

SBA Succession Planning Evaluation

Final Evaluation Report

Prepared for: The U.S. Small Business Administration
Office of Human Resources Solutions (OHRs)

Contract Number: 73351018A0036
Task Number: 73351020F0199

Published: July 2021

Prepared by: Teresa Kline, MA
Kassim Mbwana, MPP
Jessica Liodos, MA
Balint Peto, MPP
Spencer Esty
Ellory Gipson
Ethan Palmer, MPA

Summit Consulting, LLC
601 New Jersey Ave. NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20001
www.summitllc.us

DISCLAIMER

This report was prepared for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Office of Human Resources Solutions (OHRS), under Contract Number 73351018A0036, Task Order 73351020F0199. The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the SBA, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. government.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Team would like to thank the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Human Resources Solutions (OHRS) staff for their direction and support during this project. In particular, the Team thanks Shay Meinzer for her guidance and direction throughout this evaluation.

Table of Contents

1	Executive Summary	1
2	Introduction and Purpose	4
2.1	Research questions	4
2.2	Defining the leadership pipeline and the leadership cohort	5
3	Evaluation Design	5
3.1	Data sources and methods	6
	<i>Exploratory data collection and analysis phase</i>	<i>6</i>
	<i>Primary and secondary data collection and analysis phase</i>	<i>8</i>
	<i>Confirmatory data collection and analysis phase</i>	<i>11</i>
3.2	Study limitations	13
4	Findings.....	13
4.1	Research Question 1: How does leadership succession currently occur at the SBA?	14
	<i>Sub-question 1.1: What are the characteristics of SBA personnel in the leadership pipeline and in leadership positions?.....</i>	<i>14</i>
	<i>Sub-question 1.2: When in their career/tenure are people promoted into leadership positions? Are promotions happening internally from within the SBA? Are promotions happening internally from within program offices?</i>	<i>20</i>
	<i>Sub-question 1.3: What are the characteristics of personnel who are promoted?.....</i>	<i>23</i>
	<i>Sub-question 1.4: Is there a pool of qualified applicants internal to the SBA available to fill open positions? What are the trends at the MCO level?</i>	<i>26</i>
4.2	Research Question 2: How do the Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows and President’s Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation programs contribute to successful succession within the SBA?	28
	<i>Sub-question 2.1: What are the characteristics of personnel selected for these programs?.....</i>	<i>29</i>
	<i>Sub-question 2.2: Who is not being selected for these programs?.....</i>	<i>31</i>
	<i>Sub-question 2.3: What are the skills/technical competencies that participants learn? Which gaps in skills/competencies do these programs fill?</i>	<i>33</i>
	<i>Sub-question 2.4: How are participants selected for these programs?</i>	<i>35</i>
	<i>Sub-question 2.5: How are opportunities provided to participants to implement learned skills when they return to the SBA?.....</i>	<i>37</i>
	<i>Sub-question 2.6: Have program participants remained with the SBA? How have program participants progressed along the leadership pipeline at the SBA?.....</i>	<i>39</i>
4.3	Research Question 3: What gaps exist in current staff skills and abilities that may prevent effective succession planning within the SBA?	40
	<i>Sub-question 3.1: What gaps in staff skills and abilities are reported?.....</i>	<i>41</i>
	<i>Sub-question 3.2: How are staff skills gaps measured or identified?</i>	<i>44</i>
	<i>Sub-question 3.3: What skills/competencies does SBA leadership currently have? Does this differ from non-leadership staff?</i>	<i>45</i>
	<i>Sub-question 3.4: How are SBA training programs (mentorship program, temporary promotions, supervisory detail assignments, and supervisor trainings) contributing to succession?.....</i>	<i>47</i>
4.4	Additional findings	50

5	Conclusions and Recommendations	52
5.1	Develop a fully documented leadership succession plan	52
	<i>Recommendation 1. Publish a fully documented leadership succession plan</i>	52
	<i>Recommendation 2. Create a comprehensive communications plan for leadership development</i>	53
5.2	Improve skills monitoring to address skills gaps and maintain a qualified pool	53
	<i>Recommendation 3. Create and maintain a “succession snapshot” dashboard</i>	54
	<i>Recommendation 4. Expand access to the OPM 360 Assessment</i>	54
	<i>Recommendation 5. Discuss succession annually with each program office</i>	54
	<i>Recommendation 6. Consider utilizing detail assignments to identify staff for future pipeline vacancies</i>	54
5.3	Maximize program benefits	55
	<i>Recommendation 7. Ensure trainings and programs address agency needs</i>	55
	<i>Recommendation 8. Target recruitment communication to improve applicant pools for leadership development programs</i>	56
	<i>Recommendation 9. Create a more formalized implementation structure for returning EIG and PMC participants</i>	56
	<i>Recommendation 10. Increase the number of participating mentors in the mentorship program</i>	57
	<i>Recommendation 11. Increase awareness and usage of IDPs through tracking and communication</i>	57
Appendix A	Final Process Map	A-1
Appendix B	Survey Instruments	B-1
	Survey Instrument: Current SBA Employees	B-1
	Survey Instrument: Former SBA Employees	B-28
Appendix C	Focus Group Guides	C-1
	Follow-up Focus Group Guide	C-1
	Confirmatory Focus Group Guide	C-9
Appendix D	Benchmarking Interview Guide	D-1
Appendix E	SBA Succession Planning Documents Reviewed	E-1
Appendix F	Detailed Secondary Data Analysis	F-1
	Employment Personnel Data	F-1
	Dual-Rater Core Competency Assessment	F-6
	Talent Development Needs Survey	F-6

List of Figures

Figure 1: Matrix of recommendations by feasibility and impact.....	3
Figure 2: SBA succession planning evaluation design.....	6
Figure 3: Female employees at the SBA by leadership status (2010–2020).....	17
Figure 4: Male employees at the SBA by leadership status (2010–2020)	17
Figure 5: Trends in the leadership pipeline among the top five program offices (2010–2020).....	19
Figure 6: Trends in the leadership cohort among the top five program offices (2010–2020)	19
Figure 7: Leadership group movement among EIG and PMC program participants.....	40
Figure 8: Leadership group movement type at the SBA.....	40

List of Tables

Table 1: Research questions and sub-questions.....	4
Table 2: Leadership and Succession Survey sampling strata and actual number of responses	10
Table 3: Follow-up focus groups recruitment and attendance	11
Table 4: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Disaster Assistance (2020).....	15
Table 5: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Field Operations (Headquarters and District Offices, 2020)	16
Table 6: Occupational series by grade at the SBA overall, excluding the Office of Disaster Assistance and the Office of Field Operations (2020)	16
Table 7: Gender by leadership status at the SBA (2020)	16
Table 8: Length of service by leadership status (2020)	17
Table 9: Education level by leadership status (2020)	18
Table 10: Program office by leadership status (2020).....	18
Table 11: Occupational series by leadership status (2020)	19
Table 12: Promotions into leadership (pipeline or cohort)	20
Table 13: Time to promotion into leadership.....	21
Table 14: Proportion of within-office promotions to leadership by office.....	22
Table 15: Number of promotions by gender	23
Table 16: Promotion types by gender.....	23
Table 17: Promotion into leadership pipeline or leadership cohort by education.....	24
Table 18: Promotion into leadership pipeline or leadership cohort by program office.....	24
Table 19: Promotion type by program office.....	25
Table 20: Promotion into leadership pipeline or leadership cohort by occupational series.....	25
Table 21: Characteristics of EIG and PMC participants in the Leadership and Succession Survey.....	29
Table 22: Characteristics of EIG and PMC applicants who were not accepted	31
Table 23: EIG, PMC programs reported learned skills compared to future skills needs	35
Table 24: Promotions by program participation.....	39
Table 25: Skills gaps assessed in the Dual-Rater Assessment in 2018 and 2020.....	42

Table 26: What skills should be taught at the SBA?	43
Table 27: What skills are taught at the SBA?	43
Table 28: Leadership and Succession Survey perspectives on formal feedback processes	44
Table 29: Top five skills/competencies gaps in the TDNS by leadership status	45
Table 30: Leadership skills discussed in the Leadership and Succession Survey	46
Table 31: Promotions by program participation.....	48
Table 32: Temporary promotions by leadership status.....	48
Table 33: Permanent promotions among those receiving temporary promotions	49
Table 34: Use and value of IDPs.....	51
Table C-1: Focus group topics by population.....	C-1
Table D-1: Matrix of benchmarking interview topics to research sub-questions.....	D-1
Table E-1: Description of documents reviewed.....	E-1
Table F-1: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Capital Access (2020).....	F-2
Table F-2: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Government Contracting & Business Development.....	F-3
Table F-3: Occupational series by grade at the Office of the General Counsel	F-4
Table F-4: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Performance, Planning, and the Chief Financial Officer	F-4
Table F-5: Occupational series by grade at the Office Investment and Innovation	F-4
Table F-6: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Information Technology	F-5
Table F-7: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Entrepreneurial Development.....	F-5

List of Acronyms

BOS: business opportunity specialist
CHCO: Chief Human Capital Officer
CLO: Chief Learning Officer
DAU: Defense Acquisition University
ECQs: executive core qualifications
EIG: Excellence in Government Fellows Program
ERB: Executive Resource Board
FAITAS: Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System
GCBD: Office of Government Contracting & Business Development
GS: General Schedule
GSA: U.S. General Services Administration
HHS: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
HQ: headquarters
IDP: individual development plan
IRS: Internal Revenue Service
LDP: leadership development program
MCO: mission-critical occupation
NFC: National Finance Center
NOA: Notice of Action code
OCA: Office of Capital Access
OCIO: Office of the Chief Information Officer
ODA: Office of Disaster Assistance
OED: Office of Entrepreneurial Development
OFO: Office of Field Operations
OGC: Office of General Counsel
OHRS: Office of Human Resources Solutions
OPM: Office of Personnel Management
OPPCFO: Office of Performance, Planning, and the Chief Financial Officer
PMC: President's Management Council Interagency Rotation Program
PMF: Presidential Management Fellows
ROI: return on investment
SBA: U.S. Small Business Administration
SES: Senior Executive Service
SL: Senior Level
SME: subject-matter expert
SOP: standard operating procedure
TDNS: Talent Development Needs Survey
TEI: Treasury Executive Institute
TMC: Talent Management Center

1 Executive Summary

PURPOSE. The Summit Consulting, LLC and Fors Marsh Group team (“the Team”) conducted an evaluation of leadership succession at the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to help the agency develop a proactive, effective leadership succession process. To do this, the Team examined three research questions:

- **Research Question 1.** How does leadership succession currently occur at the SBA?
- **Research Question 2.** How do the Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows and President’s Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation programs contribute to successful succession within the SBA?
- **Research Question 3.** What gaps exist in current staff skills and abilities that may prevent effective succession planning within the SBA?

The target populations of interest for this evaluation are the SBA leadership pipeline and the SBA leadership cohort, as defined in the FY 2020–2022 Leadership Succession Plan. See Section 2.2 for the full definition of these populations.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGIES. The Team conducted the evaluation in three phases:

- **Exploratory data collection phase.** In this phase, the Team conducted informational meetings with key members of the Office of Human Resources Solutions (OHRS), a literature review on succession planning and leadership development programs, and an in-depth review of key SBA strategy and process documentation provided by the SBA.
- **Primary and secondary data collection phase.** Next, the Team conducted data analysis of SBA employment personnel data, the Talent Development Needs Survey (TDNS), and the Dual-Rater Core Competency Assessment (hereafter “Dual-Rater Assessment”). The Team also conducted a Leadership and Succession Survey with current and former SBA staff.
- **Confirmatory data collection phase.** Finally, the Team conducted follow-up focus groups with select SBA staff, benchmarking interviews with other federal agencies, and confirmatory focus groups with SBA staff who represent current and potential leadership.

RESULTS. The evaluation results are presented below, organized by research question.

Current leadership succession. In 2020, the SBA leadership cohort had a higher proportion of males, a high mean length of service, and high education levels. Unsurprisingly, the leadership cohort had a high proportion of Program Management staff (MCO 0340), which is the only mission-critical occupation (MCO) at the GS-15 level or higher. At least 50% of promotions into leadership happened internally within the SBA, and over 88% of promotions happened within the respective program office. Men experienced a higher proportion of first promotions into leadership positions than women but lagged in experiencing third promotions. The Office of Disaster Assistance (ODA) had a high rate of first promotions into leadership, and the majority of first promotions into leadership occurred within the General Business & Industry MCO (1101) and Program Management MCO (0340). Finally, the Team found that the skills gaps reported in the Dual-Rater Assessment are consistent. Changes in year-over-year assessments are due to the SBA adding new questions assessing technical competencies (see Sub-question 3.1: What gaps in staff skills and abilities are reported?).

EIG and PMC programs. For both programs, the majority of participants were female, all reported having received a promotion within the SBA, and retention rates¹ were better than for the SBA overall. Participants in both programs reported a variety of benefits from participating, however EIG participants generally reported greater ability to implement learned skills upon return and were much more enthused by their experience than PMC participants. There was not much overlap between skills learned through these programs and the skills gaps identified in the Dual-Rater Assessment. This suggests that while participants feel they are benefiting from participation, the programs are not directly addressing agency skills gaps. Respondents felt that potential for upward mobility and motivation to lead should be considered more heavily in the application process, while number of direct reports, tenure, and number of positions held at the SBA should be de-emphasized. Finally, respondents felt that qualified staff may be unaware of these programs; the Team recommends more frequent and targeted marketing to widen the applicant pool.

Skills gaps and barriers to succession. Skills gaps varied by MCO, but common skills gaps included written communication, oral communication, and conflict management. The Team found notable overlap in the skills gaps reported by leadership and non-leadership; for example, both groups reported in the TDNS that they would benefit from trainings on “core skills” such as conflict management, critical thinking, and change management. Although the skills gaps identified in the 2018 Dual-Rater Assessment did not persist into 2020, new gaps were identified; this suggests that the current talent pool would benefit from additional trainings to address specific skills gaps. The mentorship program, supervisory trainings, temporary promotions, and supervisory detail assignments were all beneficial to participants. Networking and exposure were the most cited benefits of these opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS. The Team made 11 recommendations, which fell into three categories. These recommendations are summarized below as well as in a matrix presenting the feasibility and impact of each recommendation.

Develop a fully documented leadership succession plan. (1) Publish an operational leadership succession plan of strategic objectives that documents corresponding communications, implementation, and change management plans, rather than publishing different leadership succession plans each year that only detail one component or a few components of leadership succession; (2) Create a targeted communication plan around all leadership development programs and opportunities.

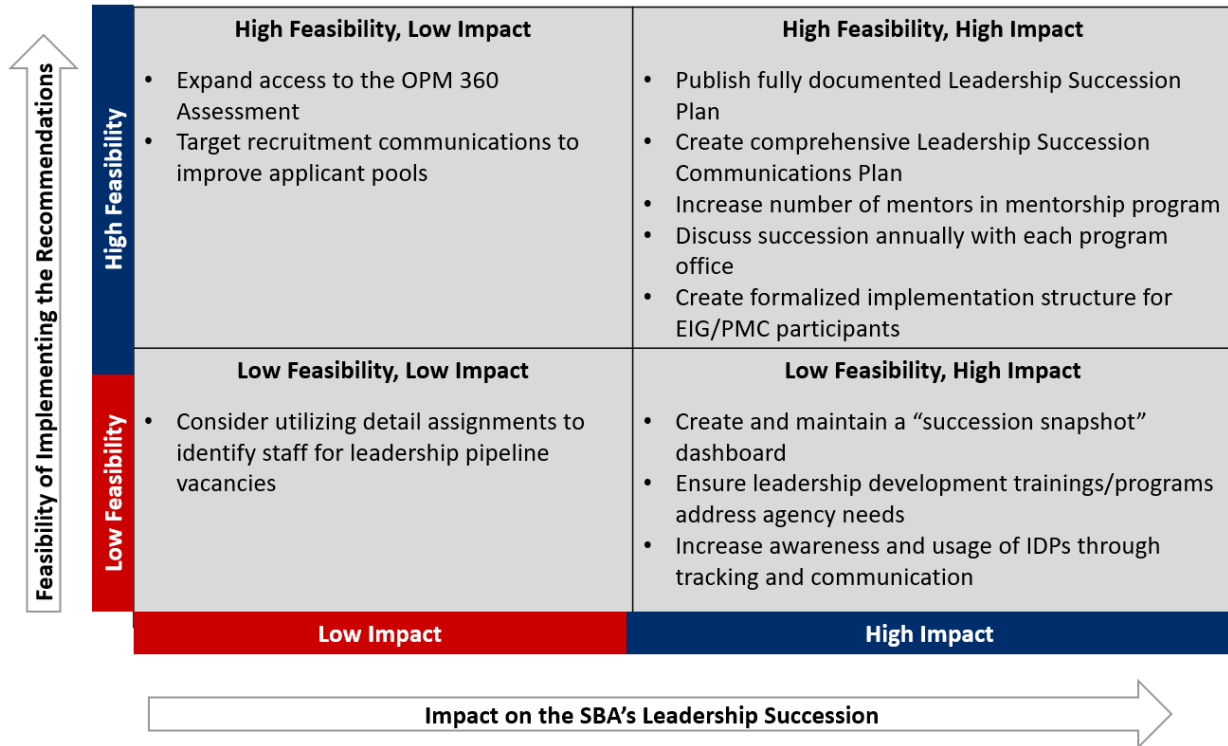
Improve skills monitoring to address skills gaps and maintain a qualified pool. (1) Create and maintain a “succession snapshot” dashboard tracking Key Performance Indicators of interest (such as skills and skills gaps) at the employee level, informed by the Dual-Rater Assessment; (2) Expand access to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) 360 Assessment (and implement recommendations in this report to increase and target communications to improve participation rates); (3) Discuss succession annually with program office leadership to identify and remedy any structural barriers preventing effective leadership succession within the agency; (4) Consider utilizing detail assignments to identify staff for future pipeline vacancies.

Maximize program benefits. (1) Ensure trainings and programs address agency needs by conducting a gap analysis mapping current trainings offered and existing skills gaps and considering other leadership development programs in addition to or in place of the EIG and PMC programs; (2) Target recruitment communications to improve applicant pools for leadership development programs; (3) Create a more

¹ Percent of employees who have remained employed by the SBA.

formalized implementation structure for returning EIG and PMC participants; (4) Increase the number of participating mentors in the mentorship program by providing more in-depth information for mentors and soliciting contact information from staff who report interest in being a mentor in the TDNS; (5) Increase awareness and usage of individual development plans (IDPs) through tracking and communication.

Figure 1: Matrix of recommendations by feasibility and impact



2 Introduction and Purpose

The Summit Consulting, LLC and Fors Marsh Group team (“the Team”) present this final report on the Succession Planning Evaluation for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBA’s strategic objective to evaluate and strengthen leadership succession comes at a critical time for the agency, given the anticipated wave of retirements. The projected retirement eligibility rate is 42% by 2022.² This evaluation assisted the SBA in developing a proactive, effective leadership succession process, which strengthens its ability to serve small businesses by building a high-performing workforce. This report is organized as follows:

- **Section 2** outlines the study research questions and defines the populations of interest.
- **Section 3** describes the data sources and methods used to conduct the evaluation.
- **Section 4** provides the detailed findings by research question.
- **Section 5** provides the Team’s conclusions and recommendations.

