affiliated with their own service branch. The second element consists of a series of seminars with an enterprise-wide focus, including on joint, interagency and multinational leadership. The seminars offer a blend of academic and experiential learning. For the third element, program participants must select an experiential activity for four to six months that spans the enterprise. Options include an action-learning team project, a rotation assignment or a role on a task

force or interagency team. Recent assignments have included activities at the Office of the Under Secretary for Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Performance Improvement Council at the White House, DHS and OMB. Several participants said that these assignments placed them in new and challenging environments where they were able to put skills they attained during DSLDP coursework into practice and gain useful experience for becoming agency leaders.

One DOD representative said that the selection process for DSLDP participants is highly competitive. Each DOD component receives a certain number of allocations for the program and has its own process for reviewing program candidates, but all candidates must demonstrate ECQ proficiency. After the components’ initial reviews, a selection panel comprising two SES members from each component selects between 30 and 40 individuals to participate in the program.

Another strong element of the DSLDP, according to a DOD representative, is senior-level support. The deputy secretary of DOD champions the program and encourages other senior leaders to promote it to employees.

Some interviewees mentioned the role of interagency assignments in giving employees a chance to learn about other opportunities. “Recruitment actually comes ... through the relationships that people have from working on interagency projects,” an interviewee said. Some agencies have successfully used short-term assignments to attract external candidates. The National Science Foundation, for example, has benefited from the Intergovernmental Personnel Act, which provides for temporary transfers of personnel between the federal government and state and local governments, academic institutions and other organizations.

3 RECRUIT AND SELECT SES MEMBERS FROM THE CANDIDATE POOL

An important part of developing the executive pipeline is attracting candidates to SES positions, whether they are from inside or outside the agency. Agencies with good pipelines often focus on making the application and selection processes for SES jobs smoother for all candidates.

Simplify the hiring process

Recognizing that some individuals are initially intrigued by the prospect of becoming an SES member but are turned off by the tedious application process, some agencies are working to make the process easier and more transparent. Several now are accepting resumes rather than ECQ narratives in the initial stage of the application process. Interviewees told us that the switch to resume-based hiring has significantly increased both the size and diversity of the agency’s applicant pool, with more opportunities for external candidates to apply for positions. Overall, the agencies we spoke with were pleased with the results—although some said dealing with the deluge of resumes was challenging.

In addition, some agencies such as VA (see sidebar) are working to make position descriptions in job announcements less technical and agency-specific. Hiring managers can work with HR professionals to write job descriptions that are open and inclusive to all candidates.

Screen for most-qualified candidates

Applicants for SES positions are evaluated by the agency’s Executive Resources Board before their application goes to OPM’s Qualifications Review Board. Engaged ERB members—who help select candidates for CDPs, serve as mentors or advisers and participate in other pipeline activities—have a wealth of information about internal candidates and how they might perform in an SES position. The ERB is then able to make a persuasive case to OPM for hiring candidates when they complete the program. This process typically can deliver a steady stream of qualified SES candidates, as the NRC sidebar demonstrates, as long as the agency follows merit principles in selecting candidates for the pre-SES development programs.

If the government is to attract more external candidates to the SES, ERBs will need to get better at determining how applicants’ external experiences translate to federal government positions. ERB members will need to ensure that outside candidates receive equal consideration.

4 ASSESS AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE LEADERSHIP-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

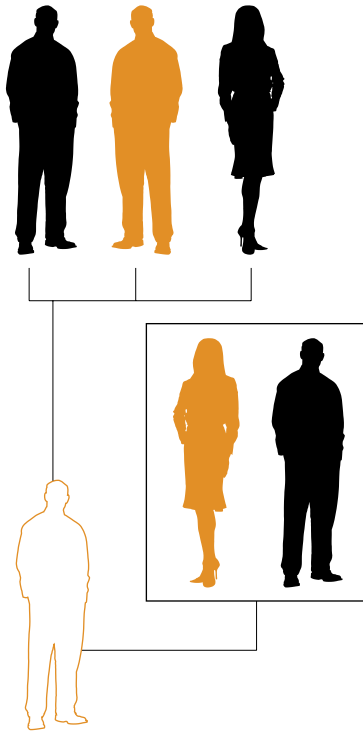
Agencies should put in place mechanisms to assess whether their leadership-development programs are delivering the intended results. Are the programs producing leaders in the right numbers, in the right time frames and with the right skills?

