



AUXILIARY SUCCESSION PLANNING GUIDE



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Succession Planning Guide

Introduction

Planning for next election or appointment is a valuable time investment. Whether a member is running for re-election or wishes to be re-appointed or it is their first time in the election process or being appointed, it's important to spend the time with the members and leadership team to plan what the Auxiliary element (flotilla, division, or district) is are going to do. A succession plan can help outline what will happen and who will be ready for an elected or appointed position.

A good succession plan enables a smooth transition with less likelihood of disruption to missions and goals of the Auxiliary.

By planning for the annual or semi-annual election or appointment transitions well in advance the Auxiliary can maximize the potential of its members, flotilla, division, or district and enable it to meet future mission needs.

Make sure your succession plan is attainable - set a realistic timetable and measurable milestones along the way and stick to them.

Succession Planning

Essentially, succession planning is a conscious decision by Auxiliary leadership to foster and promote the continual development of members, and ensure that elected and appointed positions maintain some measure of stability, thus enabling the member, flotilla, division, or district to achieve mission objectives.

Traditionally, succession planning has sometimes taken a replacement approach, often focusing on the flotilla commander position. One or two successors might be identified and an election is held.

However, succession planning has evolved into a process that can be used to:

1. Replenish the Auxiliary leadership and management at a broad or specific level;
2. Identify, assess and develop member knowledge, skills and abilities to meet the current and future elected and appointed needs of the Auxiliary element; and
3. Ensure a continuous supply of talent by helping members develop their potential, as successors for leadership and management positions.

Succession planning includes

Succession planning includes the following:

- Inventory a member's strengths and opportunities for growth.

- Set achievable goals and create a realistic roadmap to accomplish them.
- Aid in the effective integration of new personnel into the Auxiliary.
- Enhance personal skills and qualifications.
- Promote communication for career and personal development.
- Support every individual in reaching their full potential.
- Identify the competencies required for desired advancement and growth.
- Be a living document that is revised as members' progress and at least every six months.

**Use of the New Member Integration First Six Months, Member Involvement Plan, Auxiliary Member Passport to Success, Individual Development Plan, and / or the Auxiliary Mentoring Guide will assist when working through the succession planning framework.

Succession management is principally about knowing the needs of the Auxiliary element and its members and developing the capacity to address emerging issues that can or will affect mission continuity.

Succession planning framework

It is important to acknowledge that succession planning may vary slightly between Auxiliary organizational elements. Different resources, different organizational requirements and different attitudes all mean that succession planning should be flexible and adaptable in order to accommodate varying needs and achieve mission continuity.

However, there is a general framework that Auxiliary elements can use as the basis and guide for their succession planning activities.

Steps in the framework

- This framework involves:
- Step 1: Identifying key positions (current and/or future)
 - Step 2: Identifying competencies
 - Step 3: Identifying and assessing potential candidates
 - Step 4: Learning and development plans
 - Step 5: Plan implementation and evaluation

Step 1: Identifying key positions (current and/or future)

Key positions are those elected or appointed positions that are required to conduct business and execute mission. This may include any or all elected positions, appointed staff officers and assistant staff officers. Two important criteria that should be considered are criticality and retention risk. A critical position is one that, if it were vacant, would have a significant impact on the Auxiliary element's ability to conduct normal missions. Retention risk refers to positions where the current member in that position is at risk of not completing the term of that office.

By examining these criteria on a low-to-high scale, an Auxiliary organizational element can determine what positions require short- or

long-term planning.

A gap analysis, as a part of workforce planning, can also be an invaluable tool to identify key areas or occupational groups.

Information that may help identify key positions can include:

- Current and future strategic goals and objectives
- Departure forecasts
- Turnover rates
- Current and expected vacancies
- Changes to existing programs and missions
- Highly specialized function

In addition to the analysis of criticality, retention risk, and other workforce data, it might be beneficial to consider the following types of questions:

- What positions, if vacant, have the potential to prevent the Auxiliary element from achieving goals and objectives?
- What positions have a direct impact on the public?
- What positions would be difficult to fill because of required expertise or because the exiting incumbent possesses a wealth of unique and/or Auxiliary or mission knowledge?
- Is there a projected member shortage of relevant position skills?