2.1 Research questions

This evaluation explores three research questions to help the SBA achieve its goals. To effectively answer these questions, the Team split the questions into a series of sub-questions, listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Research questions and sub-questions

Research Question 1: How does leadership succession currently occur at the SBA?
<i>Sub-question 1.1.</i> What are the characteristics of SBA personnel in the leadership pipeline and in leadership positions?
<i>Sub-question 1.2.</i> When in their career/tenure are people promoted into leadership positions? Are promotions happening internally from within the SBA? Are promotions happening internally from within program offices?
<i>Sub-question 1.3.</i> What are the characteristics of personnel who are promoted?
<i>Sub-question 1.4.</i> Is there a pool of qualified applicants internal to the SBA? What are the trends at the mission-critical occupations (MCO) level?
Research Question 2: How do the Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows and President’s Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation programs contribute to successful succession within the SBA?
<i>Sub-question 2.1.</i> What are the characteristics of personnel selected for these programs?
<i>Sub-question 2.2.</i> Who is not being selected for these programs?
<i>Sub-question 2.3.</i> What are the skills/technical competencies that participants learn? Which gaps in skills/competencies do these programs fill?
<i>Sub-question 2.4.</i> How are participants selected for these programs?
<i>Sub-question 2.5.</i> How are opportunities provided to participants to implement learned skills when they return to the SBA?
<i>Sub-question 2.6.</i> Have program participants remained with the SBA? How have program participants progressed along the leadership pipeline at the SBA?
Research Question 3: What gaps exist in current staff skills and abilities that may prevent effective succession planning within the SBA?
<i>Sub-question 3.1.</i> What gaps in staff skills and abilities are reported?
<i>Sub-question 3.2.</i> How are staff skills gaps measured or identified?
<i>Sub-question 3.3.</i> What skills/competencies does SBA leadership currently have? Does this differ from non-leadership staff?
<i>Sub-question 3.4.</i> How are SBA training programs (mentorship program, temporary promotions, supervisory detail assignments, and supervisor trainings) contributing to succession?

² Succession Planning Evaluation RFP, page 1.

2.2 Defining the leadership pipeline and the leadership cohort

The target populations of interest for this study were SBA staff in the leadership pipeline and leadership cohort. The SBA **leadership pipeline** as defined in the FY 2020–2022 Leadership Succession Plan³ includes all permanent GS-12 through GS-15 employees and Senior Executive Service (SES) or Senior Level (SL) positions within a list of defined MCOs (provided below). The pipeline is composed of all employees eligible for promotion or progression into leadership positions, namely supervisory or management roles.

The FY 2020–2022 Leadership Succession Plan also defines the SBA **leadership cohort**. This group is composed of *supervisors and managers* in permanent GS-13 through GS-15 positions as well as SES levels in the same list of MCOs.

The MCOs included in the definitions of the leadership pipeline and leadership cohort are:

- GS-0201, Human Resource Specialist
- GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)
- GS-1101, Outreach and Marketing Specialist, Business Opportunity Specialist, Business Development Specialist
- GS-1102, Contract Specialists, Acquisition/Procurement Analysts
- GS-1160, Financial Analyst
- GS-1165, Loan Specialists
- GS-2210, Information Technology Specialists

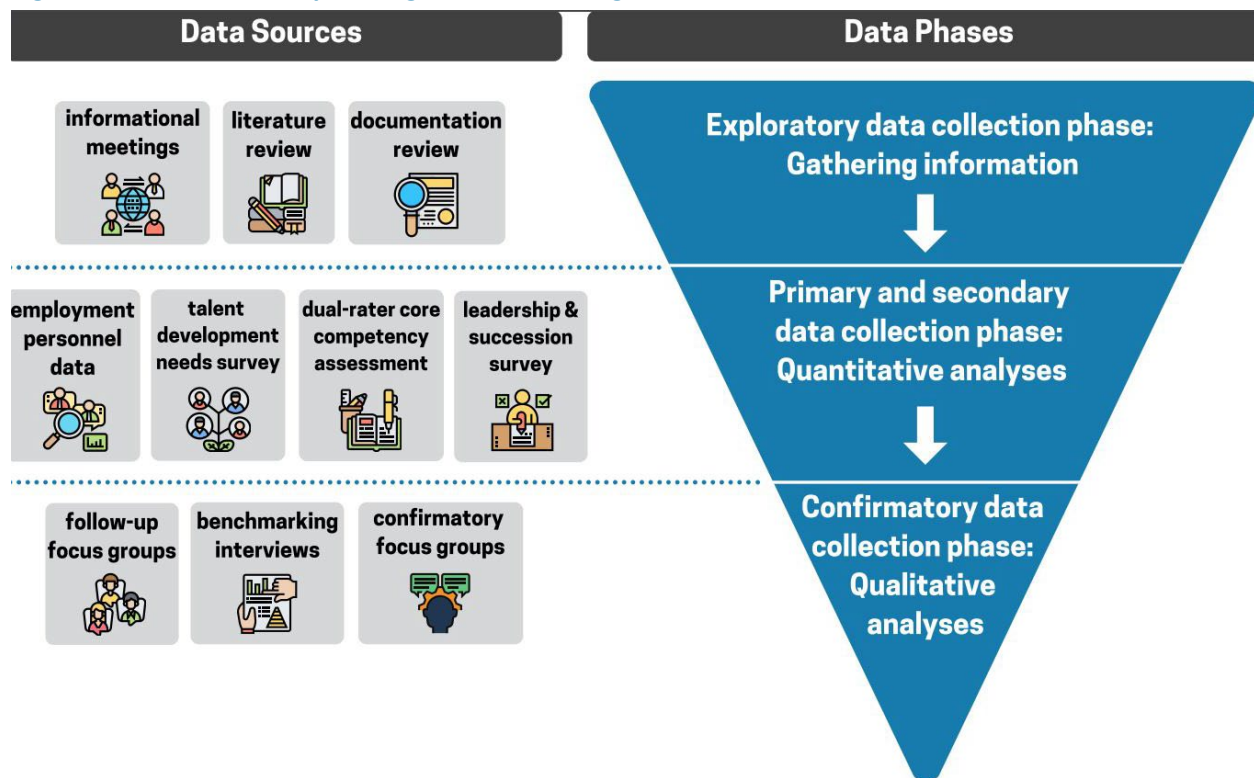
3 Evaluation Design

The Team used a mixed-methods approach to answer the three research questions. The evaluation design was structured into three interconnected and sequential phases, so that each data collection step informed the next as well as validated findings from the prior. This design increased the Team’s ability to establish consistency across evaluation findings and address new or remaining gaps at the conclusion of each phase.

Figure 2 shows the three data phases of the evaluation, illustrating how each activity built to the next. The study began with an exploratory data collection and analysis phase, in which the Team collected contextual information about the SBA’s succession planning process, how leadership succession occurs at the SBA, and general succession planning best practices. This context informed the development of the Leadership and Succession Survey (primary data) and analyses of secondary data sources from the SBA in the primary and secondary data collection and analysis phase. Finally, the Team engaged in additional data collection via follow-up focus groups with SBA staff, benchmarking interviews with other federal agencies, and confirmatory focus groups with SBA leadership to confirm or validate findings from the primary and secondary data analyses in the confirmatory data collection and analysis phase.

³ U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Human Resources Solutions: FY 2020–2022 Leadership Succession Plan, March 2020.

Figure 2: SBA succession planning evaluation design



3.1 Data sources and methods

This section provides an overview of each data source identified in Figure 2, the associated methodology, and any data limitations. In addition, key findings from the literature review, documentation review, and process map are included in this section, as they provided context for the current state of SBA leadership succession, which informed the rest of the study.

Exploratory data collection and analysis phase

Step 1: Informational meetings. As the first step in this evaluation, the Team conducted a series of informational meetings with the following members of the SBA’s Office of Human Resources Solutions (OHRS):

- Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer
- Chief Learning Officer
- Chief, Strategy, Policy and Accountability Division
- Human Resource Specialist, Training and Development
- Management and Program Analyst, Strategy, Policy, and Accountability

The purpose of these meetings was to provide the Team with an understanding of succession at the SBA. These meetings informed the focus of the literature review, the development of the process map, and the Leadership and Succession Survey instrument.

Step 2: Literature review on succession planning. The Team conducted a targeted literature review covering three topics: (1) process, methodologies, and findings of succession planning assessments done

within the U.S.; (2) strategies and best practices that lead to effective succession initiatives (with an emphasis on environments with high retirement eligibility); and (3) the impact of leadership development programs (highlighting the EIG and PMC programs) on succession planning. To supplement the limited information available on the EIG and PMC programs, as well as gain insight into the most effective elements of comparable programs, the Team expanded the search to examine leadership training programs across other federal agencies.

The Team used a rigorous methodology and documentation process to ensure the materials gathered for the review would be relevant. The Team examined more than 80 peer-reviewed and gray literature materials; ultimately, content from 36 informed the final product. Content from the 36 relevant materials were categorized and synthesized into major themes. Each theme was then summarized, leading to the key findings.⁴

The key findings of the review established a solid baseline of research-supported knowledge regarding effective succession and informed the direction and design of latter phases of the evaluation. The rigor followed in the literature review methodology increased confidence in the early evaluation findings while reducing uncertainty in the findings of subsequent evaluation phases.

Step 3: Documentation review and process map. To fully understand the SBA's current succession process, the Team conducted in-depth reviews of key strategy and process documentation provided by the SBA. The Team then created a process map to graphically depict the SBA's current succession planning process including existing actions; the flow of individual steps; and direct inputs, outputs, and outcomes. The Team also reached out to OHRS stakeholders and incorporated their feedback into the final process map. See Appendix A for the final process map.⁵

The Team reviewed a variety of documentation on the SBA's succession planning strategies (including the FY 2020–2022 and FY 2013–2016 SBA Leadership Succession Plans), implementation plans, and communication plans, as well as other key documentation. See Appendix E for the full list of documents reviewed. Additionally, the Team took the following steps to create the process map:

1. Reviewed all documentation relevant to the SBA's succession planning process;
2. Created the current-state process map and identified gaps in the documented steps;
3. Held information-gathering session with key OHRS stakeholders to validate the process map and review gaps in understanding; and
4. Incorporated feedback from OHRS stakeholders and finalized process map.

The following key findings from the documentation review and process map were instrumental in guiding the development of the Leadership and Succession Survey, benchmarking interviews, follow-up focus groups, and confirmatory focus groups:

- While the SBA is conducting many of the activities and creating the necessary outputs for the succession planning process, nearly half of these inputs, activities, and outputs were not identified in any documentation.
- By identifying all succession planning activities at the SBA through the documentation review and key stakeholder interviews, the Team was able to find many outputs that *should* come out

⁴ The *SBA Succession Planning Evaluation: Literature Review of Succession Planning* was submitted to the SBA as a stand-alone deliverable on November 20, 2020.

⁵ Note that the process map is most easily viewed as a PDF, as it was originally submitted to the SBA on September 21, 2020.

of each of the activities to ensure that the process is as successful as possible and that there is transparency across the agency. Examples of these include, but are not limited to:

- Annual analysis and recommendations on improvements to the SES hiring process;
- Flyers, emails, SBA Daily Messages, announcements, presentations, and town hall talking points on the different leadership development programs available; and
- Agency-wide awareness of a finalized leadership succession plan.
- The reviewed leadership succession plans are iterative; each covers a different topic and does not repeat information. This means there is no single document capturing the entire leadership succession process.

The documentation review and process map examined the SBA’s succession planning process as a whole, illustrating where the agency currently stands to inform changes or improvements going forward. Additional findings from the documentation review and process map can be found in the Findings below.

Primary and secondary data collection and analysis phase

SBA employment personnel dataset. The SBA’s OHRS collects detailed employment information on all employees using the National Finance Center’s Insight Datasets. The Team received data on all GS-12 through GS-15 and SES employees between January 2010 and December 2020. The 11-year period enabled the Team to track employee progression or promotion. A subset of MCOs within these GS (General Schedule) levels constitutes the SBA leadership cohort and leadership pipeline as discussed in Section 2.2 (page 5). Variable topics of interest in the dataset include:

- Demographic characteristics
- Program office and employment history
- Pay grade, position, and occupation
- Employee performance, bonuses, and awards

To address the study research questions, the Team first established a baseline understanding of the employee pool in the SBA leadership pipeline and the leadership cohort. The Team generated descriptive statistics including the mean, mode, range, and standard deviation on key variables (1) across the SBA, (2) within program offices, and (3) across MCOs.

The Team also examined when SBA staff are promoted into leadership positions, as this is a key component of understanding how leadership succession currently happens. The analysis addressed at what point in their careers staff are promoted and how many years staff are at the SBA before promotion.

In addition, the Team enumerated the MCOs that are filled by promotions in the employment personnel dataset to determine if the MCOs persist year over year—that is, are the same types of positions always being filled, and what is the rate of these positions being filled internally versus externally.

Finally, the Team explored correlations of factors such as MCOs, program office, education level, and length of service with the likelihood of being promoted. Given the Team’s observations of individuals being promoted into and out of the leadership pipeline and leadership cohort, the Team did not construct causal models as the relationships were not always experienced as upward mobility. Data limitations on whether promotions were occurring internally within the SBA or from other agencies external to the SBA also limited the Team’s ability to explore this further.

TDNS. The SBA conducts annual surveys of all personnel to assess training needs and preferences as reported by employees. Relevant topics covered in the survey include:

- Program office and location where the staff work
- Type of appointment, level of responsibility, GS level, and occupation title
- Access to, type of, and mode of training opportunities desired and available to employees
- Perspectives on IDPs
- Factors that influence training decisions and perceived barriers to completing training

The SBA provided the Team with 2018, 2019, and 2020 raw data (comma-separated values files) and 2018–2020 descriptive statistics summary reports. These descriptive summary reports are limited to counts for each of the survey questions for each year of the survey—the SBA has not compared subgroups within and across year subgroup analyses.

The TDNS data structure limited the Team’s ability to compare an individual’s responses year over year since the Team did not have a unique identifier linking each year. The Team understands that the purpose of the TDNS is tactical, to assess training needs at the agency level informing the agency’s budget, rather than identifying specific individual training needs. This big-picture, tactical design of the TDNS means its results can be considered a “snapshot” of agency training needs for the year. The Team determined that the TDNS could be used to address two research sub-questions:

- Is there a pool of qualified applicants internal to the SBA available to fill open positions? What are the trends at the MCO level? (Q 1.4)
- What skills or competencies does SBA leadership currently have? Does this differ from non-leadership staff? (Q 3.3)

To address Sub-question 1.4, the Team compared whether SBA employees’ responses to 19 specific questions (see Appendix F) persisted, remained the same, or were reduced across the three years of available data. The self-reported questions addressed two areas: (1) SBA staff opinions on general training opportunities and the SBA’s approach to helping employees plan their training for professional development and (2) SBA staff opinions on training opportunities for specific skill sets.

To address Sub-question 3.3, the Team examined the competencies of SBA leadership and non-leadership to determine whether there is a gap between the two groups. Specifically, the Team generated cross-tabs of the self-reported skills and gaps reported by employees in the dataset and assessed in Sub-question 1.4 using the following question:

- What is your level of responsibility? Response choices include three leadership options: Executive, Manager, and Supervisor.

Dual-Rater Assessment. The SBA conducted Dual-Rater Assessments of skills gaps in 2018 and 2019. In this process⁶, the SBA used working groups of subject-matter experts (SMEs) to identify competencies needed for each occupation and behavioral indicators for each competency. Employees rate themselves on their performance for each competency, and they are also rated by their supervisors. The Dual-Rater Assessment reveals employee competencies or gaps on core knowledge and skill sets identified by working groups of SMEs chosen by OHRS. The SBA provided the Team with summary statistics for the 2018 and 2019 assessments as well as raw data for the 2019 assessment. The SBA also provided eight 2019 Competency Assessment Report documents summarizing core competencies of SBA staff by eight

⁶ This process was described in documentation provided by the SBA, “The MCO Initiative Summary.”

job occupational series. The Team used the 2018 summary statistics, the 2019 data, and eight Competency Assessment Reports to address Sub-question 1.4.

Leadership and Succession Survey. The Team conducted two web surveys: one with current SBA staff in the leadership pipeline and leadership cohort and one with former SBA staff who left for a different federal agency within the past five years (2015–2019) and were in the leadership pipeline while at the SBA. See Appendix B for the full survey instruments.

The surveys included questions on the EIG, PMC, and mentorship programs (such as reasons for interest or lack of interest in participating, skills expected to gain through program participation, and ability to implement learned skills upon returning to the SBA) and skills gaps (such as perceptions of personal skills gaps and awareness of skills needed for promotions). These survey questions informed Research Questions 2 and 3.

The Team selected a stratified simple random sample drawn from SBA staff in the leadership pipeline and in the leadership cohort. The SBA worked with the Team to identify EIG, PMC, and mentorship participants to include in the survey sample.

Table 2 outlines the sampling design: the number of people sampled for each of the four strata defined by whether the employees are current or former employees and whether they are in the leadership cohort or the leadership pipeline. The table also indicates the Team’s actual survey completes for each stratum.

Table 2: Leadership and Succession Survey sampling strata and actual number of responses

Employee Status at the SBA	Leadership Cohort	Leadership Pipeline	Total Respondents
Current employee	100 sampled ¹ (48 completes)	100 sampled (25 completes)	200 sampled + 45 EIG, PMC, and mentorship participants ² (119 completes)
Former employee ³	100 sampled ⁴ (4 completes)	100 sampled ⁴ (4 completes)	12 sampled ⁴ (8 completes)
Totals	200 sampled (52 completes)	200 sampled (28 completes)	400 sampled + 45 EIG, PMC, and mentorship participants (120 completes + EIG, PMC, and mentorship participants)

Table Notes:

¹The response rates were 46% for the current employee survey and 67% for the former employee survey.

²The survey sample included EIG (10), PMC (8), and mentorship (50) participants found in the employment personnel dataset.

³These are defined as staff who left the SBA in the last five years (2015–2019) and were in the leadership pipeline. Potential recruitment challenges may lead to lower response rates and ultimately completions.

⁴The project’s intent was to sample 100 former employees in the leadership cohort and pipeline. However, former employee emails are not collected and maintained in the employment personnel dataset. Instead, the SBA sampled 12 former employees in other federal employment who were sponsored by the SBA for the EIG and PMC programs.

The SBA made the initial recruitment contact by email; this approach was designed to support the legitimacy of the evaluation and improve response rates. The SBA also made follow-up contacts by email to solicit participation in the survey as needed.

After administering the survey, the Team downloaded, cleaned, and validated the survey data. For close-ended questions, the Team calculated the percentage or count of respondents who endorsed each response option. The Team generated descriptive statistics (such as mean, median, and mode) and

produced charts and graphs to summarize results. In addition to the basic descriptive statistics, the Team also generated subgroup analyses of leadership versus non-leadership respondents.