Ideally, agencies would use SES performance data to assess the effectiveness of SES members who went through CDPs (or other prep programs) and survey SES members about how preparation for executive positions might be improved. But there are other assessment steps they can take to gain valuable insights.

Some agencies, such as GAO (see sidebar), are evaluating their programs by, for example, soliciting participant or supervisor feedback. Others pay close attention to the results of the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, an OPM-administered survey of employee satisfaction in federal agencies, to evaluate the effectiveness of training and development programs and gauge employees’ overall satisfaction with federal leaders over time.

NASA has developed what it calls a “Return on Engagement Model.” The agency asks participants about the usefulness of its leadership-development programs, whether they would recommend the programs to colleagues and if they’ve applied the skills they learned. The agency follows up with the participants’ supervisors six months after the program to see how the employees are performing. NASA is also working to track whether participants receive an increase in responsibility or a promotion by the following year.

The VA's efforts to improve its hiring processes



At the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), leadership development is driven from the top. VA established a central office—the Corporate Senior Executive Management Office (CSEMO)—to handle all SES issues including recruitment, hiring, onboarding, professional development and management of the SES corps. The head of CSEMO reports directly to the VA secretary.

CSEMO seeks to identify in advance SES positions that will become available, and begin recruitment early. The office has helped VA attract a diverse pool of applicants for SES positions by, for example, ensuring that all vacancies are open to external candidates, instead of limiting some openings to internal candidates only. It also has reworded or eliminated some of the technical qualifications in job descriptions to make them more general, rather than requiring candidates to have specific experience that only a VA candidate could have received.

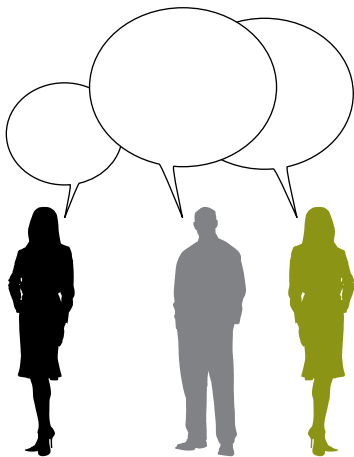
In addition, VA is more proactive about placing its CDP graduates in SES

positions, posting their bios on VA's SES website for managers to consider and forwarding their names to nominating officials when there are vacancies.

VA was one of the first agencies to adopt resume-based hiring; it now requires applicants to submit a five-page resume instead of lengthy Executive Core Qualifications narratives. Another change to the hiring process is the creation of a three-person Executive Resource Board. Rather than staff the board with the same individuals for extended periods, VA has a pool of 50 people who rotate after serving for six months, which allows for more diverse perspectives.

These efforts have helped the agency fill vacant SES positions. At the end of fiscal 2012, the agency had 94 percent of SES positions filled, compared with 89.4 percent at the beginning of the year. And there has been a dramatic increase since 2010 in the number of SES executives coming from outside the agency, said one VA interviewee, with the number rising from almost zero to about 30 percent.

The GAO's assessment process for leadership-development programs



The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has made program assessment a priority as it seeks to continuously strengthen its leadership-development programs. The agency focuses on continuous feedback from a variety of sources to enhance its programs. For example, under the agency's CDP, called the Executive Candidate Assessment and Development Program (ECADP), individual candidates meet at six-month intervals with the managing director, the Executive Resources Board (ERB) and often the candidate's mentor until the candidate successfully meets Office of Personnel Management and GAO requirements, allowing those who are supporting the candidate to assess how well the program is working. Candidates receive feedback but also have an opportunity to share their thoughts on how the program could be improved.

In addition, GAO holds focus groups with recent CDP graduates to get their

input on the program. Recently, an ECADP graduate suggested that more attention should be paid to the return on investment of the agency-wide projects participants worked on while in the program. In response, the agency has changed how these projects are conducted.

On an agency-wide level, GAO taps several sources for feedback, including internal and external auditors who do rigorous annual inspections and reviews of its programs; employee surveys; customer surveys on internal operations; and client surveys—all of which help GAO make continuous improvements. With input from the ERB, the comptroller general reviews how well GAO's mission is being carried out, determines what leadership improvements are needed and chooses appropriate areas of emphasis to integrate into GAO's leadership-development programs.

OPTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING THE SES PIPELINE

Some agencies are doing excellent work preparing talent for the SES. But pockets of excellence are not enough. If our government is to have outstanding senior leadership in the coming years, and if that leadership is truly to be an enterprise-wide resource, decisive action must be taken now. In the course of compiling this report, we identified four opportunities for building strong executive-talent pipelines and helping to ensure the quality and effectiveness of future government leaders.

Create central responsibility and accountability for developing a strong pipeline of executives who serve as government-wide assets

Because it has a government-wide view, the office of the deputy director for management at OMB—if given the appropriate resources—would be a logical choice to serve as a central entity responsible for developing a strong SES pipeline. The deputy director for management, who is also the chair of the PMC, could collaborate with OPM to ensure that agencies are identifying, developing, recruiting and selecting SES candidates who can serve as agency and government-wide assets.

In support of OMB and PMC, OPM could create and maintain a central resume bank of aspiring and current candidates for the SES that contains records of the training and preparation they've received for an executive position. OPM also could supplement its online repository of SES vacancies with opportunities for rotations, in-

teragency details or cross-agency working groups. This centralized source of information would facilitate job searches and hiring decisions, and foster greater mobility. To help get agencies familiar with, and interested in, these resources, OMB and OPM could promote them to agencies and help them understand their value.

OPM could expand its current work of facilitating the sharing of best practices among agencies. For example, if it is not cost-effective for smaller agencies to develop and run leadership-development programs, OPM could formally partner them with larger agencies with related missions so their staff can participate in CDPs and other development opportunities outside their agencies.

OMB and OPM also could consider requiring SES candidates to have experience in another functional area, agency, sector or level of government, providing an incentive to aspiring SES candidates to seek such experience. OPM and OMB also could champion expansion of the Interagency Rotation Program.

Congress, for its part, could improve the leadership capacity of the future SES cadre by ensuring funding for leadership development—even in this challenging budget environment—with the understanding that it is an investment in a more efficient and effective government. It would also be invaluable for the president to convene the SES as a community—for example, at an annual town hall-style meeting during which he shares his vision for the SES, along with his goals and priorities for

the administration. Such a meeting would demonstrate the administration's support for its senior leaders and inspire those in the talent pipeline to join the SES corps.

Develop a comprehensive approach for developing talent for the SES, incorporating best practices

Federal agencies that don't yet have a comprehensive, integrated approach to talent development should design one, incorporating other agencies' effective practices as described earlier in this report. For example, rather than waiting until an SES position opens to find feasible candidates, agencies should identify promising individuals early in their careers and give them developmental opportunities to prepare them for the SES.

SES positions require broad perspective and exceptional management and leadership capabilities, and agencies should tailor their SES preparation programs accordingly. SES positions that don't meet these criteria should be recategorized into the Senior Level (SL) or Scientific or Professional (ST) designations, which don't require the same type of management and leadership skills.

Agencies should systematically track their programs' costs, outcomes and return on investment. Once participants have gone through development programs, agencies should gather feedback from them, their supervisors and agency leaders and share that feedback with other agencies as well as with OPM. Agencies also should use performance data to evaluate the effectiveness of SES members who went through leadership development programs, and use this information to make program improvements. Agency leaders—and Congress—can gain valuable insights into the quality of leadership in each agency from the results of the annual federal employee survey, which can then inform

improvements to leadership-development programs.

Prioritize the development of future executives

Even the best-designed programs will fail without the support of an organization's top leaders. Senior agency leaders should be accountable for effective leadership development and succession planning, and provide leadership-development opportunities to the people who report to them. Furthermore, agency leaders should model the behavior they wish to see cascade through the organization, instilling in current and aspiring leaders the idea that leadership entails more than just overseeing projects or programs; it also involves developing and coaching people. They should hold their senior executives accountable for helping to build the next generation of SES members—for example, by incorporating metrics into senior executives' performance reviews on how well they develop and train their own employees.

