

Workforce Planning Toolkit

Using a Transition Plan to help ensure continuity of the mission

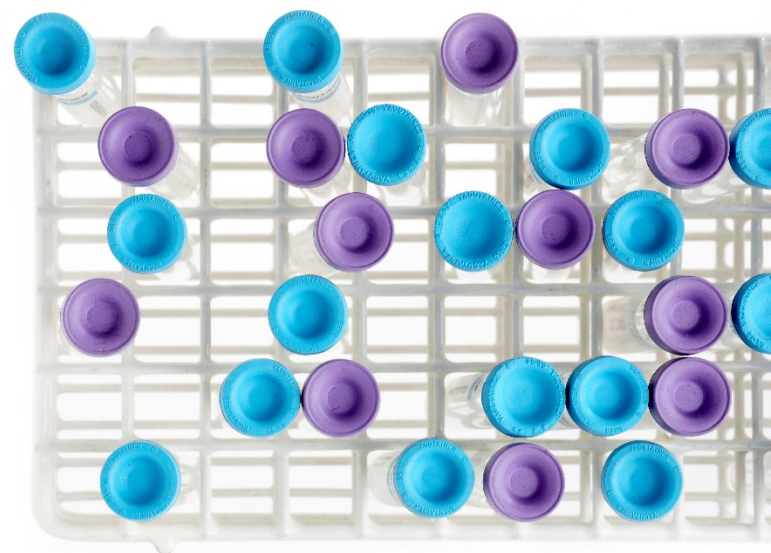


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Introduction

Welcome to the NIH *Transition Planning Overview*

Planning for staff transitions and ensuring continuity of knowledge is an important component of workforce planning. While we can not predict the future we can prepare and plan to minimize risks when vacancies occur, which minimizes the risks to programs, projects, and staff.

What is Transition Planning?

Transition planning is a systematic process that ensures the continuity of the Institute or Center's mission and scientific direction by developing a plan of action to transition work when a vacancy is anticipated or realized.

The **Transition Plan** aims to mitigate this risk and minimize the impact to others' workloads, priorities, and deadlines due to a shift in roles and responsibilities when a departure is realized and will help your organization ensure continuity of the incumbent's responsibilities in the event of a vacancy.

What is a Transition Plan?

The Transition Plan is a proactive way to capture and document an incumbent's core functions, day-to-day responsibilities, professional networks, acquired resources (budget, staff, property, inventory, protocols etc.), that will be transitioned to someone else, whether a temporary back-up or permanent successor, upon the incumbent's departure.

Why Use a Transition Plan?

- Enables organizations to ensure continuity of a position's responsibilities and security of its resources in the event of a transition or vacancy, whether planned or unplanned
- Allows for the capture of critical elements not necessarily documented on the incumbent's position description:
 - Key meetings and committees
 - Customers and knowledge sharing network
 - Resources held, number of protocols, etc.
 - Vendors and service providers
- Can serve as the designated back-up's or successor's instruction manual to ensure continuity during a transition
- Provides on-demand access to legacy knowledge and job information and provides a platform to cross-train the designated back-up(s) and/or successor(s)

The Benefits of a Transition Plan



How can a Transition Plan help me?

Because we don't always have advanced knowledge of when employees leave, the organization is vulnerable to losing critical knowledge and weakens our ability to respond quickly during staff transitions.

No matter the reason for the departure, whether planned, unplanned, temporary or permanent, this tool supports the proactive preparation to make departures more seamless.

Benefits of a Transition Plan

- ✓ Allows for seamless staff transitions of absences whether planned or unplanned, temporary or permanent
- ✓ Provides on-demand access to legacy knowledge and job information which can be passed on to a back-up(s) or potential successor(s)
- ✓ Provides a platform to cross-train the designated back-up(s) and/or successor(s)
- ✓ Minimizes the risks to programs, projects, and staff in a proactive manner
- ✓ Helps promote seamless staff transitions
- ✓ Identification and development of talent capable of filling relevant openings created by departing employees
- ✓ Limits the chance of catastrophe stemming from the immediate and unplanned loss of incumbents
- ✓ Ensures a plan is in place before an emergency arises

How to Use This Tool



The right tool for the right job.