Appendix F provides additional details on the data cleaning process for the employment personnel data. All analysis tables are also presented in these appendices, as Section 4 (Findings) presents only the most salient findings.

Confirmatory data collection and analysis phase

Follow-up focus groups. The Team conducted four follow-up focus groups with select SBA staff to (1) build on findings of interest from the survey and (2) gather more in-depth information on specific topics than covered in the survey. An initial draft of the follow-up focus group moderator guide was submitted with the draft survey instrument; after preliminary survey analyses, the final guide incorporated all additional topics or questions based on early survey findings.

To gather all the necessary information from the focus group participants, the Team conducted one focus group with each of the following populations:

- EIG program participants
- PMC program participants
- Mentorship program participants
- SBA staff who have received temporary promotions or supervisory detail assignments

In addition to topics specific to the program in which SBA staff participated, all focus groups also included questions regarding IDPs and SBA supervisory trainings.

First, the Team worked with the SBA to acquire a list of participants in each of the above groups and selected participants from each population. By recruiting eight participants for each group, the Team anticipated that four to six participants would attend. Table 3 presents recruitment and attendance counts for SBA staff selected as potential participants.

Table 3: Follow-up focus groups recruitment and attendance

Population	Recruitment Count	Attendance Count
EIG program participants	9	5
PMC program participants	9	4
Mentorship program participants	11	7
Temporary promotions, supervisory detail assignments	9	6

To ensure buy-in from the participants, the SBA made the initial recruitment contact by email and the Team followed up via email to schedule focus groups. All focus groups were conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams and were recorded with participant consent to enable exact transcription.

Thematic analysis included a review of transcripts and notes to categorize information and identify themes and patterns in the data. The Team then performed an analysis to identify key themes and best practices relevant to the three research questions.

Benchmarking interviews. The Team conducted benchmarking interviews with three federal agencies: the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the OPM, and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). These agencies were identified in conjunction with the SBA based on having:

- Similar budget size and scope;
- Similar workforce composition and size;
- Current future work readiness;
- Internal leadership programs; and
- Other requirements determined by the SBA.

The purpose of the benchmarking interviews was to (1) understand each agency's approach to succession planning, (2) provide a point of comparison for the SBA's process, and (3) identify succession planning practices that the SBA may choose to adopt.

An initial draft of the benchmarking interview guide was developed and submitted to key OHRS stakeholders. The final guide incorporated all stakeholder feedback and focused on the following topics:

- How the agency develops and maintains a qualified pool of internal candidates to fill open leadership positions
- How the agency identifies and encourages participants for the EIG and PMC programs
- Any other internal or external leadership development programs the agency utilizes
- How the agency identifies and trains for mission-critical skills

The Team worked closely with the SBA to identify one to three interviewees from each agency. Respondents were chosen based on role, responsibility, and knowledge of succession planning and included Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs) and Chief Learning Officers (CLOs).

Recruitment materials were created by the Team and sent via email from SBA leadership to request participation, provide details, and schedule interviews. Participants were given a prepared list of questions and topics beforehand to encourage preparation and allow for a more informative experience. All interview instruments were submitted to the SBA for review and approval before fielding.

All three interviews were conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams, and with participant consent, groups were recorded to enable exact transcription. Following a preliminary analysis of each interview, the Team sent follow-up questions as necessary to gather additional details.

Thematic analysis followed similar steps as those described above for the follow-up focus groups. Transcripts and notes were reviewed to categorize information and identify themes and patterns in the data. The Team then performed an analysis to identify key themes and best practices relevant to the three research questions.

Confirmatory focus groups. After the Team analyzed project findings and drafted recommendations, two confirmatory focus groups were conducted with SBA staff who represent current and potential leadership. One group was conducted with GS-15 and SES-level staff in management positions, and the other group was conducted with non-management staff in OHRS or with knowledge of succession activities and leadership development programs.

The purpose of these focus groups was to assess participants' perceptions of and reactions to preliminary findings and recommendations, as well as to gather contextual information to inform findings and influence recommendations. The discussion topics for these focus groups included high-level findings from previous research activities and proposed recommendations. The findings from these focus groups helped the Team refine the recommendations presented in this report.

Focus groups were conducted via Microsoft Teams and recorded with participant consent. Participants were informed that all findings would be presented in aggregate, project reports would not attribute comments to specific individuals, and the Team would not share personally identifiable information. The focus group instrument was submitted to the SBA for review and approval before fielding.

3.2 Study limitations

This section outlines five limitations in the secondary data that was analyzed.

- **Limitation 1.** The secondary data are not linkable across datasets at the personnel level, which limits the ability of the analysis to track and report on skills and gaps reported by specific personnel. For example, responses on training needs and preferences reported in the TDNS could not be linked at the person level between 2018 and 2019. Moreover, the Team could not link person-level responses from the TDNS to person-level information collected in the Leadership and Succession Survey. Additionally, the data received in the employment personnel dataset was de-identified.
- **Limitation 2.** There were small numbers of EIG and PMC participants in the employment personnel dataset and the Leadership and Succession Survey. Moreover, the dataset did not include a variable to track when employees participated in the program. This limited the Team's ability to track upward mobility relative to program participation, as the Team does not know whether promotions were received before or after program participation.
- **Limitation 3.** The variable in the employment personnel dataset tracking whether individuals were hired from other agencies had inconsistent records and high rates of missing data. This limited the Team's ability to track the agencies where employees were coming from and determine whether promotions were occurring internally within the SBA or internally within program offices.
- **Limitation 4.** Although the employment personnel dataset includes ODA employees, the Team is aware that most ODA employees are unique in that they are term-like appointments rather than full-time staff. The unique nature of ODA employees meant this analysis of the leadership pipeline and leadership cohort across program offices likely does not capture specific information that would be unique to ODA. This is supplemented by the fact that there were no follow-up or confirmatory focus group participants from ODA.

4 Findings

This section presents the key findings of this evaluation by research question.

- **Research Question 1.** How does leadership succession currently occur at the SBA?
- **Research Question 2.** How do the Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows and President's Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation programs contribute to successful succession within the SBA?
- **Research Question 3.** What gaps exist in current staff skills and abilities that may prevent effective succession planning within the SBA?

4.1 Research Question 1: How does leadership succession currently occur at the SBA?

To answer this question, the Team examined the characteristics of SBA personnel in the leadership pipeline and leadership cohort. The Team found that in 2020 the SBA leadership cohort had a higher proportion of males, a high mean length of service, high education levels, and (unsurprisingly) a high proportion of Program Management staff (MCO 0340). The OFO, ODA, and OCA program offices represented approximately two-thirds of all SBA personnel but nearly three-quarters of the leadership pipeline.

When examining promotion patterns⁷, the Team observed that 20% of promotions into leadership occur after 5 years of tenure at the agency, and 38% occur within 2 to 5 years. At least 50% of promotions into leadership happened internally within the SBA. Finally, the Team found that over 88% of all promotions happened within the respective program offices.

The Team also examined the characteristics of personnel promoted into leadership positions. A greater proportion of men experienced a first promotion into leadership compared to women, but a greater proportion of women experienced a third promotion. Staff who received a second or third promotion are more likely to have a professional degree or master's degree. ODA had a high rate of first promotions into leadership. Across the SBA, the Team observed that the majority of first promotions into leadership occurred within the General Business & Industry MCO (1101) and Program Management MCO (0340).

Lastly, the Team asked whether there is a pool of qualified applicants internal to the SBA, informed by the literature review and insight from OHRS staff on what would constitute a pool of qualified applicants. The Team observed that the core skills gaps reported in the Dual-Rater Assessment remained consistent. Changes in year-over-year assessments are due to the SBA introducing assessments of technical competencies.

Sub-question 1.1: What are the characteristics of SBA personnel in the leadership pipeline and in leadership positions?

Summary: In this section, the Team presents a snapshot of descriptive statistics for 2020. While there is near gender parity in the agency as a whole (48% female, 52% male), there are 4% more men than women in the pipeline and almost 16% more men than women in the leadership cohort. The mean length of service for those in non-leadership and the pipeline was approximately 15 years – 5 fewer years than the leadership cohort. The leadership cohort was generally more educated than the leadership pipeline. When looking at program office, approximately two-thirds of all SBA personnel worked in OFO, ODA, and OCA and collectively represented nearly three-quarters of the leadership pipeline. ODA, OGC, and OPPCFO have lower proportions of staff in the leadership cohort compared to their distribution in the SBA, while personnel in OFO have much higher proportions in the leadership cohort. Finally, the Team observed that more than one-third of the leadership cohort was comprised of Program Management personnel (MCO 0340: SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers).

⁷ In this report, promotions are defined as movement from a non-leadership role into the leadership pipeline, movement from non-supervisory roles to a supervisory role in the leadership cohort, and a grade increase within the leadership cohort.

The employment personnel dataset contains records from 2010 to 2020. This section presents point-in-time characteristics for 2020 and any notable trends observed over the 11-year period. The characteristics reported are gender, length of service (tenure), education level, program office, and occupational series. These are reported by leadership status.

The counts presented in this section include ODA employees (who are included in the employment personnel dataset); the majority of employees in this office are unique in the SBA’s structure. For example, as shown in Table 4,⁸ in 2020, ODA includes a significant cadre of non-MCO employees: 17% in GS-0301 and GS-0343. Throughout this section, the Team references these two non-MCO occupational series, as they are frequent pathways into MCO 0340. Nearly all ODA employees fall into term-like appointments and are not permanent full-time staff. Given the unique nature of ODA employees within the SBA overall, the Team recommends that further research be conducted on the characteristics of this program office specifically, as it may differ markedly from the SBA overall.

Table 4: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Disaster Assistance (2020)

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-0201, Human Resource Management	10 (3.8%)	13 (14.6%)	9 (17.3%)	3 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	35 (8.1%)
GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series	30 (11.3%)	17 (19.1%)	7 (13.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	54 (12.6%)
GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (52.4%)	2 (100.0%)	13 (3.0%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	10 (3.8%)	2 (2.2%)	4 (7.7%)	1 (4.8%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (4.0%)
GS-1101, General Business & Industry	19 (7.1%)	5 (5.6%)	2 (3.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	26 (6.0%)
GS-1165, Loan Specialist	90 (33.8%)	11 (12.4%)	6 (11.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	107 (24.9%)
GS-2210, IT Management	21 (7.9%)	17 (19.1%)	13 (25.0%)	2 (9.5%)	0 (0.0%)	53 (12.3%)
Other	86 (32.3%)	24 (27.0%)	11 (21.2%)	4 (19.0%)	0 (0.0%)	125 (29.1%)
Total	266 (100%)	89 (100%)	52 (100%)	21 (100%)	2 (100%)	430 (100%)

Table Notes:

*There are no employees observed in GS-1102 (Contract Specialists, Acquisition/Procurement Analysts) and GS-1160 (Financial Analysts) in these GS levels in ODA.

Similar to ODA, OFO is unique with the majority of employees located at district offices across the United States. Given the geographical dispersion, their characteristics could be different from those at headquarters and may benefit from separate analysis. Table 5 shows the distribution of occupational series by grade level among OFO, while Table 6 shows the same distribution for the rest of the SBA (excluding OFO and ODA).

⁸ Tables showing the breakdown of occupational series by grade level are presented in Appendix F.

Table 5: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Field Operations (Headquarters and District Offices, 2020)

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-0201, Human Resource Specialist	10 (3.2%)	2 (1.5%)	5 (7.2%)	9 (11.4%)	0 (0.0%)	26 (4.3%)
GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	60 (87.0%)	69 (87.3%)	5 (100.0%)	134 (22.4%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.8%)	4 (5.8%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (1.0%)
GS-1101, General Business & Industry	279 (88.3%)	116 (89.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	395 (65.9%)
Other	27 (8.5%)	11(8.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	38 (6.3%)
Total	316 (100%)	130 (100%)	69 (100%)	79 (100%)	5 (100%)	599 (100%)

Table Notes:

*There are no employees observed in GS-0301 (Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series), GS-1102 (Contract Specialists, Acquisition/Procurement Analysts), GS-1160 (Financial Analysts), GS-1165 (Loan Specialist), and GS-2210 IT Management.

Table 6: Occupational series by grade at the SBA overall, excluding the Office of Disaster Assistance and the Office of Field Operations (2020)

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-0201, Human Resource Management	11 (3.0%)	36 (9.1%)	20 (8.3%)	10 (8.3%)	2 (5.6%)	79 (6.8%)
GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series	44 (11.9%)	38 (9.6%)	19 (7.9%)	16 (13.3%)	0 (0.0%)	117 (10.1%)
GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)	2 (0.8%)	18 (15.0%)	31 (86.1%)	52 (4.5%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	27 (7.3%)	33 (8.4%)	45 (18.8%)	11 (9.2%)	0 (0.0%)	116 (10.0%)
GS-1101, General Business & Industry	45 (12.1%)	48 (12.2%)	57 (23.8%)	19 (15.8%)	0 (0.0%)	169 (14.6%)
GS-1102, Contracting	0 (0.0%)	54 (13.7%)	13 (5.4%)	3 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	70 (6.0%)
GS-1160, Financial Analyst	0 (0.0%)	63 (16.0%)	21 (8.8%)	8 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	92 (7.9%)
GS-1165, Loan Specialist	194 (52.3%)	62 (15.7%)	18 (7.5%)	15 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	289 (24.9%)
GS-2210, IT Management	23 (6.2%)	48 (12.2%)	45 (18.8%)	20 (16.7%)	3 (8.3%)	139 (12.0%)
Other	27 (7.3%)	11 (2.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	38 (3.3%)
Total	371 (100%)	394 (100%)	240 (100%)	120 (100%)	36 (100%)	1,161 (100%)

As shown in Table 7, there is near parity in gender for all employees at the SBA in 2020. There is only a 4% difference between genders, with more men than women. However, the percent difference widens to 16% in favor of males in the leadership cohort.

Table 7: Gender by leadership status at the SBA (2020)

	All SBA	Non-Leadership	Leadership Pipeline	Leadership Cohort
Gender	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)
Female	1,046 (48.2%)	406 (53.0%)	440 (47.6%)	200 (41.8%)
Male	1,124 (51.8%)	360 (47.0%)	485 (52.4%)	279 (58.2%)
Total	2,170 (100%)	766 (100%)	925 (100%)	479 (100%)

The 11-year gender trend at the SBA is shown in Figure 3 (female) and Figure 4 (male). While the overall proportion of women has hovered between 48% and 50%, the proportion of women in the pipeline has been declining over the decade from a high of approximately 52% in 2010 to 47% in 2020. The proportion of women in the leadership cohort rose steadily from 39% in 2010 to a high of 44% in 2016 before declining to 43% in 2020. Among men, the 11-year proportion fluctuates between a low of 49% in 2011 and a high of 53% in 2017. While the proportion of men in the leadership cohort has declined from a high of 62% in 2010 to 58% in 2020, the proportion of men in the pipeline has steadily increased over the decade from 47% to 53% in 2020 (peaking in 2017 at approximately 55%).

Figure 3: Female employees at the SBA by leadership status (2010–2020)

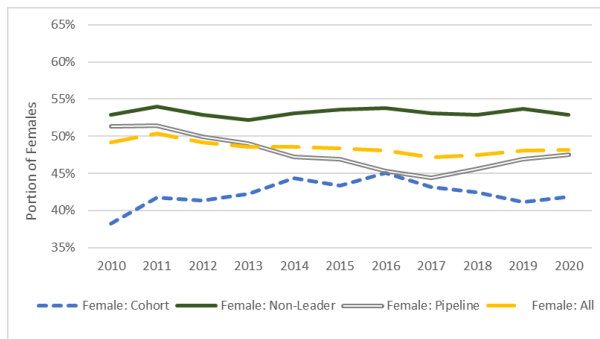
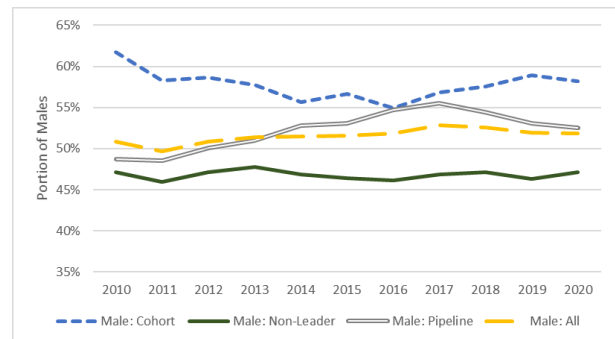


Figure 4: Male employees at the SBA by leadership status (2010–2020)



As shown in Table 8, in 2020, the mean length of service was high for all leadership and non-leadership groups. The mean length of service among those in the leadership pipeline was very similar to that for non-leadership employees at the SBA, 14.6 years compared to 14.8 years – both were approximately 5 fewer years than those in the leadership cohort.

Table 8: Length of service by leadership status (2020)

	All SBA	Non-Leadership	Leadership Pipeline	Leadership Cohort
<i>Length of Service (in Years)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>
1–5	310 (14.5%)	130 (17.3%)	137 (15.0%)	43 (9.1%)
6–10	397 (18.6%)	119 (15.9%)	201 (22.0%)	77 (16.2%)
11–15	494 (23.1%)	182 (24.3%)	211 (23.1%)	101 (21.3%)
16–20	191 (8.9%)	56 (7.3%)	83 (9.1%)	52 (11.0%)
21–25	211 (9.9%)	83 (11.2%)	87 (9.5%)	41 (8.6%)
26–30	223 (10.4%)	71 (9.5%)	83 (9.1%)	69 (14.6%)
31–35	201 (9.4%)	76 (10.1%)	67 (7.3%)	58 (12.2%)
36–40	76 (3.5%)	23 (2.9%)	32 (3.5%)	21 (4.4%)
40+	34 (1.6%)	11 (1.5%)	11 (1.2%)	12 (2.5%)
Mean (years)	15.7	14.8	14.6	19.4
Total	2,137 (100%)	751 (100%)	912 (100%)	474 (100%)

Table Notes: *There are 33 employees missing length of service values for 2020.

As shown in Table 9, education levels of the leadership cohort are generally higher than those in the leadership pipeline. For example, professional degrees, master’s degrees, and doctorates or post-doctorates account for 35% of the leadership cohort compared to 22% of the pipeline. Conversely, 36% of the pipeline have a high school degree or less compared to 20% of the leadership cohort. Notably, bachelor’s degree holders in the leadership cohort (34%) are more prevalent than those in the pipeline

(30%) and the SBA overall (27%). This may be partially explained by length of tenure shown in Table 8; those in leadership may simply have had more time to get higher degrees.