Step 2: Identifying competencies

All positions have a requisite set of knowledge, skills and abilities that are expected of members who are filling that function. Thus, knowing the competencies of a job is a mandatory component of recruitment, serving as a general baseline to measure against interested potential candidates. However, succession planning provides an opportunity to review the competencies traditionally associated with jobs, particularly with respect to current goals and objectives. Several ways to determine and develop required competencies include:

- Reviewing position descriptions and relevant requirement criteria
- Interviewing current and former position incumbents
- Interviewing the Chain of Leadership and Management (COLM) and other stakeholders
- Reviewing any existing development programs (i.e. leadership competencies, C-Schools)
- Reviewing Auxiliary values

Although position descriptions offer a good starting point for the identification of competencies, it is important to consider some of the other sources of information listed above.

Current incumbents, for example, would have a good understanding of which competencies are the most important to their position. Interviewing these members may reveal knowledge, skills and abilities that are necessary for the position, but are not currently identified in the position description. Given the practical scope of any position, valid identification of competencies is necessary for:

- Establishing minimum requirements for position success;
- Creating a baseline for assessing interested potential candidates; and
- Identifying appropriate learning and development opportunities.

Some questions to consider might include:

- What are the specific functional competencies that apply to a key positions?
- What leadership competencies apply to all members? Are these competencies aligned with the Auxiliary elements' mission requirements?

Step 3: Identifying and assessing potential candidates

The key purpose of identifying and assessing members against core position competencies is to help focus their learning and development opportunities in order to prepare them for future roles in the Auxiliary. Traditional approaches to succession planning have the potential to result in a one-sided selection process – the Auxiliary element identifies a key position, and then upper level elected leadership select a high-potential individual for preparation or training. Given the potential sensitivity around the decision-making process in these situations, a member might be advised about their prospective opportunity for advancement in private. This process is not transparent and can negatively impact the morale of other members (including the member chosen for succession) and their relationship with the Auxiliary element.

Modern approaches to succession planning suggest that transparency and accountability are the best practices for the Auxiliary. Recruitment into the Auxiliary is based on merit, fairness and respect, and these concepts are maintained and supported by the succession planning process. To demonstrate these values, succession planning must be:

- Objective and independent of personal bias;
- Merit-based;
- Communicated to and understood by all members; and
- Transparent at all stages of the process.

Under these circumstances, self-identification is a useful starting point to see which members are interested in leadership roles, career advancement or lateral moves that might not be easily attained without focused training, other learning and development opportunities, or mentoring. Several ways to solicit for self-identification include:

- Circulating an expression of interest
- Members discussing career goals and objectives with their Chain of Leadership and Management (COLM)
- Developing an inventory of member skills/competencies and career interests

There are a number of other supporting methods to identify potential candidates once a pool of interested candidates has been established. Some of these methods can include:

- Written exams (specialty courses, PQS, Leadership Competency courses, C-Schools)
- Candidate interviews
- Review of résumés/CVs
- Simulated work exercises
- Past performance reviews
- Talent review meetings

This step of the succession planning process is closely related to regular recruitment practices, but succession planning goes one step further by helping interested candidates develop the requisite skills prior to the formal recruitment process that begins once a position becomes vacant. Auxiliary elements should consider consulting with the higher level elements to ensure that the steps used for identifying potential candidates support decisions that are based on merit, fairness and respect.

Some critical questions that may help Auxiliary elements prepare for this step include:

- Has there been one-on-one discussion with members regarding their career goals and interests?
- Have all members been made aware of available succession opportunities?
- Do members understand the purpose and process of succession planning?

Specifically, do they understand that they are not guaranteed to be appointed or elected as a result of this process?

- Do members who were not considered for a current opportunity understand that they can be considered in the future with further development of their knowledge, skills, and abilities?
- How will the Auxiliary element communicate the outcome of a succession-based appointment?
- Have alternative career paths (i.e., relevant lateral moves) been identified for members who were not considered for a current opportunity?
- Will the Auxiliary element use multiple sources of information when assessing a candidate?
- How will the Auxiliary element develop an inventory of member skills and interests?
- Are an appropriate number of members being developed for a key position?
- How will the candidate pool demonstrate the Auxiliary's value for equity, inclusion, and diversity?

Step 4: Learning and development plans

Once the relevant candidates have been identified, based on their interest and potential for success in a key position, the Auxiliary element leadership must ensure that these members have access to focused learning and development opportunities. Some key points to remember when developing learning and development plans are:

- Plans should focus on decreasing or removing the gap between expected competencies and the current knowledge, skills and abilities of candidates.
- Manage expectations – modern succession planning is based on learning and development to fulfill member potential, rather than merely filling a vacancy.
- There are a wide range of learning and development opportunities to consider, which can include:
 - o Assignments that develop and/or improve a candidate’s competencies;
 - o Position rotations; and
 - o Formal training.
- Ensure appropriate strategies are in place to support the transfer of corporate knowledge to candidates for key jobs, which can include:
 - o Mentoring, coaching or job-shadowing;
 - o Documenting critical knowledge;
 - o Exit interviews; and
 - o Establishing communities of practice.