ERBs should comprise top career and political leaders who understand the ERB's role in developing the SES talent pipeline: It serves as the critical link between agency leadership and the human capital office. ERB members should be actively involved in identifying high-potential talent, selecting participants for leadership-development programs and CDPs, and serving as advisers and mentors for these programs. They should work closely with agency leadership to make certain that all SES hires meet the agency's short- and long-term needs. ERB members also should help ensure the SES cadre participates in ongoing career enhancement through activities such as rotations.

Open SES pipelines more fully to external candidates

Agency leaders should instill a culture that not only accepts but also

actively seeks and welcomes talent from outside the agency and the federal government. Agencies should review their hiring processes and remove unnecessary barriers to external candidates—for example, by eliminating the ECQ narrative requirement, as some agencies have already done; they should also streamline the hiring process to reduce wait time and uncertainty. Agency executive-resources staff should work closely with hiring managers to make sure that SES job descriptions reflect the essential skills needed for success and are not written in a way that excludes or discourages non-government applicants. For example, a job description should not require non essential experience that only a current federal employee is able to attain.

Agencies should pursue partnerships and short-term exchanges to bring in talent from the private sector, nonprofit organizations and academia. Such exchange opportunities can help give external candidates a window into the federal government and perhaps encourage some to pursue a career in public service.

The federal government's senior-most executives cannot just be good program managers. The dynamic global environment, the tendency of modern problems to spill across multiple agencies and the increasingly interconnected and interdependent nature of government require executives who have broad perspectives, can think strategically and are able to lead people through uncertainty and change. Today's senior agency leaders should ensure that our future executives have the requisite preparation and skills. They must invest time, attention and resources in talent development. The payoff will be a more effective government—one that can more capably meet the needs of its many constituents.

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

RETIREMENT ELIGIBILITY OF CAREER SENIOR EXECUTIVES, BY FISCAL YEAR

Agency		2011*	2012**	
Government-wide***	Total employed	7,100	7,089	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	34.8%	33.9%
		In 3 years	52.7%	51.8%
		In 5 years	63.7%	62.8%
Department of Agriculture	Total employed	305	297	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	43.9%	41.8%
		In 3 years	63.9%	62.0%
		In 5 years	74.4%	70.7%
Department of the Air Force	Total employed	186	176	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	43.9%	41.8%
		In 3 years	47.3%	45.5%
		In 5 years	60.2%	58.0%
Department of the Army	Total employed	286	270	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	26.9%	26.3%
		In 3 years	46.2%	49.6%
		In 5 years	59.1%	65.2%
Department of Commerce	Total employed	335	340	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	39.1%	35.3%
		In 3 years	50.4%	47.6%
		In 5 years	58.8%	55.0%
Department of Education	Total employed	65	62	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	49.2%	46.8%
		In 3 years	66.2%	67.7%
		In 5 years	73.8%	75.8%
Department of Energy	Total employed	424	439	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	28.5%	26.2%
		In 3 years	45.0%	43.5%
		In 5 years	55.9%	57.2%
Department of Health and Human Services	Total employed	385	376	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	31.4%	28.5%
		In 3 years	45.7%	42.6%
		In 5 years	56.9%	54.3%
Department of Homeland Security	Total employed	459	546	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	27.2%	27.5%
		In 3 years	48.6%	47.3%
		In 5 years	58.8%	59.0%
Department of Housing and Urban Development	Total employed	91	84	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	46.2%	44.0%
		In 3 years	58.2%	58.3%
		In 5 years	65.9%	64.3%
Department of the Interior	Total employed	227	228	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	40.5%	46.5%
		In 3 years	63.0%	59.6%
		In 5 years	70.5%	66.7%
Department of Justice	Total employed	700	679	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	38.4%	40.8%
		In 3 years	61.6%	62.7%
		In 5 years	74.0%	72.5%