Table 9: Education level by leadership status (2020)

	All SBA	Non-Leadership	Leadership Pipeline	Leadership Cohort
<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>
High school or less	701 (32.3%)	270 (35.2%)	337 (36.4%)	94 (19.6%)
Some college	172 (7.9%)	59 (7.7%)	73 (7.9%)	40 (8.4%)
Associate's	87 (4.0%)	33 (4.3%)	38 (4.1%)	16 (3.3%)
Bachelor's	583 (26.9%)	145 (18.9%)	276 (29.8%)	162 (33.8%)
Professional	170 (7.8%)	116 (15.1%)	20 (2.2%)	34 (7.1%)
Master's	425 (19.6%)	118 (15.4%)	177 (19.1%)	130 (27.1%)
Doctorate or post-doctorate	32 (1.5%)	25 (3.3%)	4 (0.4%)	3 (0.6%)
Total	2,170 (100%)	766 (100%)	925 (100%)	479 (100%)

As shown in Table 10, in 2020 approximately two-thirds of all SBA personnel worked in OFO, ODA, and OCA and collectively represented nearly three-quarters of the leadership pipeline. Notably, employees from ODA, OGC, and OPPCFO have much lower proportions in the leadership cohort relative to their distribution in the SBA overall. Conversely, personnel in OFO have much higher proportions in the leadership cohort relative to their distribution in the SBA overall. As the Team learned from confirmatory focus groups, some of these trends may be explained by the fact that certain MCOs in specific offices top out and do not have a direct path into a leadership role.

Table 10: Program office by leadership status (2020)

	All SBA	Non-Leader	Pipeline	Cohort
<i>Program Office</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>
Office of Capital Access	356 (16.4%)	61 (8.0%)	215 (23.2%)	80 (16.7%)
Office of the Chief Information Officer/Operations Officer	60 (2.8%)	5 (0.7%)	39 (4.2%)	16 (3.3%)
Office of Disaster Assistance	430 (19.8%)	208 (27.2%)	158 (17.1%)	64 (13.4%)
Office of Entrepreneurial Development	32 (1.5%)	25 (3.3%)	1 (0.1%)	6 (1.3%)
Office of Field Operations	599 (27.6%)	70 (9.1%)	306 (33.1%)	223 (46.6%)
Office of General Counsel	122 (5.6%)	121 (15.8%)	1 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Office of Government Contracting & Business Development	161 (7.4%)	36 (4.7%)	95 (10.3%)	30 (6.3%)
Office of Human Resources Solutions	57 (2.6%)	12 (1.6%)	34 (3.7%)	11 (2.3%)
Office of Investment & Innovation	68 (3.1%)	28 (3.7%)	27 (2.9%)	13 (2.7%)
Office of International Trade	36 (1.7%)	8 (1.0%)	17 (1.8%)	11 (2.3%)
Office of Performance, Planning, and the Chief Financial Officer	103 (4.7%)	69 (9.0%)	24 (2.6%)	10 (2.1%)
Other	146 (6.7%)	123 (16.1%)	8 (0.9%)	15 (3.1%)
Total	2,170 (100%)	766 (100%)	925 (100%)	479 (100%)

Table Notes:

The data presented include ODA employees, the majority of whom are unique in the SBA's structure. Nearly all ODA employees fall into term-like appointments and are not permanent full-time staff. The Team recommends future analysis of ODA employees in the employment personnel dataset. Similarly, the Team also recommends separate future analyses of OFO employees to account for the office's unique geographical dispersion.

Figure 5 and Figure 6 explore 11-year trends in the leadership pipeline and leadership cohort among the top five program offices based on the number of employees in the pipeline and leadership cohort. When

looking at the leadership pipeline, OFO experienced a decline in the number of employees in the leadership pipeline, while ODA, OCA, and GCBD experienced little to no change. Trends in the leadership cohort also showed limited fluctuation; all offices except ODA showed a modest upward trend while OFO experienced a decrease in the number of employees in the leadership cohort.

Figure 5: Trends in the leadership pipeline among the top five program offices (2010–2020)

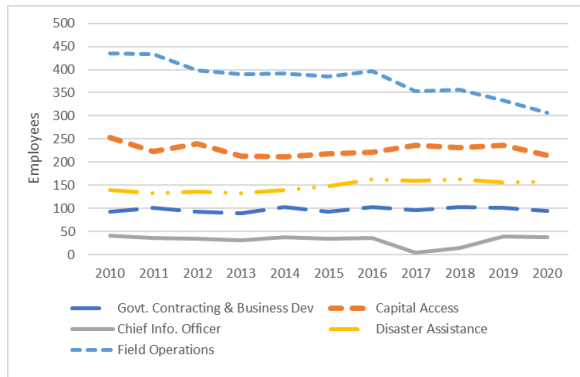
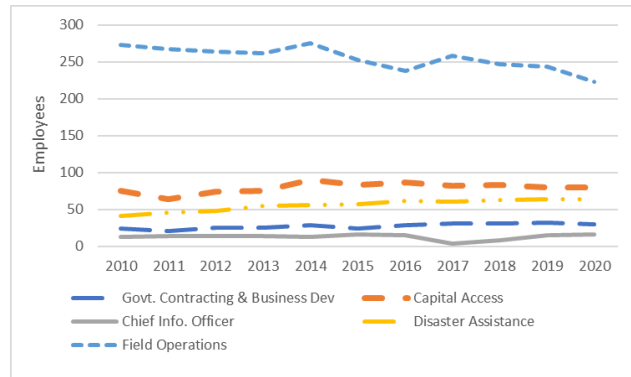


Figure 6: Trends in the leadership cohort among the top five program offices (2010–2020)



At the occupational series level, the Team observed a lower distribution of Program Management staff (MCO 0340). Despite MCO 0340 staff comprising just 9% of all SBA employees, MCO 0340 staff represent 38% of all employees in the leadership cohort and 0% of all employees in the leadership pipeline. This finding is unsurprising, as movement into the MCO 0340 leadership cohort often happens from occupations in non-leadership pipeline an cohort, such as 0343 (Management and Program Analysis) and 0301 (Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series)—it is rare for MCO 0340 positions to be non-supervisory. This suggests that SBA may want to consider more intentional or targeted leadership development for these occupational codes since they are feeders of the MCO 0340 leadership pipeline and cohort. Employees in the MCO 1102 series (Contracting) have a much higher proportion of staff in the leadership pipeline (7%) relative to the leadership cohort (1%). See Table 11 for a complete reporting of occupational series and leadership status.

Table 11: Occupational series by leadership status (2020)

Variable	All SBA	Non-Leadership	Pipeline	Cohort
<i>Occupational Series</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>
GS-0201, Human Resource Management	79 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)	50 (5.4%)	29 (6.1%)
GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series	143 (6.6%)	143 (18.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
GS-0340, Program Management	186 (8.6%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.3%)	183 (38.2%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	122 (5.6%)	122 (15.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
GS-1101, General Business & Industry	564 (26.0%)	13 (1.7%)	412 (44.6%)	139 (29.0%)
GS-1102, Contracting	70 (3.2%)	0 (0.0%)	67 (7.3%)	3 (0.6%)
GS-1160, Financial Analyst	92 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)	75 (8.1%)	17 (3.5%)
GS-1165, Loan Specialist	289 (13.3%)	3 (0.4%)	217 (23.5%)	69 (14.4%)
GS-2210, IT Management	139 (6.4%)	0 (0.0%)	100 (10.8%)	39 (8.1%)
Other	0 (0.0%)	486 (63.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	2,170 (100%)	767 (100%)	924 (100%)	479 (100%)

Respondents in the confirmatory focus group felt it was likely that many hires into leadership positions are external to the agency and noted there was less diversity in the leadership cohort as compared to the SBA overall. Although leadership diversity is not the focus of this evaluation, the Team notes that developing the internal leadership pipeline (through the recommendations presented in this report) to increase internal hiring into leadership would eventually lead to increased diversity at the leadership level, given the SBA’s overall diverse staff. The benefits of a diverse leadership cohort were highlighted by literature review findings, which showed that a more diverse workplace—specifically at the leadership level—improves employer attractiveness, improves retention rates, decreases costly recruitment efforts over time, fosters group cohesion, increases the likelihood of fair and equitable treatment, and leads to higher-quality decision-making among staff.

Sub-question 1.2: When in their career/tenure are people promoted into leadership positions? Are promotions happening internally from within the SBA? Are promotions happening internally from within program offices?

Summary: Overall, most promotions into the leadership cohort happen within the first 5 years of employment at the SBA: 36% occur within 2 to 5 years, and 26% happen within 1 to 2 years. The Team can conclude that at least 50% of promotions into leadership happen internally within the SBA. The Team also found that over 88% of all promotions at the SBA occur within the same program office.

The Team defined three different types of promotions:

1. Movement from a non-leadership role into the leadership pipeline, defined as “non-leadership to pipeline”
2. Movement from a non-supervisory role to a supervisory role in the leadership cohort, defined as “supervisory change”
3. Movement from one supervisory role to another supervisory role in the leadership cohort concurrent with a GS (grade level) increase, defined as “grade change within cohort”

Overall, there were 732 instances of experiencing at least one promotion, with the majority of these movements being supervisory changes. The counts in Table 12 do not reflect the number of individuals promoted, but the number of promotions that occurred (meaning a single individual could have experienced more than one promotion). These counts can be conceived of as a measure of upward mobility.

Table 12: Promotions into leadership (pipeline or cohort)

Promotion Type	1st Promos	2nd Promos	3rd+ Promos	Total
Non-leadership to pipeline	90	8	8	106
Supervisory change	512	67	23	602
Grade change within cohort	130	108	29	266
Total	732	182	60	974

Table Note: The columns are not mutually exclusive. In order to receive the second, third, or additional promotion, one must have received a preceding promotion.

When are people promoted into leadership positions? Most promotions into the leadership pipeline or leadership cohort happen within the first 5 years. Thirty-eight percent of promotions occurred within 2 to 5 years from the date of hire, while 25% occurred within 1 to 2 years.

Table 13: Time to promotion into leadership

	Non-Leadership to Pipeline	Supervisory Change	Grade Change Within Cohort	Total
Under 6 months	10 (9.4%)	42 (7.0%)	18 (6.8%)	70 (7.2%)
6–12 months	15 (14.2%)	59 (9.8%)	28 (10.5%)	102 (10.5%)
1–2 years	28 (26.4%)	125 (20.8%)	86 (32.3%)	239 (24.5%)
2–5 years	38 (35.8%)	239 (39.7%)	96 (36.1%)	373 (38.3%)
5 years or more	15 (14.2%)	137 (22.8%)	38 (14.3%)	190 (19.5%)
Total	106 (100.0%)	602 (100.0%)	266 (100.0%)	974 (100.0%)

Are promotions happening internally from within the SBA/program offices? The Team used definitions from the OPM website⁹ to identify the agencies from which employees in the dataset were hired into SBA leadership positions (pipeline or cohort). Because approximately 50% of the instances of movement identified in the From Personnel Office Identifier variable were datapoints with no values (blank) or listed “other”, the Team can only conclude that at least 50% of promotions into leadership at the SBA occurred internally from within the agency. Observations of personnel promoted into SBA from other agencies represent less than 1% of the distribution.

The Team also explored the proportion of promotions into leadership positions happening within program offices, as shown in Table 14. Notably, for SBA employees promoted, promotions experienced were within the same program office and were approaching or above 90%.

⁹ <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/data-analysis-documentation/data-policy-guidance/#Personnel-Office-Identifier-POI>

Table 14: Proportion of within-office promotions to leadership by office

	Non-Lead to Pipeline	Non-Lead to Pipeline	Supervisory Change	Supervisory Change	Grade Change Within Cohort	Grade Change Within Cohort	Total	Total
	<i>Total Promos</i>	<i>Within Office (%)</i>	<i>Total Promos</i>	<i>Within Office (%)</i>	<i>Total Promos</i>	<i>Within Office (%)</i>	<i>Total Promos</i>	<i>Within Office (%)</i>
Office of Capital Access	34	34 (100%)	123	123 (100%)	42	41 (98%)	199	198 (99%)
Office of the Chief Information Officer	6	6 (100%)	10	10 (100%)	2	1 (50%)	18	17 (94%)
Office of Disaster Assistance	6	6 (100%)	91	91 (100%)	48	48 (100%)	145	145 (100%)
Office of Entrepreneurial Development	5	5 (100%)	17	16 (94%)	2	2 (100%)	24	23 (96%)
Office of Field Operations	14	14 (100%)	224	222 (99%)	122	121 (99%)	360	357 (99%)
Office of the General Counsel	1	1 (100%)	10	10 (100%)	4	4 (100%)	15	15 (100%)
Office of Government Contracting & Business Development	10	10 (100%)	26	24 (96%)	12	11 (92%)	47	45 (96%)
Office of Human Resource Solutions	2	2 (100%)	6	5 (83%)	0	(0%)	8	7 (88%)
Office of Investment & Innovation	3	3 (100%)	12	12 (100%)	3	3 (100%)	18	18 (100%)
Office of International Trade	9	9 (100%)	16	15 (94%)	0	(0%)	25	24 (94%)
Office of Performance, Planning, and the Chief Financial Officer	2	2 (100%)	17	17 (100%)	13	13 (100%)	32	32 (100%)
Other	13	13 (100%)	51	49 (96%)	19	16 (84%)	83	78 (94%)
Total	105	105 (100%)	602	594 (99%)	267	260 (97%)	974	959 (98%)

Table Note: “Within office” is determined by remaining in one of the 11 program offices listed at the same instance of promotion.

Sub-question 1.3: What are the characteristics of personnel who are promoted?

Summary: The Team found that a greater proportion of men experienced a first promotion compared to women, but men lag behind women in experiencing third promotions. Additionally, staff who received a second or third promotion were more likely to hold professional credentials or a master’s degree. The Team also noted that promotions do not occur at the same rate across program offices. While ODA had a high rate of first promotions into leadership, it represents only 7% of subsequent second promotions. Finally, the Team observed that across the SBA the majority of first promotions into leadership occurred within the General Business & Industry MCO (1101) and Program Management MCO (0340).

As shown in Table 15, the proportion of women experiencing at least one or two promotions lags behind the proportion of men experiencing at least one or two promotions but rises above that of men when experiencing at least three or more promotions.

Table 16 shows the types of promotions by gender, revealing that while there are more women being promoted from non-leadership positions into the pipeline (55% compared to 45%), the proportion of women experiencing promotions as supervisory changes or grade increases in the leadership cohort lags behind men.

Table 15: Number of promotions by gender

Variable	All SBA	1 st Promotion Observed	2 nd Promotion Observed	3rd+ Promotion Observed
Gender	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)
Female	452 (46.4%)	337 (46.0%)	84 (46.2%)	31 (51.7%)
Male	522 (53.6%)	395 (54.0%)	98 (53.8%)	29 (48.3%)
Total	974 (100%)	732 (100%)	182 (100%)	60 (100%)

Table 16: Promotion types by gender

Variable	All SBA	Non-Lead to Pipe	Supervisory Change	Grade Change Within Cohort
Gender	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)
Female	452 (46.4%)	58 (54.7%)	279 (46.3%)	115 (43.2%)
Male	522 (53.6%)	48 (45.3%)	323 (53.7%)	151 (56.8%)
Total	974 (100%)	106 (100%)	602 (100%)	266 (100%)

As shown in Table 17, the greatest proportion of first, second, and third promotions occur among employees with a high school education or less, a bachelor’s degree, or a master’s degree. As previously noted, these three groups represent the greatest proportion of all SBA employees—32%, 27%, and 20%, respectively. However, the proportion of subsequent promotions among those who hold a high school degree or less drops while those with a master’s increases. Moreover, bachelor’s degree holders experienced the highest rate of promotions when they moved from the first to the second promotion (32% to 39%). Overall, this suggests that bachelor’s degree holders may be more likely to experience a second promotion at the SBA, and master’s degree holders may be more likely to experience a third or subsequent promotion (moving from 18% to 22%). Notably, while employees with some college education are proportionately fewer (only 8% of all SBA employees), the proportion of this group that experiences a third or more promotion is high, approximately 22%. Among individuals who have been at the SBA for 30 to 40 years, a greater proportion receive a third promotion compared to all employees at the SBA (24% compared to 20%)—this is unsurprising, as these individuals have been at the SBA long enough to earn multiple promotions. Among the few employees with doctoral or post-doctoral degrees,

second and third promotions are not frequently observed, which can likely be explained by these employees entering their roles in a high position, which leaves little room for additional promotions.

Table 17: Promotion into leadership pipeline or leadership cohort by education

Variable	ALL SBA	1st Promotion Observed	2nd Promotion Observed	3rd+ Promotion Observed
<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>
High school or less	238 (24.4%)	191 (26.1%)	40 (22.1%)	7 (11.7%)
Some college	96 (9.9%)	68 (9.3%)	15 (8.3%)	13 (21.7%)
Associate's	47 (4.8%)	34 (4.7%)	9 (5.0%)	4 (6.7%)
Bachelor's	324 (33.3%)	234 (32.0%)	71 (39.2%)	19 (31.7%)
Professional	75 (7.7%)	58 (7.9%)	13 (7.2%)	4 (6.7%)
Master's	186 (19.1%)	140 (19.2%)	33 (18.2%)	13 (21.7%)
Doctorate or post-doctorate	6 (0.6%)	6 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	974 (100%)	731 (100%)	181 (100%)	60 (100%)

As shown in Table 18, promotions do not appear to occur at the same rate across program offices. Notably, OFO accounts for 35% of first promotions into leadership, while OCA accounts for 20% and ODA for 16%. Together, these make up 71% of all first promotions into leadership. OGC, OPPCFO, and the Office of Entrepreneurial Development (OED) are also less represented among those with promotions. One hypothesis to explain the low numbers at certain offices like OGC is that employees in these program offices enter their roles in a high GS level, which leaves little room for additional promotions.

Table 18: Promotion into leadership pipeline or leadership cohort by program office

Variable	1st Promotion Observed	2nd Promotion Observed	3rd+ Promotion Observed	All SBA
<i>Program Office</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>
Office of Capital Access	148 (20.2%)	35 (19.2%)	16 (26.7%)	199 (20.4%)
Office of the Chief Information Officer	12 (1.6%)	6 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (1.8%)
Office of Disaster Assistance	116 (15.8%)	26 (14.3%)	3 (5.0%)	145 (14.9%)
Office of Entrepreneurial Development	15 (2.0%)	4 (2.2%)	4 (6.7%)	23 (2.4%)
Office of Field Operations	255 (34.8%)	78 (42.9%)	27 (45.0%)	360 (37.0%)
Office of the General Counsel	14 (1.9%)	1 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (1.5%)
Office of Government Contracting & Business Development	39 (5.3%)	8 (4.4%)	1 (1.7%)	48 (4.9%)
Office of Human Resource Solutions	6 (0.8%)	2 (1.1%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (0.8%)
Office of Investment & Innovation	15 (2.0%)	2 (1.1%)	1 (1.7%)	18 (1.8%)
Office of International Trade	22 (3.0%)	2 (1.1%)	1 (1.7%)	25 (2.6%)
Office of Performance, Planning, and the Chief Financial Officer	26 (3.6%)	6 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	32 (3.3%)
Other	64 (8.7%)	12 (6.6%)	7 (11.7%)	83 (8.5%)
Total	732 (100%)	182 (100%)	60 (100%)	974 (100%)

Table 19 shows promotions at program offices by promotion type. Among the three previously discussed offices that make up nearly three-quarters of all first promotions at the SBA, the Team notes that nearly 30% of all promotions into the leadership pipeline and 20% of promotions by supervisory

position change occur at OCA. The majority of promotions due to grade changes within the leadership cohort occur at OFO (46%) and ODA (18%).