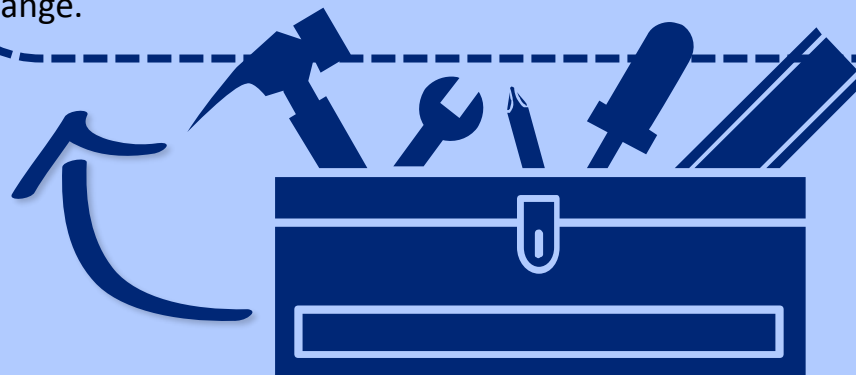
This tool is just one component of a larger workforce planning toolkit with many tools, processes, and case studies to assist you as you implement workforce planning in your organization. Make sure and explore the entire toolkit for other tools that might be helpful.

How to Use a Transition Plan

The purpose of this tool is to collect information about an incumbent's position, the duties regularly performed, and the professional network maintained. While the Staff Transition Plan can be used for all positions in the organization, as anyone in *any* position can use this tool to assist with preparing for a seamless transition, it is particularly important that Key Position incumbents have a Transition Plan on file with their supervisor and that designated back-up(s) are identified in case of a departure.

Once the Transition Plan is completed by the incumbent, it should be shared with the incumbent's supervisor so he/she can share the information collected to prepare any necessary back-up(s) and/or successors to the position.

It is also recommended that Transition Plans be updated yearly or as duties change.



Frequent Uses for Transition Planning



Who should use a Transition Plan?

Although a Transition Plan can be used at any time for any incumbent in any position, the Transition Plan is especially critical for those in leadership and key positions as well as those who are retirement eligible.

Transition Plans are Extremely Helpful for:

- Executive and senior leaders
- Scientific leaders
- Administrative leaders
- Mission-essential incumbents
- Incumbents in “Stand-Alone” positions or where expertise is concentrated to one or a small number of incumbents
- Incumbents on extended assignments
- Incumbents planning to be on extended leave (paternity)
- Those with high potential for exits
- Retirement eligible employees



“Successful transition plans are **co-created** between the **incumbent and their supervisor**. We recommend leadership considers taking opportunities to pair these transition planning activities with the work involved in preparing for performance plan close-out and establishment.”

What Can a Transition Plan Help Solve?



What can Transition Planning help resolve?

The Transition Plan is a versatile tool which can be used to solve a number of issues and enhance our capacity to respond rapidly in time of staff transitions.

Common challenges Transition Plans can help resolve:

Knowledge Gaps

A Transition Plan helps the incumbent document the nuances of his/her duties that are not necessarily captured in the official position description. This type of information can help close knowledge gaps and enables back-up(s) and/or successors to have a better preview and understanding of the job they are coming into.

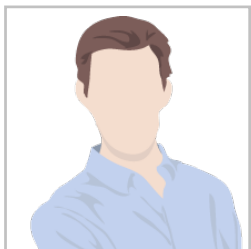
Legacy Information

Having on-demand access to legacy information and knowledge can help minimize the risks to programs, projects, and staff. This information can promote knowledge sharing, enhance cross-training, and promote collaboration.

Successor and Back-up Preparation

Over the years incumbents develop extensive networks, become members of key meetings, committees, or workgroups, and develop relationships with vendors and service providers. The Transition Plan documents these important nuances of the job which will assist with cross training back-up(s) and preparing eventual successor(s); which can reduce the time it takes to get the back-up(s) an/or successor(s) up to speed.

Create Your Own Transition Plan



Now it's your turn.

Now that you understand the Transition Plan, it's time to create your own! [Refer to the corresponding template in the toolkit to get started.](#) You will find a basic structure for creating Transition Plan with appropriately labeled sections with guiding questions. You may need to rearrange, add, or omit certain sections based on your specific needs as they might not all be relevant.

Good luck!