Agency		2011*	2012**	
Department of Labor	Total employed	136	128	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	47.1%	46.9%
		In 3 years	65.4%	61.7%
		In 5 years	76.5%	73.4%
Department of the Navy	Total employed	340	314	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	29.4%	30.9%
		In 3 years	49.4%	51.0%
		In 5 years	62.4%	64.6%
Department of State (except Foreign Service)	Total employed	129	138	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	41.9%	39.1%
		In 3 years	56.6%	58.0%
		In 5 years	71.3%	67.4%
Department of Transportation	Total employed	184	193	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	35.9%	33.2%
		In 3 years	47.3%	46.6%
		In 5 years	56.5%	57.0%
Department of the Treasury	Total employed	443	458	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	30.0%	29.0%
		In 3 years	48.5%	48.7%
		In 5 years	59.6%	63.3%
Department of Veterans Affairs	Total employed	281	307	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	40.2%	36.5%
		In 3 years	61.2%	54.7%
		In 5 years	68.3%	62.9%
Environmental Protection Agency	Total employed	254	248	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	39.4%	37.5%
		In 3 years	57.1%	54.8%
		In 5 years	66.1%	65.7%
General Services Administration	Total employed	88	93	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	26.1%	24.7%
		In 3 years	39.8%	33.3%
		In 5 years	48.9%	48.4%
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	Total employed	462	403	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	24.8%	27.8%
		In 3 years	43.3%	46.2%
		In 5 years	55.8%	59.1%
National Labor Relations Board	Total employed	55	52	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	83.6%	73.1%
		In 3 years	89.1%	82.7%
		In 5 years	89.1%	86.5%
National Science Foundation	Total employed	74	76	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	54.1%	44.7%
		In 3 years	60.8%	55.3%
		In 5 years	73.0%	64.5%
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	Total employed	160	146	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	32.5%	32.2%
		In 3 years	50.6%	53.4%
		In 5 years	65.0%	69.9%

Agency		2011*	2012**	
Office of Management and Budget	Total employed	54	59	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	20.4%	22.0%
		In 3 years	31.5%	27.1%
		In 5 years	42.6%	37.3%
Office of Personnel Management	Total employed	54	57	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	26.5%	29.8%
		In 3 years	34.7%	45.6%
		In 5 years	49.0%	56.1%
Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, Defense Agencies and Department of Defense Field Activities	Total employed	448	406	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	28.1%	29.8%
		In 3 years	47.1%	50.7%
		In 5 years	62.1%	62.6%
Small Business Administration	Total employed	41	39	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	41.5%	38.5%
		In 3 years	53.7%	59.0%
		In 5 years	65.9%	59.0%
Social Security Administration	Total employed	146	136	
	Eligible to retire:	Currently	58.2%	52.2%
		In 3 years	72.6%	62.5%
		In 5 years	78.1%	69.1%

*2011 figures gathered in March 2011. **2012 figures gathered in June 2012. ***Includes SES in small agencies not shown.

Source: Office of Personnel Management analysis of the Central Personnel Data File (now called EHRI-SDM) for career senior executives employed at agency.

APPENDIX C

RETIREMENT TRENDS OF CAREER SENIOR EXECUTIVES, BY FISCAL YEAR

Agency		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Government-wide*	Total employed**	6,546	6,849	6,966	6,997	7,126
	Total retired***	504	400	493	565	592
	Percent retired***	7.7%	5.8%	7.1%	8.1%	8.3%
Department of Agriculture	Total employed	318	299	303	314	304
	Total retired	39	15	22	39	28
	Percent retired	12.3%	5.0%	7.3%	12.4%	9.2%
Department of the Air Force	Total employed	159	152	162	191	186
	Total retired	18	13	7	14	13
	Percent retired	11.3%	8.6%	4.3%	7.3%	7.0%
Department of the Army	Total employed	240	257	269	275	278
	Total retired	16	22	24	19	21
	Percent retired	6.7%	8.6%	8.9%	6.9%	7.6%
Department of Commerce	Total employed	315	325	339	322	333
	Total retired	16	13	21	20	33
	Percent retired	5.1%	4.0%	6.2%	6.2%	9.9%
Department of Education	Total employed	67	75	71	63	73
	Total retired	3	7	10	2	8
	Percent retired	4.5%	9.3%	14.1%	3.2%	11.0%
Department of Energy	Total employed	420	450	443	423	426
	Total retired	32	25	39	44	28
	Percent retired	7.6%	5.6%	8.8%	10.4%	6.6%
Department of Health and Human Services	Total employed	354	372	369	380	374
	Total retired	23	18	17	32	25
	Percent retired	6.5%	4.8%	4.6%	8.4%	6.7%
Department of Homeland Security	Total employed	325	411	440	438	508
	Total retired	29	21	31	44	33
	Percent retired	8.9%	5.1%	7.0%	10.0%	6.5%
Department of Housing and Urban Development	Total employed	88	88	90	91	88
	Total retired	7	5	7	9	8
	Percent retired	8.0%	5.7%	7.8%	9.9%	9.1%
Department of the Interior	Total employed	221	230	231	228	226
	Total retired	18	12	22	22	16
	Percent retired	8.1%	5.2%	9.5%	9.6%	7.1%
Department of Justice	Total employed	643	672	686	682	686
	Total retired	57	60	64	82	89
	Percent retired	8.9%	8.9%	9.3%	12.0%	13.0%
Department of Labor	Total employed	133	140	141	128	126
	Total retired	15	8	18	13	10
	Percent retired	11.3%	5.7%	12.8%	10.2%	7.9%
Department of the Navy	Total employed	310	319	319	344	326
	Total retired	20	13	11	16	16
	Percent retired	6.5%	4.1%	3.4%	4.7%	4.9%
Department of State (except Foreign Service)	Total employed	114	121	122	132	138
	Total retired	5	4	4	8	9
	Percent retired	4.4%	3.3%	3.3%	6.1%	6.5%