Table 19: Promotion type by program office

Variable	All SBA	Non-Leadership to Pipeline	Supervisory Change	Grade Change Within Cohort
<i>Program Office</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>
Office of Capital Access	197 (20.2%)	32 (30.2%)	123 (20.4%)	42 (15.8%)
Office of the Chief Information Officer	18 (1.8%)	6 (5.7%)	10 (1.7%)	2 (0.8%)
Office of Disaster Assistance	145 (14.9%)	6 (5.7%)	91 (15.1%)	48 (18.0%)
Office of Entrepreneurial Development	23 (2.4%)	5 (4.7%)	17 (2.8%)	1 (0.4%)
Office of Field Operations	360 (37.0%)	14 (13.2%)	224 (37.2%)	122 (45.9%)
Office of the General Counsel	15 (1.5%)	1 (0.9%)	10 (1.7%)	4 (1.5%)
Office of Government Contracting & Business Development	47 (4.8%)	10 (9.4%)	25 (4.2%)	12 (4.5%)
Office of Human Resource Solutions	8 (0.8%)	2 (1.9%)	6 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Office of Investment & Innovation	18 (1.8%)	3 (2.8%)	12 (2.0%)	3 (1.1%)
Office of International Trade	25 (2.6%)	9 (8.5%)	16 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Office of Performance, Planning, and the Chief Financial Officer	32 (3.3%)	2 (1.9%)	17 (2.8%)	13 (4.9%)
Other	86 (8.8%)	16 (15.1%)	51 (8.5%)	19 (7.1%)
Total	974 (100%)	106 (100%)	602 (100%)	266 (100%)

Observations of promotions at the occupational series also show varying distributions. As observed in Table 20, the majority of first promotions into leadership occurred at GS-1101 (35%), GS-0340 (17%), and GS-1165 (13%).

Table 20: Promotion into leadership pipeline or leadership cohort by occupational series

Variable	All SBA	1st Promotion Observed	2nd Promotion Observed	3rd+ Promotion Observed
<i>Occupational Category</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>	<i>Count (%)</i>
GS-0201, Human Resource Management	38 (3.9%)	32 (4.4%)	5 (2.7%)	1 (1.7%)
GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series	53 (5.4%)	38 (5.2%)	12 (6.6%)	3 (5.0%)
GS-0340, Program Management	203 (20.8%)	123 (16.8%)	57 (31.3%)	23 (38.3%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	18 (1.8%)	12 (1.6%)	6 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)
GS-1101, General Business & Industry	311 (31.9%)	253 (34.6%)	45 (24.7%)	13 (21.7%)
GS-1102, Contracting	8 (0.8%)	7 (1.0%)	1 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)
GS-1160, Financial Analyst	49 (5.0%)	41 (5.6%)	6 (3.3%)	2 (3.3%)
GS-1165, Loan Specialist	136 (14.0%)	98 (13.4%)	25 (13.7%)	13 (21.7%)
GS-2210, IT Management	48 (4.9%)	40 (5.5%)	7 (3.8%)	1 (1.7%)
Other	110 (11.3%)	88 (12.0%)	18 (9.9%)	4 (6.7%)
Total	974 (100%)	732 (100%)	182 (100%)	60 (100%)

Because some offices have very low promotions into leadership, the Team recommends that OHRS meet annually to discuss succession with each office. While some of the differences in promotion numbers may be due to the specific mission of the office and the number of leadership positions available within

the office, it is important for the SBA to ensure that leadership potential is tapped from all sources within the agency. If promotions into leadership are happening at a lower rate for specific offices simply because those roles do not naturally lead into leadership positions, the agency may be missing out on potentially qualified staff for leadership roles. These discussions could also identify pain points specific to individual offices leading to lower promotion rates into leadership; for example, there may be fewer promotion opportunities in specific locations, requiring relocation to receive additional promotions. Identifying these challenges would help the SBA support its staff, ensuring that qualified staff can pursue promotional opportunities regardless of location or program office.

Sub-question 1.4: Is there a pool of qualified applicants internal to the SBA available to fill open positions? What are the trends at the MCO level?

Summary: The Team observed that the core skills gaps reported in the Dual-Rater Assessment remained consistent. Changes in year-over-year assessments were due to the SBA introducing assessment of technical competencies. Additionally, the desired training topics identified by TDNS respondents over three years were consistent. The Team concludes that while there were generally not widening or persistent skills gaps (which would suggest that the existing pool of potential applicants would not meet OHRS’s definition of a “qualified pool”), continued training and monitoring of the current talent pool is needed.

The Team held informational meetings during the early stages of the evaluation. During one of these discussions, OHRS envisioned a qualified pool of internal candidates as a group of qualified staff that are available to quickly fill critical leadership positions so that business needs continue to be met and the leadership bench is enhanced at “not only the SES level, but for all leadership positions.” This clarity helped produce findings that emphasize the consequences an agency could face absent a qualified pool of internal candidates. For example, the research suggests this absence may result in widening competency and skills gaps, leaving agencies vulnerable to the adverse impacts of retirement waves.

As supported by the literature review, a useful mitigation strategy for the adverse impacts of retirement waves is to maintain effective leadership development programs (LDPs) and strengthen retention practices. Effective LDPs that align with an agency’s mission and needs can create long-term organizational improvements, performance and efficiency gains, and seamless leadership transitions. These results depend on well-developed candidate selection criteria—such criteria may include the desire to advance into leadership, levels of self-motivation, interpersonal skills, ability to think innovatively and creatively, as well as a commitment to the agency’s mission. Retention practices are critical for maintaining the talent after making investments in development. These investments in current staff are crucial, especially taking into consideration how difficult it is to hire high-level leadership positions with IT experience or hard skills that can be compensated more competitively in the private sector.

During the benchmarking interviews, the Team gathered information on how other agencies develop, maintain, and define a qualified pool of internal applicants. According to the benchmarking respondents, the process for filling leadership positions typically differs across business lines and depends on the nature of the position. Executives continuously inform what is needed, primarily focusing on leadership skills and culture fit, and a pool is maintained and updated in tandem. Respondents emphasized the importance of having internal leadership involved in the hiring process for key roles, given their firsthand understanding and experience of what is needed, rather than using a third-party rating panel for hiring. Some of the main challenges voiced by these agencies were similar to

those faced by the SBA, including filling positions that require niche skills or highly desired experience (such as IT, cyber, or procurement) due to competition among agencies, salary constraints, competition with the private sector, and roles appearing difficult to obtain due to rigorous government processes. Some suggested solutions were employing an innovative and targeted recruiting strategy, highlighting the role's work-life flexibilities and culture, and emphasizing the position's focus on mission-driven outcomes, public service, and innovation.

To answer this sub-question specific to the SBA, the Team relied on the Dual-Rater Assessments and TDNS. A more detailed breakdown is presented in Sub-question 3.1, which asks what skills gaps were identified. Overall, areas of need identified in the 2018 Dual-Rater Assessment, such as written communication, oral communication, and conflict management, did not persist in 2020 for most MCOs. However, new skills gaps were identified in 2020 for some MCOs; for example, IT professionals listed gaps in numerous skills whereas none were assessed in 2018. However, these new areas of need can be explained by the SBA's introduction of technical competencies in the assessment; therefore, the core skills gaps reported between the years were consistent.

The Team also reviewed 2018–2020 TDNS findings on the types of trainings employees said they would benefit from, which can be interpreted as implicitly identifying skill gaps. The questions reviewed included:

- I would benefit from the following core skills training...
- What type(s) of business management training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office?
- What type(s) of Supervisory training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office?
- What type(s) of Leadership training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office?

Overall, the desired training topics identified by TDNS respondents over the 3 years were consistent and included topics such as conflict management, critical thinking, program and/or project management, business analytics, mentoring and developing employees, and managing employee performance. Interestingly, while the Dual-Rater Assessment did not show conflict management as a persistent gap across years, the TDNS consistently self-identifies conflict resolution as a training need.

The Team had hypothesized that widening or persistent skills gaps (as measured in the Dual-Rater Assessment and TDNS trends) would suggest that the existing pool of potential applicants would not meet OHRS's definition of a "qualified pool," thereby requiring OHRS to continue building staff competency to enable a robust succession plan. While the populations of each year's TDNS's survey are not necessarily the same, the results can be taken to represent a snapshot of skills gaps at the SBA for each year. Overall, other than conflict management or resolution, the analysis did not identify other widening or persistent skills gaps; while the Team cannot directly link this finding to the trainings offered to the current talent pool, the Team recommends that such training and monitoring is continued.

4.2 Research Question 2: How do the Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows and President's Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation programs contribute to successful succession within the SBA?

EIG program. The majority of EIG participants who responded to the Leadership and Succession Survey were female, half were not in the leadership pipeline or leadership cohort, all experienced a promotion within the SBA, and retention rates were better than for the SBA overall. Participants endorsed program benefits such as enhanced networking, skill development, and additional experience, among others. In particular, they appreciated the unique element of 360-degree assessment provided through the program. Participants generally reported that they were able to implement the skills they had learned upon returning to their roles, but there is still room for improvement. These participants suggested options such as alumni networks and mentoring to help returning participants find opportunities to implement the skills they learned. Overall, EIG program participants were much more enthused by their experience than PMC program participants.

PMC program. The characteristics of the SBA's PMC participants who responded to the Leadership and Succession Survey are similar to the EIG participants: majority female, all reported having received a promotion within the SBA, and retention rates were better than for the SBA overall. SBA staff who participated in the PMC program reported a variety of benefits from participation, including the ability to expand their interests and network. However, participants reported challenges implementing the skills they learned and felt that the program had no direct impact on their career paths. They noted that while the PMC program is advertised as a way to gain supervisory and leadership experience, the tasks are typically more niche and often administrative in nature. In contrast to EIG participants, PMC program participants felt it was difficult to implement learned skills when they returned to the SBA, largely because their PMC rotations were not relevant to their current positions and they did not learn technical skills in their rotations.

Overall. Collectively, participants in the PMC and EIG programs hoped to learn similar skills to some of the skills identified as gaps in the 2018 and 2020 Dual-Rater Assessments, including conflict management, team building, political savvy, and creativity and innovation. However, there is not much overlap between actual skills learned and the skills gaps identified, suggesting a general misalignment between the skills gaps, skills of interest, and skills learned. Therefore, while program participants feel they are benefiting from participation, the programs are not directly addressing agency skills gaps.

Survey respondents suggested the SBA should consider the potential for upward mobility and motivation to lead more heavily when selecting both EIG and PMC applicants rather than the number of direct reports, tenure, and number of positions held at the SBA. Focus group participants noted that supervisor involvement in the application and selection process for both programs varies by individual; clarifying expected roles and encouraging supervisor involvement throughout the process could garner interest and create a more level playing field for applicants.

For both programs, focus group participants felt that many qualified SBA employees may be unaware of the programs' existence and benefits. The SBA can widen the applicant pool by sending more frequent and targeted marketing emails and publishing past participants' contact information. However, given significantly higher participant satisfaction with the EIG program than the PMC program, it would be worthwhile for the SBA to first examine whether existing leadership development opportunities are meeting the needs of the agency or whether other programs would be a better fit.

Sub-question 2.1: What are the characteristics of personnel selected for these programs?

Summary: The Team found that the majority of EIG and PMC participants were female. Between one-third and one-half of participants were in non-leadership positions (not in the leadership cohort or pipeline). All program participants in the survey reported having ever received a promotion. Commonly cited reasons for the participating in the PMC program were skill development, exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA, and career progression and mobility within and outside the SBA. EIG program participants frequently cited exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA and networking.

Descriptive statistics from the Leadership and Succession Survey. The low number of EIG and PMC participants identified in the employment personnel dataset make it difficult to draw generalizable conclusions from that dataset. Still, descriptive statistics on these populations based the Leadership and Succession Survey can inform the answer this sub-question. Table 21 shows the characteristics of the survey respondents who reported they participated in the EIG program (19)¹⁰ or the PMC program (5).

Table 21: Characteristics of EIG and PMC participants in the Leadership and Succession Survey

Characteristic	EIG Participants (n=19)	PMC Participants (n=5)
Gender (male)	7	2
Leadership status		
Non-leadership	9	2
Leadership pipeline	5	1
Leadership cohort	5	2
Education level		
High school or less	0	0
Some college	0	0
Associate's	0	0
Bachelor's	3	1
Master's	12	4
Professional (PhD, MD, JD)	3	0
Prefer not to answer	1	0
Length of service		
1–3 years	0	0
4–5 years	3	0
6–10 years	10	1
11–20 years	4	2
More than 20 years	2	2
Prefer not to answer	1	0
Number ever promoted	19	5
Program office		
Office of Capital Access	1	1
Office of Communications and Public Liaison	0	1
Office of Entrepreneurial Development	0	1

¹⁰ It is worth noting that some survey respondents' program participation may have been sponsored by another federal agency prior to their SBA tenure.

Characteristic	EIG Participants (n=19)	PMC Participants (n=5)
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs	1	1
Office of Field Operations	5	0
Office of General Counsel	3	0
Office of Government Contracting & Business Development	3	1
Office of Human Resources Solutions	0	0
Office of International Trade	1	0
Office of Veterans Business Development	0	0
Office of Investment and Innovation	1	0
Office of Performance, Planning, and the Chief Financial Officer	3	0
Prefer not to respond	1	0

The majority of survey respondents who participated in the EIG and PMC programs were female, 12 and 3, respectively. These respondents were highly educated, with 15 EIG respondents and 4 PMC respondents holding a master’s or professional degree. The equivalent proportion among all SBA employees is 20% (see Table 9). This pool also has significant experience working at the SBA—2 EIG respondents and 2 PMC respondents had worked at the SBA for more than 20 years. Almost three-quarters of the EIG program pool (16) and all of the PMC program pool (5) had worked at the SBA for 6 to 20 years. When asked if they believed that program participation had changed their career path, 1 PMC participant and 5 EIG participants reported that they were promoted within the SBA after participating in the program. Notably, although the majority of EIG (10) and PMC (3) participants were in the leadership pipeline or leadership cohort, more than one-third of EIG and PMC participants were in non-leadership positions.

The Team also conducted a Leadership and Succession Survey among former employees that were sponsored by the SBA to participate in the EIG or PMC program. While also a small number, 8 of the 12 invited former employees completed the survey, a 67% response rate. Among these participants, 2 (1 male, 1 female) had participated in the EIG program. One had worked at the SBA for 1 to 3 years and the other for 6 to 10 years, both in non-leadership positions. Six of the former employees (2 male, 4 female) had participated in the PMC program. One respondent had worked at the SBA for more than 20 years, 1 for 11 to 20 years, 3 for 6 to 10 years, and 1 for 1 to 3 years. Four of the respondents were in leadership positions while at the SBA.

Reasons for interest in participating. Survey respondents who reported they were interested in the PMC and EIG programs were asked their reasons for interest. For the 12 respondents who answered this question about the PMC program, the most cited reasons were skill development (11), exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA (11), and career progression and mobility within and outside the SBA (9). Among the 20 respondents who answered this question about the EIG program, the most cited reasons were exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA (8) and networking (6).

According to EIG and PMC participants in the follow-up focus groups, individuals who apply to the EIG or PMC program are typically already high performers. Some participants felt they were selected for participation based on upcoming SBA projects. As one focus group participant said, “I didn’t know any past fellows and I didn’t know who any of the panelists were. So it seemed to me in retrospect that I had been selected based on the project that the agency had in mind. And I think that may have been the case...because the folks that I...later realized were selected for that group, I think had the strengths geared towards their project.” Interestingly, this perception is contrary to the statement from

respondents in confirmatory focus groups that the SBA does not have an existing strategy to align program participation with upcoming projects or anticipated agency needs.

When asked about their reason for participating, most EIG participants in the follow-up focus group reported they were attracted to the opportunity for upward mobility and leadership experience. They felt this was a unique opportunity to collaborate with individuals from other agencies. Individuals also felt the EIG program was highly regarded both within the SBA and government-wide. For example, one past participant who works outside of headquarters mentioned that the EIG program is the only government leadership program that is well known in the field.

Participants from the confirmatory focus groups noted that there is more interest in “high-profile” programs such as the PMC and EIG programs, and it is more difficult to attract applicants for other programs. For example, the SBA recently opened the OPM Leadership 360 program to non-supervisory staff in the MCOs, but still had a small applicant pool.

Sub-question 2.2: Who is not being selected for these programs?

Summary: Many of the characteristics of the unsuccessful EIG (11) and PMC (7) applicants resembled those of the successful program participants, with a few exceptions. Unlike program participants, the majority of unsuccessful PMC applicants were male (5). The Team also examined reasons that interested SBA staff self-selected out of the application for these programs. Common reasons for choosing not to apply to the PMC program included lack of time to participate and lack of supervisor support. For the EIG program, common reasons for choosing not to apply included lack of time to complete the application or participate and lack of program information. Focus groups revealed that some qualified SBA employees may be unaware of these programs’ existence and benefits.

Descriptive statistics of non-selected applicants. Out of the 109 Leadership and Succession Survey respondents, 11 had applied to the EIG program but were not accepted, and 7 applied to the PMC program but were not accepted. Table 22 outlines their characteristics.

Table 22: Characteristics of EIG and PMC applicants who were not accepted

Characteristic	EIG Program – Applied, Not Accepted (n=11)	PMC Program – Applied, Not Accepted (n=7)
Leadership status		
Non-leadership	4	3
Leadership pipeline	2	2
Leadership cohort	5	2
Number promoted	6	3
Program office		
Office of Capital Access	2	2
Office of Entrepreneurial Development	0	1
Office of Field Operations	4	2
Office of Government Contracting & Business Development	1	1
Office of Human Resources Solutions	2	0
Office of Veterans Business Development	1	0
Prefer not to respond	1	1

Among respondents that applied but were not accepted, the majority of EIG applicants (9) were also female. However, the majority of PMC applicants were male. Similar to those who were accepted for the program, these applicants were highly educated—8 unsuccessful EIG applicants had a master’s degree, as did 6 unsuccessful PMC applicants.

The length of service of EIG applicants who applied but were not accepted is similar to those who were accepted (see Table 21). However, among PMC applicants who applied and were not accepted, a lower proportion (2 of 7 versus 2 of 5) had been at the SBA more than 20 years.

The distributions among program applicants who applied and were not accepted were similar to those who participated: the majority of applicants to the EIG (7) and PMC (4) programs were in the leadership pipeline or leadership cohort. Approximately half of the unsuccessful EIG and PMC applicants reported ever having experienced a promotion (compared to program participants, all of whom had experienced a promotion according to the survey data).

Reasons for not applying. Although there are a limited number of available spots for both programs, understanding the reasons staff choose not to apply can help the SBA identify and remove application and participation barriers, which will result in a stronger applicant pool, eventually benefiting the overall leadership pipeline. As noted in Research Question 1, a stronger applicant pool will also improve the number of internal hires into leadership positions, which will lead to greater diversity in the leadership cohort (given that the SBA overall is more diverse than the leadership cohort).