Step 5: Plan implementation and evaluation

Provide information regarding:

- How the process operates – the relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes
- Impact of the process relative to stated goals and objectives
- Functional strengths and weaknesses
- Potential gaps in planning and assumptions

Planning to collect and assess these types of information will ensure that the organization monitors its succession planning activities, appropriately measures success, and adjusts the process accordingly given sufficient evidence. Some evaluative questions for leadership to consider might include:

- Have all key positions been identified and do they have succession plans?
- What is the impact of succession plans on Auxiliary element continuity in key positions?
- Are successful candidates performing well in their new roles?
- What is the impact of learning and development efforts? Are members ready to compete for a vacant key position?
- Is the candidate pool diverse and reflective of equity, inclusion, and diversity values?
- What are the areas for improvement in the succession planning process?

Once a succession plan has been established, monitoring its efficiency and effectiveness will be essential. Thus, each succession plan should be developed within an evaluation framework in order to measure progress and success, as well as provide any evidence to support changes to the succession planning process.

The Individual Development Plan (IDP)

The following guidance will assist a member with completing an IDP.

- State your goals Begin by writing goals for current position held, and then list short-term and long-term goals.

- Competencies to be developed Identify those competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities) that need to be developed to accomplish each of the listed goals.

- Developmental actions to be taken Identify a developmental activity for each targeted competency. Explore developmental activities in the areas of education, training, and professional development.

- Desired outcomes State the desired outcome of by obtaining that competency. *For example*, if the desired competency is to learn how to use a photo editing program, the desired outcome may be to use the program to create publishable images for the Auxiliary.

- Completion date and cost Commit to a realistic and achievable completion date for each item. Be sure to note any cost associated with the task, even if it is just travel.

Succession Tracks

Succession plans often have clear succession or career tracks so members will understand the progression of positions and development to get to the next leadership level.

Possible Flotilla and Division Succession Track

1. Member (New Member Integration First Six Months, Member Involvement Plan, Auxiliary Member Passport to Success, Individual Development Plan)
2. Qualification (AUXOP, specialty courses, PQS, C-Schools, civilian experience)
3. Mentoring from the Flotilla Staff Officer (FSO) or Division Staff Officer (SO) to prepare for appointment to staff officer
4. Staff Officer with mentoring from Vice Flotilla Commander (VFC) or Vice Division Commander (VCDR) to prepare for election to VFC or VCDR
5. Vice Commander (Mentoring from Flotilla Commander [FC] or Division Commander [DCDR] to prepare for election to FC or DCDR)
6. Commander (Coaching from Immediate Past Flotilla Commander [IPFC] or Immediate Past Division Commander [IPDCDR] for success as commander)

A possible modification to this track would be a Flotilla Staff Officer (FSO) being mentored by the Division Staff Officer (SO) to prepare to be appointed to assistant SO. Or, the Flotilla Commander (FC) being mentored by either a Division Staff Officer (SO) or the Vice Division Commander (VCDR) to be prepared to be appointed into a Division Staff position (SO) or elected into the Vice Division Commander (VCDR) position.

District Succession Track

1. Division Commander (Coached by the Immediate Past Division Commander [IPDCDR] for success as Division Commander [DCDR]) and mentored by the District Captain [DCAPT] to be prepared to be elected to DCAPT)
2. District Captain (Coached and mentored by the District Chief of Staff [DCOS] and the District Commodore [DCO] for success as District Captain [DCAPT] and to be prepared for election to DCOS)
3. District Chief of Staff (Coached by the Immediate Past District Commodore [IPDCO] for success as District Chief of Staff and mentored by the District Commodore [DCO] to be prepared for election to DCO)
4. District Commodore (Coached by the Immediate Past District Commodore [IPDCO] for success as DCO)

Modification of Succession Tracks

These suggested succession planning tracks may have to be modified to meet the needs of the Auxiliary element. These suggested tracks and any modification need to be transparent to the members, is based on merit, fairness and respect, and these concepts are maintained and supported by the succession planning process.