Agency		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Department of Transportation	Total employed	188	188	191	186	184
	Total retired	22	13	17	19	9
	Percent retired	11.7%	6.9%	8.9%	10.2%	4.9%
Department of the Treasury	Total employed	386	413	423	428	448
	Total retired	34	23	30	28	41
	Percent retired	8.8%	5.6%	7.1%	6.5%	9.2%
Department of Veterans Affairs	Total employed	236	235	242	267	302
	Total retired	21	22	25	21	31
	Percent retired	8.9%	9.4%	10.3%	7.9%	10.3%
Environmental Protection Agency	Total employed	261	258	253	247	255
	Total retired	13	13	16	14	18
	Percent retired	5.0%	5.0%	6.3%	5.7%	7.1%
General Services Administration	Total employed	80	80	84	88	89
	Total retired	6	4	6	7	4
	Percent retired	7.5%	5.0%	7.1%	8.0%	4.5%
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	Total employed	431	445	437	429	426
	Total retired	19	17	21	18	31
	Percent retired	4.4%	3.8%	4.8%	4.2%	7.3%
National Labor Relations Board	Total employed	55	56	56	55	53
	Total retired	3	4	4	6	10
	Percent retired	5.5%	7.1%	7.1%	10.9%	18.9%
National Science Foundation	Total employed	79	77	80	75	76
	Total retired	7	2	4	6	8
	Percent retired	8.9%	2.6%	5.0%	8.0%	10.5%
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	Total employed	146	151	162	160	160
	Total retired	18	7	9	8	11
	Percent retired	12.3%	4.6%	5.6%	5.0%	6.9%
Office of Management and Budget	Total employed	51	58	57	56	53
	Total retired	3	2	0	2	1
	Percent retired	5.9%	3.4%	0.0%	3.6%	1.9%
Office of Personnel Management	Total employed	41	46	47	47	53
	Total retired	0	0	2	0	0
	Percent retired	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, Defense Agencies and Department of Defense Field Activities	Total employed	413	431	439	440	425
	Total retired	25	28	26	29	30
	Percent retired	6.1%	6.5%	5.9%	6.6%	7.1%
Small Business Administration	Total employed	36	41	44	42	43
	Total retired	3	1	2	2	5
	Percent retired	8.3%	2.4%	4.5%	4.8%	11.6%
Social Security Administration	Total employed	134	142	140	145	146
	Total retired	13	15	13	18	22
	Percent retired	9.7%	10.6%	9.3%	12.4%	15.1%

*Includes SES and small agencies not shown. **Total number of career SES members employed at the start of the fiscal year. ***Total number and percentage of career SES members retiring during the fiscal year.

Source: FedScope (fedscope.opm.gov) from the Office of Personnel Management for career senior executives in full-time, nonseasonal, permanent positions.

APPENDIX D

CDP PLACEMENT TRENDS OF NEW CAREER SENIOR EXECUTIVES, BY FISCAL YEAR

Fiscal year	Total new SES appointments	CDP graduates	Non-CDP graduates	From outside the federal government**
2008	948	10.0%	82.9%	7.1%
2009	651	9.2%	79.7%	11.1%
2010	673	13.2%	74.0%	12.8%
2011	797	12.8%	75.8%	11.4%
2012*	562	11.6%	80.4%	8.0%

*Through June 2012. **Includes the private sector, nonprofit sector and agencies that do not report their data to OPM.