Of the survey respondents who were aware of the PMC program, approximately 81% never applied, although 45% (22 respondents) were interested in applying. Of those 22 who were interested but did not apply, 32% cited a lack of time to participate, 27% cited a lack of supervisor support, and 23% cited a belief that they were not eligible. Among the 27 respondents who were not interested in applying for the PMC program and stated why they were not interested, the most common reasons included a lack of time to participate (44%), and they did not believe it would benefit their upward movement within the SBA (33%).

Of the 68 survey respondents (63%) who were aware of the EIG program, 37 never applied; of those, 54% (20) were interested in applying. Among the 17 respondents not interested in applying, similar to the PMC program, the most cited reason was lack of time to participate (35%) and a belief that it would not benefit their upward movement (18%). Among the respondents who chose not to apply even though they were interested in the program, the most common reasons were a lack of time to complete the application (83%), a lack of time to participate (60%), and lack of program information (40%).

The Team learned from follow-up focus groups that most EIG and PMC participants are made aware of the program through agency emails such as the SBA Daily as well as word of mouth (although the Team learned from the confirmatory focus groups that these programs are also marketed via the “Ask the CLO” vehicle). Per these participants, many qualified SBA employees are unaware of these programs’ existence and benefits. Employees that choose to actively seek out information on these programs are typically already highly motivated, resulting in a high-performing but narrow applicant pool¹¹. The EIG and PMC applicant pools might be widened by sending more frequent and targeted marketing emails

¹¹ Based on information provided by the SBA, 30 employees applied for the PMC program between October 2017 and April 2019 (a time period spanning 4 program cohorts), and 12 were selected. Ninety employees applied for the EIG program between the fall of 2017 and the fall of 2019 (a time period spanning 3 cohorts), and 14 were selected. Eight employees reapplied after not being selected, and 2 were successful on the second attempt.

and publishing past participants' contact information. Focus group participants were enthusiastic about helping other employees learn more about the programs and suggested an ambassador program to help bridge the gap between interest and participation.

Sub-question 2.3: What are the skills/technical competencies that participants learn? Which gaps in skills/competencies do these programs fill?

Summary: Overall, PMC and EIG program participants in the Leadership and Succession Survey reported that participating in the programs enhanced their skills. Collectively, participants in the PMC and EIG programs hoped to learn similar skills to those identified as gaps in the 2018 and 2020 Dual-Rater Assessments, including conflict management, team building, political savvy, and creativity and innovation. However, there appears to be a general misalignment between the skills learned and the skills participants hoped to learn, suggesting that while the programs are beneficial, they do not directly contribute to filling existing skills gaps. It is also worth noting that in general, EIG participants were much more enthused by their experience than PMC participants.

PMC program. In the Leadership and Succession Survey, PMC program participants reported hoping to learn strategic thinking (3 of 5) and political savvy (4 of 5) through program participation. Two of five respondents reported hoping to learn creativity and innovation, developing others, partnering and collaboration, problem solving, resilience, and team building. Notably, political savvy, conflict management (similar to problem solving), and team building were also gaps identified in the 2018 and 2020 Dual-Rater Assessments (see Table 25 under Sub-question 3.1). Comparatively, among the five PMC participants in the Leadership and Succession Survey, three reported they learned accountability, creativity and innovation, external awareness, organizational awareness, partnering and collaboration, and strategic thinking. Thus, while there is some overlap between actual skills learned and those participants hoped to learn as well as gaps identified in the Dual-Rater Assessment (notably in strategic thinking and creativity and innovation), there is still a general misalignment between the skills gaps and skills learned and of interest. This suggests that while PMC participants are benefiting from participation, the program is not directly addressing agency skills gaps.

PMC participants in the follow-up focus groups identified several benefits from their participation, including that the program allowed them to break out of comfort zones, expand interests, and network. Individuals based in the field were able to experience and make connections at D.C.-based agencies and vice versa. Depending on their assigned tasks, participants had the opportunity to interact with employees and leadership from a variety of agencies in addition to contractors and other stakeholders. One focus group participant described the PMC program as a way to “break away from the gravity of [the participant’s] stagnation and to reignite the curiosity and to open the mind.” Another participant stated that their rotation at a larger agency gave them a more worldly perspective; they worked with people who had never heard of the SBA and noted it was a valuable opportunity “to break out of our own bubble and then see other people in there that are also in other bubbles at other agencies.” Respondents reported learning skills, such as the ability to adapt to different agencies, dynamics, and people.

However, participants also noted drawbacks of program participation; these drawbacks were significant enough that PMC participants were considerably less enthused about their experiences when compared to EIG participants. For example, they noted that while the PMC program is advertised as a way to gain supervisory experience, the tasks are typically more niche and occasionally even administrative in nature. For example, one participant’s assignment was to write a white paper on content unrelated to

their field of study, while another participant's time was spent completing ad hoc administrative tasks. Per respondents in the confirmatory focus groups, because the PMC program is open to GS-13 participants (while the EIG program starts at GS-14), some of the available rotational positions may be aimed at that lower grade level; these participants may therefore not see opportunities to move forward due to the level of assignment they selected. Although the SBA has no control over the rotational assignments offered by other agencies, focus group participants suggested that the SBA could be a better steward of the program by offering more meaningful opportunities to PMC participants from other agencies. This would help set a higher standard for opportunities offered by agencies across the board, which could contribute to ensuring all opportunities for PMC participants are meaningful and relevant to their roles and long-term goals.

EIG program. The 19 EIG participants in the Leadership and Succession Survey were asked what skills they hoped to learn through program participation. Most hoped to learn strategic thinking (67%), influencing and negotiation (56%), developing others (50%), and partnering and collaboration (50%). Seven participants (39%) reported hoping to learn conflict management, external awareness, and team building. Notably, conflict management (similar to problem solving), political savvy (similar to influencing and negotiation), and team building (similar to partnering and collaboration) were also gaps identified in the 2018 and 2020 Dual-Rater Assessments (Table 25). However, when asked what skills they did learn through the EIG program, respondents reported learning technology management (74%), technical credibility (68%), customer service (63%), and organizational awareness (63%). As with the PMC program, there is a misalignment between the skill gaps that participants hoped to address through the EIG program and the skills they learned.

Focus group participants reported that benefits of the EIG program included its impressive curriculum and structure, invested and passionate instructors, and the depth of relationships developed, all of which drive interest in program participation. The largest benefit of the program, however, was networking. Many participants have kept in contact with members of their EIG cohorts. Individuals were motivated to participate by the fact that the program is highly regarded across all government agencies.

Similar to the survey results, focus group participants noted that skills learned through the EIG program included leading change, political savvy, thoughtful leadership, active listening, and personal leadership style development. They also reported that the EIG program offers a unique element of 360-degree assessment and awareness. While many of the focus group participants reported they had completed a self-assessment before program participation, these assessments are usually reviewed by the individual and then shelved (the Team suspects this may be a reference to the Dual-Rater Assessment, in which employees receive their reports but results are not automatically shared with their supervisors). In the EIG program, one participant described doing a 360-degree assessment and then meeting with their coach right after. Additionally, this person had 16 other EIG participants rate them on the same skills and felt they received more honest, impactful feedback because the individuals doing the rating were not their usual staff or colleagues. Given that this type of 360-degree assessment was so highly regarded by EIG participants, it may be worthwhile for the SBA to consider a similar in-agency opportunity for 360-degree assessment and review.

One drawback specific to the current pandemic that participants noted is that the virtual environment makes it difficult for participants to reap EIG program benefits, especially those around networking and relationships. This underscores the value of in-person networking that participants experience when the program is able to operate in person.

Table 23 matches the skills EIG and PMC participants reported learning through program participation with the skills identified in the literature review as either an emerging skills trend important for agencies to consider as the Future of Work continues to evolve or those identified as critical leadership skills. As the table shows, the EIG and PMC programs do teach many skills important for the Future of Work.

Table 23: EIG, PMC programs reported learned skills compared to future skills needs

Future Skills Need	EIG Program	PMC Program
Political savvy, stakeholder engagement (networking)*	✓	✓
Collaboration (internal decentralization)**	✗	✓
Identify opportunities for cross-agency collaboration (external awareness)**	✗	✓
Strategic, innovative, creative thinking**	✗	✓
Thought leadership (leading change)**	✓	✗
Technical skills and data analysis**	✓	✗
Adaptability, flexibility**	✗	✗
Developing diversity**	✓	✓
Knowledge management*	✗	✗
Identifying inefficiencies*	✗	✗

*Critical leadership skill; **Emerging skills trend

Agencies in the benchmarking interviews identified other valuable leadership opportunities they utilize in addition to the PMC and EIG programs, such as the SES Candidate Development Program (agency-specific), the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program, the White House Fellows Program, the CXO Fellows Program, and trainings offered through the Treasury Executive Institute (TEI) and OPM. Although these programs were outside the scope of the current evaluation, they represent additional programs that the SBA could evaluate in addition to or in place of the EIG and PMC programs. Some of these programs (such as TEI and the White House Fellows Program) are ones that the SBA either offers now or has in the past. Per the confirmatory focus groups, important benefits for the SBA to obtain through program participation include retention, knowledge transfer, and leveraging skills that were learned. The biggest barrier for offering program participation to SBA staff is the cost; in particular, the EIG program and the White House Fellows Program are very expensive.

Sub-question 2.4: How are participants selected for these programs?

Summary: This section provides a high-level overview of the applicant process and selection via the Executive Review Board (ERB) for both programs. Survey respondents suggested that the SBA should consider potential for upward mobility and motivation to lead more heavily when selecting when both EIG and PMC applicants over number of direct reports, tenure, and number of positions held at the SBA. Focus group participants noted that supervisor involvement in the application and selection process for both programs varies by individual; clarifying expected roles and encouraging supervisor involvement throughout the process could garner interest and create a more level playing field for applicants.

Although the application and selection process for the EIG and PMC programs is documented, exploring what SBA staff say about the process and how other agencies select participants can help identify any space for improvements in the selection process at the SBA.

PMC program. According to the documentation reviewed by the Team and informational meetings with OHRS staff, the PMC program accepts applications from GS-13 through GS-15 employees and applications are reviewed by a selection panel. This panel, referred to as the Executive Review Board (ERB), performs a review based on established selection criteria using a scoring system. Application requirements include first- and second-level supervisory approval and the most recent performance appraisal. The number of staff who can participate in a PMC rotation is dependent on the number of host assignments the SBA offers to staff from other agencies, typically three to four individuals. The SBA works to offer additional slots by sending requests to supervisory managers and encouraging them to put available rotational assignments forward. The PMC program is advertised through targeted marketing with emails being sent directly to individuals eligible in the appropriate grades.

Program participants who responded to the Leadership and Succession Survey were asked whether there were factors they felt the SBA should consider more or less heavily in selecting individuals for these programs. According to the five PMC participants, potential for upward mobility (4) and motivation to lead (3) should be considered more heavily, while the number of direct reports (4), tenure (3), and number of positions held at the SBA (3) should not be considered as heavily.

EIG program. Per the documentation reviewed by the Team, the EIG program accepts applications from GS-14 through GS-15 employees from headquarters or field offices. To be considered, applicants must submit to OHRS a current résumé, supervisor recommendation, and an essay describing their experience as a leader. Due to the volume of applicants received, typically a prescreening panel reviews applicants first before sending applications to the ERB for review and interviews. Successful applicants attend a training session and are required to sign a 1-year continued service agreement.

When asked in the Leadership and Succession Survey about factors the SBA should consider more or less heavily in selecting individuals, at least half of the 18 EIG participants thought that factors including motivation to lead (88%), potential for upward mobility (67%), performance (61%), and consistency in performance (56%) should be considered more heavily for EIG participation. Over half the respondents thought that the number of positions held at the SBA (76%), number of direct reports (71%), and tenure at the SBA (65%) should not be considered as heavily.

Both programs. Focus group participants noted that supervisor involvement in the application and selection process for both programs varies by individual. Given that a supervisory recommendation is required to be submitted as part of the application, it is important that supervisors are as invested in these programs as interested applicants. PMC participants stated that differing levels of supervisor involvement may give unfair advantages throughout the application and selection process. For example, one individual's supervisor sat on the selection panel, while another's was unaware of the program entirely. Therefore, clarifying expected roles and encouraging supervisor involvement throughout the process might garner interest and create a more level playing field for applicants.

The topic of supervisor involvement was also raised by participants in the benchmarking interviews. The two agencies that participate in the PMC program noted that supervisor involvement and continued correspondence with previously denied applicants are crucial to maintaining a healthy applicant pool for these programs. Similarly, the respondents from GSA noted that the EIG program is open to applicants from all offices and regions as long as they have supervisor agreement. The EIG program has become one of GSA's most popular leadership development programs, with nearly 50 applicants this past year.

Sub-question 2.5: How are opportunities provided to participants to implement learned skills when they return to the SBA?

Summary: Overall, the PMC participants felt it was difficult to implement new skills when they returned to the SBA, largely because their PMC rotations were not relevant to their current positions and they did not learn technical skills in their rotations. However, they did report learning personal skills (such as conflict management and political savvy), which they felt would be useful throughout their careers. EIG participants by contrast were more likely to report that they were able to implement the skills they had learned, but there is still room for improvement. These participants suggested options such as alumni networks and mentoring to help returning participants find opportunities to implement the skills they learned.

PMC program. In the Leadership and Succession Survey, none of the five PMC participants strongly agreed that they were able to implement the skills they learned from the PMC program into their current role. One respondent attributed their inability to implement what they had learned to the decentralized shift brought on by the pandemic. A second participant reported trying to implement what they had learned but facing a lack of interest from their manager. When asked what skills they *were* able to implement, each of the following options was endorsed once by the respondents: conflict management, customer service, decisiveness, external awareness, human capital management, partnering and collaboration, and team building.

As noted in response to Sub-question 2.3, because the PMC program is open to GS-13 participants (as opposed to the EIG program, which begins at GS-14), some of the rotational programs may be aimed at that lower grade level. It is therefore possible this contributes to some of the difficulty in applying learned skills upon return to the SBA.

In the follow-up focus groups, PMC participants reported that it was often unclear what specific placement opportunities entailed, which made it difficult to determine whether they would learn skills they could implement in their current roles. This was largely due to the sheer number of placement opportunities to choose from; participants described being handed a spreadsheet of more than 250 placement opportunities and having to narrow it down to just 5 to pursue, with minimal guidance and information about each opportunity. Respondents are then quickly expected to select their final placement from that narrowed-down list. Although it would be up to OPM to improve the PMC opportunity matching system to make temporary roles more meaningful and applicable to participants' existing positions, the SBA could assist their participants by communicating what skills participants can expect to learn. Additionally, focus group participants suggested it might be beneficial for the SBA to take inventory of upcoming projects and skills needed. This way, PMC participants could seek out specific opportunities that better align with those skills and could return to the SBA anticipating the opportunity to use those skills on upcoming projects.

Focus group participants generally felt that it was easier to implement personal skills they learned rather than technical skills, since placement opportunities often differed significantly from their current roles. Some skills learned included listening, conflict management, and political savvy. Participants mentioned that exposure to various leadership styles, management techniques, ways of thinking, and processes allowed them to learn best practices related to these. These experiences may apply at different points in participants' future career paths; as one individual stated, "That's the value to the program, what you might pick up at a time and then use later sometime down the line." Overall, focus group participants

felt that the PMC program was more beneficial than not, but it did not have as much of an impact as they had anticipated on their skill set and career progression.

In benchmarking interviews, the Team asked respondents what measures they take to ensure PMC program participants have opportunities to implement learned skills when they return to their home agency. Respondents from OPM emphasized the importance of holding follow-up interviews and group sessions with PMC participants to discuss experiences and ensure skills are being implemented in current roles. A group forum allows participants to hold each other accountable, maintain camaraderie, and share best practices for implementing skills. The SBA could benefit from establishing similar groups for PMC (and EIG) participants, which may also incentivize others to apply for these programs and can be used as a reference tool for potential applicants who want more information.

EIG program. In contrast to the PMC participants, 72% (18) of the EIG respondents in the Leadership and Succession Survey reported that they did not face any barriers to implementing what they learned from the EIG program when they returned to their current role at the SBA. Notably, one survey participant wrote, “I implement the skills the best I can from the position that I am in. I’m not a team lead or supervisor, but I look for projects where I can get some experience with a team.”

However, EIG participants in the follow-up focus groups did not necessarily agree; they explained that the SBA lacks a structured approach to implementing lessons learned. Despite this, they emphasized the positive impact that the experience has had on their behaviors and actions. EIG participants were interested in a more formalized implementation structure including progress tracking, alumni committees, and mentoring opportunities to share best practices. The SBA could capitalize on this enthusiasm by soliciting EIG alumni for more initiatives and projects that allow them to use their leadership skills. The EIG program will be the most effective when supervisors are engaged and feedback methods such as follow-up surveys or interviews are used to ensure that what participants learned can be applied upon their return. These measures track and hold participants accountable for implementing learnings. Additionally, this increases agency-wide awareness of the EIG program and its offerings.

The benchmarking interviews yielded information on how other agencies evaluate the usefulness of skills learned in the EIG program and opportunities to apply those skills at the home agency. GSA conducts a survey of all EIG participants to determine the value of the EIG program to the agency and if they should continue to offer the program. Additionally, GSA is currently instituting return-on-investment (ROI) analysis for the EIG program to ensure the learnings are applied and that there are specific opportunities made available to demonstrate what was learned. GSA expects that this ROI analysis will allow the agency to evaluate the costs and benefits of the EIG program. However, GSA noted that there are some barriers to implementing learned skills. These included times when participants return to a previous position that lacks opportunities to grow and showcase learned skills, or lack of a networking system for participants to communicate with others who have returned to their old positions in their home agencies.

Sub-question 2.6: Have program participants remained with the SBA? How have program participants progressed along the leadership pipeline at the SBA?

Summary: Among the EIG and PMC participants in the employment personnel dataset, retention rates were higher than for the SBA overall. Additionally, more than half of program participants experienced a promotion, which outpaces the general population. The most common type of movement (11 instances) into leadership experienced by PMC and EIG program participants was from the leadership pipeline into the leadership cohort. However, this does not seem to be specific to these populations, as this finding mirrors the general population of the SBA. Focus group participants reported that the programs were a positive experience but did not directly lead to their upward movement within the SBA.

Retention rates among EIG and PMC participants observed in the dataset were high. Using the Notice of Action variable, the Team also observed an overall retention rate of approximately 91% among all SBA employees. Notably, the dataset did not include all EIG and PMC participants at SBA during the 11-year period covered. Hence, the EIG and PMC retention rate trends observed in the data are not generalizable.

The Team also examined whether program participants overall are different from non-participants in terms of promotions. Table 24 provides the number of EIG or PMC program participants who have ever received a promotion, as documented in the employment personnel dataset. Less than half (4 of 10) of EIG program participants and more than half (5 of 8) of PMC participants had ever received a promotion, outpacing the general population¹². If the Team takes a snapshot of the entire SBA, only 23% (491 out of 2,170) received a promotion in 2020.