Source: Partnership analysis of the Central Personnel Data File (now called EHRI-SDM) for career senior executives converted or newly appointed to career SES positions.

APPENDIX E

SOURCE TRENDS OF NEW CAREER SENIOR EXECUTIVES, BY FISCAL YEAR

Fiscal year	Total new SES appointments	From inside the federal government			From outside the federal government**
		Same agency and subcomponent	Same agency but different subcomponent	Different agency	
2008	948	76.7%	4.7%	11.5%	7.1%
2009	651	69.1%	7.5%	12.3%	11.1%
2010	673	70.9%	6.8%	9.5%	12.8%
2011	797	71.9%	3.9%	12.8%	11.4%
2012*	562	75.6%	5.2%	11.2%	8.0%

*Through June 2012. **Includes the private sector, nonprofit sector and agencies that do not report their data to OPM.

Source: Partnership analysis of the Central Personnel Data File (now called EHRI-SDM) for career senior executives converted or newly appointed to career SES positions.

APPENDIX F
SOURCE OF CAREER SENIOR EXECUTIVES

Agency	2011*				2012**			
	Total career SES	From outside the federal government***	CDP graduates	Non-CDP graduates	Total career SES	From outside the federal government***	CDP graduates	Non-CDP graduates
Government-wide****	7,100	7.3%	11.3%	81.4%	7,089	7.5%	12.1%	80.4%
Department of Agriculture	305	4.9%	25.6%	69.5%	297	5.1%	26.6%	68.3%
Department of the Air Force	186	18.8%	0.5%	80.7%	176	20.4%	0.6%	79.0%
Department of the Army	286	16.8%	1.0%	82.2%	270	15.9%	1.1%	83.0%
Department of Commerce	335	10.1%	6.3%	83.6%	340	9.7%	7.9%	82.4%
Department of Education	65	4.6%	0.0%	95.4%	62	3.2%	0.0%	96.8%
Department of Energy	424	12.0%	2.8%	85.2%	439	11.9%	3.6%	84.5%
Department of Health and Human Services	385	8.3%	9.1%	82.6%	376	8.5%	8.5%	83.0%
Department of Homeland Security	459	5.7%	14.4%	79.9%	546	7.5%	13.9%	78.6%
Department of Housing and Urban Development	91	7.7%	9.9%	82.4%	84	10.7%	10.7%	78.6%
Department of the Interior	227	4.8%	24.7%	70.5%	228	5.3%	23.2%	71.5%
Department of Justice	700	1.6%	2.7%	95.7%	679	1.5%	2.9%	95.6%
Department of Labor	136	6.6%	12.5%	80.9%	128	7.0%	14.1%	78.9%
Department of the Navy	340	8.2%	0.6%	91.2%	314	7.3%	0.6%	92.1%
Department of State (except Foreign Service)	129	3.9%	7.0%	89.1%	138	2.2%	5.8%	92.0%
Department of Transportation	184	13.6%	4.3%	82.1%	193	13.5%	4.6%	81.9%
Department of the Treasury	443	4.3%	28.9%	66.8%	458	4.8%	33.0%	62.2%
Department of Veterans Affairs	281	6.0%	11.7%	82.3%	307	9.4%	13.4%	77.2%
Environmental Protection Agency	254	3.5%	15.4%	81.1%	248	4.4%	15.7%	79.9%
General Services Administration	88	5.7%	0.0%	94.3%	93	4.3%	0.0%	95.7%
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	432	6.7%	16.9%	76.4%	403	6.4%	17.9%	75.7%
National Labor Relations Board	55	0.0%	1.8%	98.2%	52	0.0%	1.9%	98.1%
National Science Foundation	74	0.0%	2.7%	97.3%	76	1.3%	2.6%	96.1%
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	160	0.0%	71.3%	28.7%	146	0.0%	76.7%	23.3%
Office of Management and Budget	54	0.0%	31.5%	68.5%	59	1.7%	35.6%	62.7%
Office of Personnel Management	49	12.3%	6.1%	81.6%	57	7.0%	7.0%	86.0%
Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, Defense Agencies and Department of Defense Field Activities	448	13.0%	0.4%	86.6%	406	13.3%	0.5%	86.2%
Small Business Administration	41	19.5%	19.5%	61.0%	39	20.5%	18.0%	61.5%
Social Security Administration	146	0.7%	23.3%	76.0%	136	1.5%	27.2%	71.3%

*2011 figures gathered in March 2011. **2012 figures gathered in June 2012. ***Includes the private sector, nonprofit sector and agencies that do not report their data to OPM. ****Includes SES in small agencies not shown.