Table 24: Promotions by program participation

Promotion Status	EIG Program (n=9)	PMC Program (n=8)	All SBA, 2020 (n=2,170)
Ever received promotion	4 (44%)	5 (62%)	491 (23%)
Never received promotion	5 (56%)	3 (38%)	1,679 (77%)

Table Note: These groups are not mutually exclusive, because there are four individuals who participated in more than one program.

Figure 7 shows types of promotion experienced by PMC and EIG program participants at any point in the 11 years covered by the dataset. The most common type of movement was from a non-supervisory role into a supervisory role in the leadership cohort (55%) followed by a grade increase among those already in the leadership cohort (32%). Figure 8 shows promotions for all SBA employees (including EIG and PMC program participants), with similar findings to those highlighted above for program participants. The most common type of movement is supervisory change (62%).

¹² However, as noted above, there is no variable indicating when staff participated in these programs, which means promotions could have preceded program participation.

Figure 7: Leadership group movement among EIG and PMC program participants

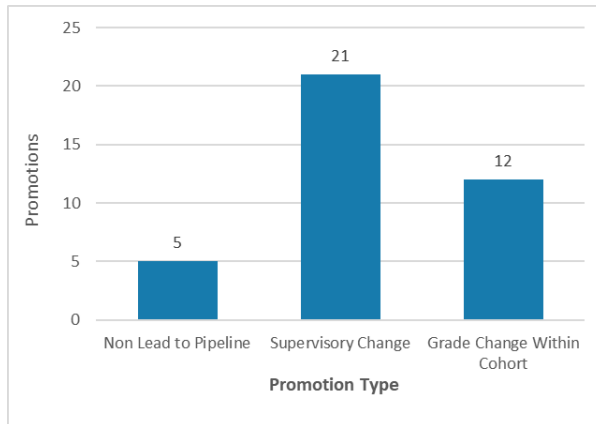
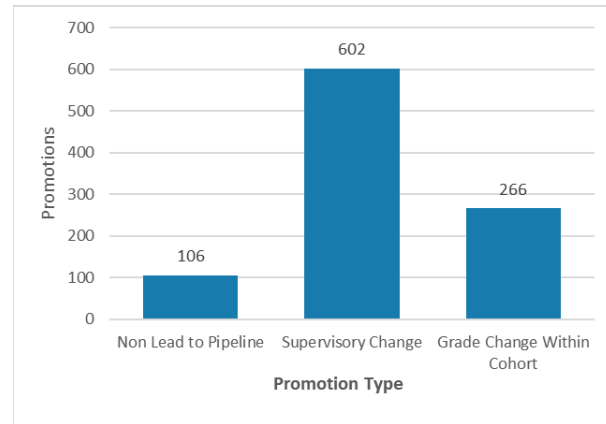


Figure 8: Leadership group movement type at the SBA



Participant perceptions of program impacts. Both EIG and PMC participants in the follow-up focus groups reported that the programs generally had a positive influence on their perspectives, attitudes, and behavior. Specifically, participants expressed that they were thankful for the opportunity and the SBA’s investment in their professional growth and noted they had learned new leadership skills and gained new perspectives on how to accomplish tasks, orient teams, and so on. However, given that both EIG and PMC participants in the follow-up focus groups said that the programs did not directly lead to upward movement within the SBA, it may be beneficial for the SBA to include additional language in outreach materials and the application, indicating that participation does not necessarily result in promotion. The increased clarity may help ensure that individuals apply for reasons that align with actual program benefits. As previously reported, 9 of 12 PMC participants in the Leadership and Succession Survey reported interest in applying due to perceptions of potential career progression and mobility within and outside the SBA, as did 15 of 19 EIG participants in the survey.

Another interesting finding was the potential to lose PMC participants to new roles outside the agency. Respondents in the follow-up focus groups and confirmatory focus groups said they may lose staff after PMC participation when a promotion opens up outside the agency (although they may also gain staff who come to the SBA through the PMC program). Similarly, while benchmarking interview respondents from OPM reported that PMC participants returned more well-rounded and excited for their career growth and expansion, they did note that the agency has lost and gained many individuals through rotations with other agencies. From their perspective, however, this aspect of the program is not seen as harmful as it supports retention and developmental efforts within the agency. Based on this information, the SBA should consider offering rotations that attract talent they may be lacking or not normally seek as there is a chance these participants will stay with the agency.

4.3 Research Question 3: What gaps exist in current staff skills and abilities that may prevent effective succession planning within the SBA?

The Team used the Dual-Rater Assessment to identify skills gaps reported in 2018 and 2020, with the assumption that widening or persistent skills gaps would impede the SBA’s ability to fill leadership vacancies. Common gaps identified included written communication, oral communication, and conflict management. Although the skills gaps identified in 2018 generally did not persist into 2020, the

assessment was expanded to include technical competencies for several MCOs resulting in newly identified gaps. The Leadership and Succession Survey revealed that respondents did not think the SBA taught skills which mapped to the identified skills gaps in the Dual-Rater Assessment—for example, less than one-third of respondents reported that team building and conflict management are taught at the SBA, even though more than 50% of respondents identified these as skills that should be taught. Collectively, these findings suggest that the current talent pool could benefit from additional trainings to address identified skills gaps and help develop a qualified internal pool of potential leadership.

The Team also examined skills gaps specific to SBA leadership and found notable overlaps in the skills gaps reported by SBA leadership and non-leadership. Both groups, for example, reported in the TDNS that they would benefit from trainings on “core skills” such as conflict management, critical thinking, and change management.

Finally, the Team examined how the mentorship program, temporary promotions, supervisory detail assignments, and supervisor trainings contribute to succession at the SBA.

- **Mentorship program.** Participants spoke highly of the networking benefit, particularly when mentor/mentee pairs crossed the field and HQ. Some felt the program would benefit from increased marketing as well as the use of participants as ambassadors to highlight the program’s benefits. Another challenge noted was the lack of participating mentors.
- **Temporary promotions and supervisory detail assignments.** Staff who received temporary promotions or supervisory detail assignments reported benefits including networking, exposure to a variety of offices, and gaining experience managing peers; challenges included relocation costs. Although it was suggested that temporary promotions could be an opportunity for the SBA to identify staff in advance of vacancies opening in the leadership pipeline, some respondents raised inclusivity concerns with that approach because temporary promotions or supervisory detail assignments are not equally accessible to all staff. The Team did not find a correlation between temporary promotions and permanent promotions.
- **Supervisor trainings.** Similar to the mentorship program, participants felt the greatest benefit of these trainings was the networking aspect, rather than the specific skills taught; grouping participants from the field and HQ could capitalize on this benefit. The biggest drawback that participants identified was that trainings developed for the private sector were missing the government perspective, which make learned skills less applicable in government jobs.

Sub-question 3.1: What gaps in staff skills and abilities are reported?

Summary: The Team used the Dual-Rater Assessment to identify skills gaps reported in 2018 and 2020. Notably, while areas of need identified in the 2018 assessment did not persist in 2020 for most MCOs, skills gaps were identified in 2020 for some of the MCOs. The Leadership and Succession Survey revealed that respondents did not think the SBA taught skills which mapped to the identified skills gaps in the Dual-Rater Assessment. Based on these findings, it is important to continue offering (and possibly expand) skills trainings to agency staff to ensure the current talent pool contains qualified applicants to fill leadership vacancies.

To answer this sub-question, the Team relied on the Dual-Rater Assessment and the Leadership and Succession Survey. In the review of the Dual-Rater Assessments at the MCO level, the Team made comparisons between the 2018 and 2020 assessments on the reported skills gaps (Table 25). Although it is likely the respondents to the 2018 and 2020 assessments differed, given that participation is voluntary, the survey can be considered a snapshot of skills gaps at the agency; comparing the years can

help identify overall themes in how skills gaps change over time. Overall, areas of need identified in 2018, such as written communication, oral communication, and conflict management, did not persist in 2020 for most MCOs. However, new skills gaps were identified in 2020 for some of the MCOs; for example, IT professionals listed gaps in numerous skills, whereas none were assessed in 2018. The table below suggests that SBA training programs have been able to mitigate some of the skills gaps identified in the 2018 Dual-Rater Assessment.

Table 25: Skills gaps assessed in the Dual-Rater Assessment in 2018 and 2020

MCO (Occupational Series)	2018 Areas of Need (GS-13 and Higher)	2020 Areas of Need (GS-13 and Higher)
0201 – Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written communication • Oral communication (GS-13 and GS-14) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor relations
0340 – Program Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written communication • Oral communication (GS-15) • Conflict management (GS-15) 	GS-13 and GS-14 did not report skills gaps. Among GS-15: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team building • Human capital management • Political savvy • Financial management
1101 - General Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written communication 	No skills gaps assessed
1102 – Contracting	Among GS-15: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict management • Creativity and innovation • Knowledge of SBA business • Leveraging diversity • Oral communication • Written communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of e-business and automation tools
1160 – Financial Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict management (GS-13) • Knowledge of SBA business (GS-13) • Leveraging diversity • Written communication (GS-13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy guidance and regulatory compliance
1165 – Loan Specialists	Among GS-15: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written communication 	No skills gaps assessed
2210 – IT Professionals	None reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT governance • Enterprise architecture • Data management • Cybersecurity • Service management (GS-15 and SES) • Customer Service (GS-15 and SES)

The Leadership and Succession Survey asked respondents to identify what skills they believe are taught at the SBA and what skills they believe *should* be taught at the SBA. As shown in Table 27, more than half of the survey respondents identified skills gaps similar to those identified in the 2018 and 2020 Dual-Rater Assessments, including creativity and innovation, leveraging diversity, team building, and conflict management.

Table 26: What skills should be taught at the SBA?

Responses	What skills do you believe should be taught at the SBA? Choose all that apply.
Strategic thinking	66 (62%)
Developing others	63 (59%)
Creativity and innovation	61 (58%)
Leveraging diversity	60 (57%)
Organizational awareness	57 (54%)
Partnering and collaboration	57 (54%)
Team building	57 (54%)
Conflict management	56 (53%)
Customer service	55 (52%)
Total respondents	106

The skills that respondents reported are taught at the SBA generally did not map to the identified skills gaps— in Table 27 for example, less than one-third of respondents reported that team building and conflict management are taught at the SBA. Similarly, less than 20% of respondents felt that other skills gaps were topics taught at the SBA. Among participants who had ever been promoted at the SBA, when asked if there were any skills they wished they had in their new roles, at least 20% reported the following: political savvy (31%), data analysis and literacy (30%), human capital management (23%), conflict management (22%), and technology management (22%). Collectively, these findings suggest that the current talent pool could benefit from additional trainings to address identified skills gaps and develop a qualified internal pool of potential leadership.

Table 27: What skills are taught at the SBA?

Responses	What skills do you believe are taught at the SBA? Choose all that apply.
Customer service	42 (40%)
Partnering and collaboration	39 (37%)
Problem solving	35 (33%)
Resilience	34 (32%)
Team building	32 (30%)
Entrepreneurship	30 (28%)
Conflict management	29 (27%)
Strategic thinking	28 (26%)
Organizational awareness	27 (25%)
Flexibility	26 (25%)
Total respondents	106

In the benchmarking interviews, the Team learned that technical competencies are tailored to specific program offices. Therefore, even though technical competencies are valued across these agencies, the specific competencies valued at the highest leadership positions tend to be less results-driven and quantitatively focused (such as leading change, leading people, political savvy, and negotiating) and therefore more difficult to monitor and track. The SBA may benefit from developing methods to monitor these competencies so that individuals are incentivized to improve them, rather than focusing on easy-to-track, results-driven competencies.

Sub-question 3.2: How are staff skills gaps measured or identified?

Summary: Staff skills gaps are primarily measured through the Dual-Rater Assessment. The majority of Leadership and Succession Survey respondents felt they had a clear understanding of their current performance and had participated in a formal feedback process. However, just under 50% of respondents felt the skills necessary for promotion were clearly defined, and they were made aware of them, while just over 10% felt skills were clearly defined, but they were not made aware of them.

Skills gaps are currently identified primarily through the Dual-Rater Assessment. See Section 3.1 for a description of how this assessment is administered. While the Dual-Rater Assessment reports perceived gaps as related to skills needed for job requirements, the TDNS documents individuals’ perceptions of their training needs and preferences.

The Team also examined how staff skills gaps are communicated to staff. Respondents in the confirmatory focus groups explained that staff receive an assessment based on their Dual-Rater Assessment, which highlights where they fall in relation to specific skill targets, specifically whether they are above or below those targets. The results are not automatically shared with supervisors, but employees are encouraged to share their results with their supervisor. However, the assessment is not mandatory, and less than half of SBA staff completed it.

Respondents in the Leadership and Succession Survey were asked if they had a clear understanding of their current performance level in their role at the SBA. The majority (90%) felt that they had a clear understanding of their performance. Eighty-one of 98 respondents (83%) also reported participating in a formal feedback process. The primary formal process reported is the annual performance appraisal, reported by 72 of 81 respondents (89%).

As shown in Table 28, most respondents (68%) thought the formal feedback process was extremely or very effective in communicating current performance. Conversely, a smaller proportion (41%) thought the feedback process was extremely effective or very effective at communicating potential.

Table 28: Leadership and Succession Survey perspectives on formal feedback processes

Responses	How effective is the formal feedback process in communicating your current performance?	How effective is the formal feedback process in communicating your potential?
Extremely effective	24 (30%)	15 (19%)
Very effective	31 (38%)	18 (22%)
Moderately effective	17 (21%)	21 (26%)
Not at all effective	5 (6%)	18 (22%)
Slightly effective	4 (5%)	9 (11%)
Total	81 (100%)	81 (100%)

Leadership and Succession Survey participants who had ever been promoted at the SBA (71) were asked if the skills necessary for promotion were clearly defined at each level they reached. While roughly 47% reported that the skills were clearly defined and they were made aware of them, about 11% reported skills were clearly defined but they were not made aware of them. When these participants were asked how they were made aware of the skills, the most cited avenues were information from their managers or supervisors (13), job description postings (12), self-driven or motivated research (7), and conversations with mentors or coaches (6).

Sub-question 3.3: What skills/competencies does SBA leadership currently have? Does this differ from non-leadership staff?

Summary: The TDNS revealed significant overlaps in the skills gaps reported by SBA leadership and non-leadership. For example, conflict management, critical thinking, and change management were identified as gaps in “core skills” by both leadership and non-leadership. Survey respondents were asked the most important skills for SBA leadership to have and what leadership’s strongest skills are. The data revealed that the skills staff considered most important were not always what they felt leadership had. For example, developing others was identified as an important skill to have by 67% of respondents, but only 8% of respondents thought leadership possessed this skill.

To address Sub-question 3.3, the Team examined the competencies of SBA leadership and non-leadership to determine whether there is a gap between the two groups. Specifically, the Team compared the self-reported skills gaps reported in the TDNS dataset by leadership group as well as leadership skills and skills gaps as reported in the Leadership and Succession Survey.

Table 29 outlines the top five skills and competencies identified in the TDNS across three years, 2018–2020. The competencies are related to four key questions, and responses are compared between SBA staff and SBA leadership (executives, managers, and supervisors). As shown in table cells marked with an asterisk, there is a large overlap between the top five skills gaps identified between all staff and SBA leadership. For example, when asked what core skills training would benefit each employee, conflict management, critical thinking, public speaking, and change management were among the top skills for each group. Notably, the proportion of competencies identified by non-leadership staff and leadership staff were similar, with a few exceptions. A greater proportion of employees in leadership identified conflict management (17% versus 10%) and change management (15% versus 9%) as training needs.

Table 29: Top five skills/competencies gaps in the TDNS by leadership status

Question	SBA (Non-Leadership)	Count (%)	SBA (Leadership)	Count (%)
I would benefit from the following Core Skills training. Please select up to 3 of the following choices.	*Conflict Management	770 (10%)	*Conflict Management	225 (17%)
	*Critical Thinking	769 (10%)	*Change Management	210 (15%)
	*Public Speaking	737 (10%)	*Critical Thinking	138 (10%)
	Effective Writing	711 (9%)	Time Management	117 (9%)
	*Change Management	676 (9%)	*Public Speaking	100 (7%)
What type(s) of Business Management training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office? Please select up to 3 of the following choices.	*Program and/or Project Management	1,126 (17%)	*Program and/or Project Management	205 (16%)
	*Business Analytics	915 (14%)	*Data-Driven Decision-Making	204 (16%)
	None at this time or N/A	791 (12%)	*Business Analytics	196 (15%)
	*Data-Driven Decision-Making	764 (11%)	*Assessing, Advising and Counseling Small Businesses	98 (8%)
	*Assessing, Advising and Counseling Small Businesses	603 (9%)	Marketing (1285)	98 (8%)
What type(s) of Supervisory training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office? Please select up to 3 responses.	*Mentoring/Developing Employees	1,180 (16%)	*Dealing with Unacceptable Performance	290 (17%)
	*Managing Employee Performance	1,040 (14%)	*Managing Employee Performance	275 (16%)
	*Dealing with Unacceptable Performance	937 (13%)	*Mentoring/Developing Employees	227 (13%)
	*Recognizing High Performers	915 (12%)	Addressing Conduct	219 (13%)

Question	SBA (Non-Leadership)	Count (%)	SBA (Leadership)	Count (%)
	None at this time or N/A	915 (12%)	*Recognizing High Performers	196 (12%)
What type(s) of Leadership training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office? Please select your top 3 choices.	*Strategic Thinking & Vision	947 (12%)	*Strategic Thinking & Vision	217 (14%)
	*Team Building	910 (11%)	*Team Building	170 (11%)
	*Developing Others	656 (8%)	*Developing Others	149 (10%)
	*Conflict Management	645 (8%)	*Conflict Management	142 (9%)
	*Creativity/Innovation	576 (7%)	*Creativity/Innovation	111 (7%)

Table Note: Cells marked with an asterisk denote an overlap in skills assessed between SBA non-leadership and SBA leadership.

In the Leadership and Succession Survey, respondents were asked to identify their leadership’s strongest skills and the most important skills for leaders to have. Table 30 compares the top skills (either leadership’s strongest skills or the most important skill to have). The key takeaway in this comparison is that the most important skills were not always identified as present by respondents. For example, developing others was identified as an important skill to have by 67% of respondents, but only 8% of respondents thought leadership possessed this skill.

Table 30: Leadership skills discussed in the Leadership and Succession Survey

Responses	In your opinion, what are the SBA leadership’s strongest skills?	In your opinion, which skills are the most important for the SBA leadership to have? Choose all that apply.
Strategic thinking	16 (16%)	76 (73%)
Developing others	8 (8%)	70 (67%)
Team building	8 (8%)	64 (62%)
Accountability	11 (11%)	61 (59%)
Organizational awareness	22 (22%)	56 (54%)
Creativity and innovation	11 (11%)	55 (53%)
Partnering and collaboration	15 (15%)	55 (53%)
Human capital management	12 (12%)	54 (52%)
Leveraging diversity	15 (15%)	54 (52%)
Decisiveness	8 (8%)	51 (49%)
Conflict management	9 (9%)	50 (48%)
Customer service	23 (23%)	50 (48%)
Flexibility	16 (16%)	48 (46%)
Problem solving	14 (14%)	47 (45%)
External awareness	16 (16%)	46 (44%)
Technical credibility	20 (20%)	43 (41%)
Political savvy	26 (26%)	42 (40%)
Resilience	24 (24%)	37 (36%)
Financial management	12 (12%)	35 (34%)
Total respondents	99	104

Sub-question 3.4: How are SBA training programs (mentorship program, temporary promotions, supervisory detail assignments, and supervisor trainings) contributing to succession?