Source: Office of Personnel Management analysis of the Central Personnel Data File (now called EHRI-SDM) for career senior executives employed at agency.

APPENDIX G

TENURES OF CAREER SENIOR EXECUTIVES (IN YEARS)

Agency	2011*					2012**				
	Total career SES	Average tenure			Avg. age when joining SES	Total career SES	Average tenure			Avg. age when joining SES
		In current position	In SES	Before joining SES			In current position	In SES	Before joining SES	
Government-wide***	7,100	3.4	6.4	17.3	47	7,089	3.4	6.3	16.9	48
Department of Agriculture	305	3.7	6.5	19.6	49	297	3.6	6.3	19.4	50
Department of the Air Force	186	1.3	4.8	15.0	49	176	1.7	5.2	12.5	50
Department of the Army	286	2.9	5.4	16.1	50	270	2.9	5.9	15.3	50
Department of Commerce	335	3.8	7.2	16.0	48	340	3.8	6.8	15.5	48
Department of Education	65	3.5	9.1	16.9	48	62	4.2	9.0	16.5	48
Department of Energy	424	3.0	6.4	15.8	48	439	2.7	6.1	15.5	48
Department of Health and Human Services	385	4.1	6.3	16.0	48	376	4.0	6.6	15.0	48
Department of Homeland Security	459	2.1	4.0	16.8	48	546	2.0	3.9	16.0	48
Department of Housing and Urban Development	91	3.2	6.5	18.6	50	84	2.9	6.6	17.0	49
Department of the Interior	227	3.6	6.4	18.9	49	228	3.5	6.7	18.5	49
Department of Justice	700	3.3	4.8	18.4	41	679	3.3	5.2	18.4	47
Department of Labor	136	4.1	7.1	18.4	50	128	4.4	7.2	18.3	50
Department of the Navy	340	3.2	6.9	18.1	47	314	3.5	7.6	17.5	47
Department of State (except Foreign Service)	129	4.4	7.5	18.2	47	138	4.3	6.7	18.1	49
Department of Transportation	184	4.5	6.7	14.9	48	193	4.3	6.8	14.5	48
Department of the Treasury	443	2.9	5.8	18.8	47	458	3.0	5.7	18.7	48
Department of Veterans Affairs	281	3.3	6.2	20.0	50	307	3.1	5.6	18.5	50
Environmental Protection Agency	254	4.7	9.0	17.6	45	248	4.6	8.9	17.5	47
General Services Administration	88	2.6	4.7	19.3	46	93	2.2	4.3	18.3	47
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	432	3.2	6.8	16.8	47	403	3.4	7.1	17.4	47
National Labor Relations Board	55	8.9	9.8	23.1	47	52	6.8	9.7	23.5	51
National Science Foundation	74	4.4	9.7	11.9	48	76	3.6	8.5	12.1	50
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	160	2.1	7.7	19.8	46	146	2.3	8.1	20.0	46
Office of Management and Budget	54	5.8	7.9	14.2	41	59	5.4	8.5	13.2	42
Office of Personnel Management	49	1.6	5.0	16.9	48	57	1.9	4.9	17.6	49
Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, Defense Agencies and Department of Defense Field Activities	448	3.2	6.4	14.4	48	406	3.4	6.7	14.2	49
Small Business Administration	41	4.5	8.2	12.7	46	39	3.4	7.5	13.5	48
Social Security Administration	146	3.2	5.9	23.7	50	136	3.1	5.9	22.5	49

*2011 figures gathered in March 2011. **2012 figures gathered in June 2012. ***Includes SES in small agencies not shown.

Source: Partnership for Public Service analysis of the Central Personnel Data File (now called EHRI-SDM) for career senior executives employed at agency.



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