Mentorship program.

Summary: Both mentors and mentees found the mentorship program helpful and noted that networking was the greatest benefit, particularly when mentor/mentee pairs cross the field and HQ. Some participants felt that staff may be unaware of all the benefits of the networking program, while others noted that mentors are not always sure what their expectations are. Increased marketing and use of past and current participants as ambassadors could address both of these challenges. Another challenge noted was the lack of participating mentors.

Overall, the Team found that the mentorship program is beneficial for both mentees and mentors alike, as it provides opportunities for employees to network within the SBA. Participants are able to meet individuals outside of their current roles and expand their circles, exposing them to new opportunities and roles. Participants highlighted this networking aspect as the biggest benefit of participation, particularly when mentor/mentee pairs included participants from different locations. For this reason, follow-up focus group participants emphasized the importance of matching mentors and mentees strategically to increase dialogue between HQ and the field.

However, participants in the follow-up focus groups felt that many qualified SBA employees are unaware of the mentorship program's more subtle benefits, such as mental stimulation and networking between headquarters and the field, both hard to come by in today's virtual environment. Increased marketing and using past participants as ambassadors to increase awareness might target a broader group that includes more than just the high performers.

Some participants also noted that they were unsure what was expected of them as mentors—increased marketing as well as additional training on expectations and requirements could help address this challenge. Additionally, another area for potential improvement of the mentorship program is increased formalization. Mentees and mentors from the follow-up focus groups felt that more structure and direction in addition to some sort of tracking tool would help both parties align on objectives and monitor progress. An IDP may serve as an effective tracking tool and would allow participants to formally develop goals and steps and then monitor and evaluate progress throughout. The tracking tool would be a means of initiating conversation between mentors and mentees and would address the expressed concerns around lack of structure.

One challenge raised in the follow-up focus groups is the lack of mentors participating in the SBA mentorship program. (Although the lack of participating mentors was raised several times by SBA respondents, the Team found more mentors than mentees in the employment personnel dataset.) This challenge was a surprise to the Team, given the TDNS data showed many staff were interested in acting as mentors—227 in 2019 (28% of respondents) and 149 in 2020 (17% of respondents). Focus group participants suggested holding a meeting for interested employees to create camaraderie and synergy. Inviting past participants to this meeting to communicate their experiences and the importance of the program may also increase awareness.

Table 31 provides the number of mentors and mentees in the mentorship program who have ever received a promotion, as documented in the employment personnel dataset. Over one-third of mentorship program participants (39% of mentors and 33% of mentees) had ever received a promotion, outpacing the general population.¹³ If the Team takes a snapshot of all SBA participants in 2020, only 23% (491 out of 2,170) received a promotion.

Table 31: Promotions by program participation

Promotion Status	Mentor (n=36)	Mentee (n=15)	All SBA, 2020 (n=2,170)
Ever received promotion	14 (39%)	5 (33%)	491 (23%)
Never received promotion	23 (66%)	9 (60%)	1,679 (77%)

Temporary promotions and supervisory detail assignments.

Summary: Staff who received temporary promotions or supervisory detail assignments reported benefits including networking, exposure to a variety of offices, and gaining experience managing peers. Certain challenges (such as relocation costs) make these opportunities less available to some staff. Finding solutions to these challenges (such as beginning temporary promotions or supervisory detail assignments with 1 to 2 weeks in person before shifting to virtual) would allow a wider variety of individuals to participate, eventually resulting in a stronger leadership succession pipeline. Although it was suggested that temporary promotions could be an opportunity for the SBA to identify staff in advance of vacancies opening in the leadership pipeline, some respondents raised inclusivity concerns with that approach because temporary promotions or supervisory detail assignments are not equally accessible to all staff (as noted above). Finally, the Team did not find a correlation between temporary promotions and permanent promotions.

The Team gathered information on temporary promotions (in which staff receive non-permanent promotions, typically to fill a vacancy until a permanent hire is made) and supervisory detail assignments (in which staff are temporarily assigned to a different position for a prespecified period of time).

Correlation between temporary and permanent promotions. First, the Team used the employment personnel dataset to explore whether there is any correlation between staff who have received temporary promotions and permanent promotions. The Team observed a weak sample correlation coefficient ($r=0.185$) between the temporary and permanent promotions. Generally, correlation coefficients below 0.4 are considered weak or low correlation. Note that the employment personnel dataset does not have a variable to identify supervisory detail assignments, so the same analysis cannot be done for this group. As Table 32 shows, most temporary promotions occurred in the leadership cohort (11%) followed by non-leadership (9%).

Table 32: Temporary promotions by leadership status

Temporary Promotions	All SBA (2010–2020)	Non-Leadership	Pipeline	Cohort
Ever received temporary promotion	310	121	81	108
Never received temporary promotion	3,819	1,297	1,665	857
Total	4,129	1,418	1,746	965

¹³ However, as noted above, there is no variable indicating when staff participated in these programs, which means that it is possible promotions preceded participation in the programs.

Table 33 shows the subset of individuals who experienced a permanent promotion into the pipeline, a supervisory position, or grade change within the leadership cohort after a temporary promotion. Approximately 19% of all promotions (183 out of 974) at the SBA occurred among those who had experienced a temporary promotion. However, 59% of staff who ever experienced a temporary promotion also experienced a permanent promotion (183 out of 310) after the temporary promotion.

Table 33: Permanent promotions among those receiving temporary promotions

Temporary Promotions	All SBA	Non-Lead to Pipeline	Supervisory Change	Grade Change Within Cohort
Ever received promotion	183	10	116	57
Never received promotion	791	96	486	209
Total	974	106	602	266

Table Note: This table examines the subset of individuals who experienced both temporary and permanent promotions. Individuals are counted if they experienced their most recent temporary promotion prior to their earliest permanent promotion. The Team deems this to be the most reasonable way of identifying the effect of temporary promotions because all other chronological orderings of temporary and permanent promotions are ambiguous.

Participant perceptions of benefits and challenges. Follow-up focus group participants who had received a temporary promotion or supervisory detail assignment reported a variety of benefits including networking, exposure to a variety of offices, gaining experience managing peers, and refinement of interpersonal skills such as verbal communication. When temporary positions are assigned thoughtfully with the individual’s role, responsibilities, and skills gaps in mind, participants are able to implement learnings when they return to their current roles. Follow-up focus group participants felt that although these positions usually did not directly result in promotion, it gave them the confidence to apply for higher roles and had an overall positive effect on their career trajectory. However, this perception is not supported by the employment personnel data, which shows that few permanent promotions occurred after a temporary promotion.

Some focus group participants identified challenges to applying for or accepting a temporary promotion or supervisory detail assignment if the position is not in the same region. They reported that many of these positions require relocation (which can be difficult for staff with children) but do not cover travel or housing costs. Furthermore, those acting in lower-level details may experience a de facto pay decrease if they are required to relocate to a more expensive area. Finding solutions to these limiting factors would allow a wider variety of individuals to participate; this would benefit the leadership pipeline by allowing lower-level staff to begin leadership development earlier in their careers, eventually resulting in a stronger pipeline.

Another challenge, noted by a participant in the confirmatory focus group, may be that some offices do not know how to set up opportunities for temporary promotions. Providing more information around when and how to create temporary promotion openings and how to market these could increase the number available to eligible SBA staff.

Additionally, it is possible there is some confusion among SBA staff regarding who is eligible to participate in a temporary promotion. Follow-up focus group respondents reported that no one under GS-13 is considered for a temporary promotion but noted there may be staff under this level who would be qualified. However, the employment personnel dataset shows instances of GS-12 staff that have received temporary promotions—of the 371 instances of temporary promotions observed in the data, 84 occurred at GS-12.

The Team learned from the follow-up focus groups that employees are typically made aware of supervisory detail and temporary promotion opportunities through word of mouth and the SBA Daily. Focus group participants felt it was likely that many staff—especially those in the field—are unaware of open positions and their potential benefits. The SBA could increase awareness of and interest in temporary promotions and supervisory detail assignments by sending more frequent marketing emails and publishing past participant contacts.

The Leadership and Succession Survey asked staff who had received temporary promotions and supervisory detail assignments what they believed they gained from their experience. Among the 29 staff who received temporary promotions, 66% reported skill development, 55% noted the potential for career progression and upward mobility within the SBA, and 45% reported career progression and upward mobility within the SBA. Of the 23 staff who received supervisory detail assignments, 57% reported career progression and upward mobility within the SBA, 43% cited skill development, and 35% noted the potential for career progression and upward mobility within the SBA.

One confirmatory focus group respondent suggested that temporary promotions could be an opportunity for the SBA to identify staff in advance of vacancies opening in the leadership pipeline. However, other respondents raised inclusivity concerns with this approach, noting that many staff located in the field do not have the capability to take a detail at headquarters, which could mean this opportunity is not equally available to all eligible staff. One proposed way to remediate the challenge would be to offer the temporary promotion virtually, possibly with the first week or two in person at headquarters before shifting to remote.

Supervisor trainings.

Summary: Supervisory training participants reported that the greatest benefits of these trainings are the networking aspect; grouping participants from the field and HQ could capitalize on this benefit. The biggest drawback that participants identified was that trainings were missing the government perspective. Tailoring trainings more to the public sector would help participants better apply what they learn.

The Team learned during follow-up focus groups that there are two main types of supervisory training: managing people/resources and leadership trainings. While these trainings cover a wide variety of topics, participants felt they are typically very repetitive, and the biggest benefit was networking with other supervisors rather than specific skills learned. One follow-up focus group participant described supervisor trainings as “check the box” situations. Participants reported that trainings did not always relate to their position or role and were sometimes missing the government perspective. Shifting the focus of supervisory trainings from daily operations to leadership and incorporating a public-sector focus may make learnings more applicable. Additionally, strategic groupings of field and HQ staff in each supervisory training would ensure a variety of perspectives, thereby capitalizing on the highly rated networking aspect of these trainings.

4.4 Additional findings

This evaluation also yielded additional findings about the use of individual development plans (IDPs) at the SBA that do not fall within the scope of the three research questions answered in the section above. According to follow-up focus group participants, while there is an occasional push to discuss IDPs an influential IDP program has not materialized. In the confirmatory focus groups, the Team learned that

while leadership offers IDP trainings to program offices by request, IDPs are not tracked unless entered into the Talent Management Center (TMC).

The TDNS shows 10% to 15% of respondents actively use an IDP. Per findings from the SBA, respondents with active IDPs were more likely to indicate there were no barriers to the amount of training they received; two-thirds more respondents with IDPs were able to take two weeks of training in 2020. Follow-up focus group participants suggested these staff were more likely to have taken trainings because they had “[planned] it out in advance and [were] not waiting to the last minute.”

The Leadership and Succession Survey uncovered that almost half of respondents (44%) had never had an IDP, and of those with a current or past IDP, less than half reported that they found the IDPs useful. See Table 34 for additional IDP findings from the Leadership and Succession Survey.

Table 34: Use and value of IDPs

Ever Had an IDP	All Respondents (n=110)
No, I have never had an IDP	48 (44%)
Yes, I currently have an active IDP and find it useful	18 (16%)
Yes, I currently have an active IDP but do not find it useful	6 (6%)
Yes, I had an IDP in the past and did not find it useful	26 (24%)
Yes, I had an IDP in the past and found it useful	12 (10%)

The Team encountered the idea of including IDP participation with other development programs, such as the mentorship program. IDPs based on OPM’s executive core qualifications (ECQs) are already a required part of participation in the PMC program; participants are asked to identify several ECQs they would like to develop and are encouraged to seek assignments supporting that development. Similar to this approach, one follow-up focus group participant suggested that IDPs be required to participate in the mentorship program to help guide discussions with mentors and create “tangible” opportunities to learn by planning out which training will be taken and when.

The Team learned through follow-up focus groups that although SBA employees are offered many trainings to choose from, simply offering these trainings does not necessarily promote a learning culture, and conversations around IDPs are not common. Based on this finding, the SBA would benefit from establishing an agency-wide IDP, separate from performance appraisals, to serve as a developmental tool. It is crucial that supervisors and staff are well trained on the IDP’s potential use by understanding success stories and best practices. Therefore, the SBA would benefit from having a built-out communication and change management plan that includes IDPs so that they have the necessary buy-in. Additionally, because IDPs are mandatory at the SES/Executive level, the IDP trainings could have Q&As with individuals who have successfully created and used their IDP.

Finally, the Team learned from benchmarking interviews that IDPs are only mandatory for executives and SES-level employees at the IRS, OPM, and GSA. While these agencies encourage IDPs for all employees, they face barriers such as time constraints, measurability, and “check the box” mentalities.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This section presents the 11 main recommendations resulting from this evaluation. These are organized into the following three categories:

- Develop a fully documented leadership succession plan;
- Improve skills monitoring to address skills gaps and maintain a qualified pool;
- Maximize program benefits.

Across the three categories, an overarching theme common to these recommendations is communication. In many places, the Team recommends more targeted or increased communications. This stems from a frequent disconnect between what leadership is doing (that is, providing trainings on IDP use or sending information on the PMC and EIG programs via the SBA Daily) and what non-leadership is hearing. For example, the Team learned that trainings on IDP use are offered, but non-leadership staff felt there were only occasional pushes to promote IDP use across the agency. As another example, the EIG and PMC programs are advertised via the SBA Daily, yet follow-up focus group participants felt it was likely eligible staff were not all aware of the programs. This disconnect leads the Team to conclude that while information is being circulated, it is not always reaching the intended audience. Thus, throughout the recommendations below the Team raises opportunities to spread the message more effectively and efficiently.

Additionally, some of the recommendations made below dovetail with existing efforts underway at the SBA or with plans that were articulated by OHRS in discussions with the Team. It is a positive sign that the recommendations developed through this evaluation often overlap with existing or planned efforts, as this suggests the planned path for leadership development and succession at the SBA is supported by the evidence. Moving forward by focusing on effective and efficient implementation (which, per the recommendations below, can often be achieved by leveraging existing agency resources) will help the SBA achieve its goals of effective leadership succession and a qualified internal pool of applicants.

5.1 Develop a fully documented leadership succession plan

The recommendations in this category aim to ensure all involved parties know exactly what steps should be taken and when. This would decrease the risk from the turnover of personnel involved in succession planning. The recommendations made in this section are likely some of the easiest to implement, because they largely entail documenting existing processes.

Recommendation 1. Publish a fully documented leadership succession plan

Publish an operational leadership succession plan of strategic objectives with corresponding communications, implementation, and change management plans, rather than publishing periodic leadership succession plans each year which only detail one or a few components of leadership succession. This plan should fully document all components of leadership succession at the SBA.

- This plan should document all inputs, activities, and outputs that occur in the leadership succession process (see the final process map in Appendix A for steps that are currently completed but not documented). This change in approach ensures that regardless of any turnover at the SBA or change in personnel, anyone who has the full plan will be able to perform the necessary activities to ensure successful and efficient leadership succession.

- The plan should also include a standard list of succession planning outputs, which will help SBA leadership have a clear sense of goals and expectations for all succession activities.
- The plan should also include any strategic objectives for leadership succession (for example, increasing internal rather than external promotions into leadership, or increasing diversity in the leadership cohort).
- Engage leadership in SES hiring; executives should play a hands-on role in filling leadership positions given their firsthand experience and understanding of the required skills and culture fit. Leadership should continuously inform what is needed, and a pool of potential leaders should be maintained and regularly updated.

Recommendation 2. Create a comprehensive communications plan for leadership development

Create a targeted communication plan around all leadership development programs and opportunities. Ideally, this communication plan would be included in the leadership succession plan. Given that the Team repeatedly heard the need for additional, more targeted marketing and communication in relation to all programs, the Team recommends creating a plan that documents the following:

- The populations that should be targeted for communications on specific programs and opportunities (i.e., specific program offices, MCOs, GS levels, supervisors of eligible staff); this includes segmenting communications (for example, different emails marketing the benefits of the EIG program for GS-15 staff versus SES-level staff)
- The frequency of communication (only when openings are available, periodically prior to application period, etc.)
- The content of each communication (application requirements and instructions, desired skill sets, benefits of participation, etc.)

Other recommendations made in this report regarding communication (such as more targeted recruitment for the EIG and PMC programs) would also be captured in this communication plan.

To ensure standardization in the communication of opportunities, this communication plan would cover all leadership development opportunities (including the EIG and PMC programs and temporary promotion listings), trainings (including supervisory trainings), and other opportunities such as the mentoring program. By improving the communication around these opportunities, the SBA could help ensure a broader and more equitable applicant pool, which would raise the caliber of program participants, thereby improving the leadership succession pool.

5.2 Improve skills monitoring to address skills gaps and maintain a qualified pool

The four recommendations in this section are intended to help the SBA continue to monitor and identify skills gaps, address those gaps before they pose a challenge to the agency, and maintain a qualified pool of potential applicants to fill vacancies in the leadership pipeline and leadership cohort. They are organized by anticipated impact, with the first recommendation expected to be the most impactful.



Recommendation 3. Create and maintain a “succession snapshot” dashboard

The Team recommends that the SBA utilize the Dual-Rater Assessment to maintain a “succession snapshot” dashboard, which tracks current/past positions, leadership experience, subject-matter expertise, skills (and skills gaps), and other Key Performance Indicators of interest at the employee level. The Team recommends that this dashboard only be accessible by OHRS, given the collection of sensitive, employee-level data.

The dashboard would allow the SBA to identify gaps in the succession pool and address them before they become a problem (for example, a lack of GS-13 or higher staff with a specific skill set when retirements are expected) and therefore better prepare the SBA for leadership vacancies. It would also provide a big-picture overview of the upcoming pipeline of employees and common skills and skills gaps, which could then inform the development and offering of trainings to minimize gaps. The process of updating this list yearly should be a standardized, documented part of the leadership succession plan.

One potential challenge to implementing this recommendation would be the response rates to the Dual-Rater Assessment, given that participation is not required. If there are other data sources with higher response rates (or required response), the SBA should consider using those data sources in addition to or in place of the Dual-Rater Assessment.

Recommendation 4. Expand access to the OPM 360 Assessment

Given the extent to which EIG program participants valued the opportunities for self-assessment, the Team recommends that the SBA expand the number of non-supervisory staff who can participate in the OPM 360 Assessment. This would increase the number of staff who benefit from the type of evaluation that EIG program participants considered extremely useful, without increasing the number of EIG participants (given the high program cost). Although the Team learned in the confirmatory focus groups that although made widely available, the applicant pool for the OPM 360 Assessment remains small, implementing the recommendations around increased and more targeted communications will help grow the applicant pool.

Recommendation 5. Discuss succession annually with each program office

Given the finding that some offices have few to no promotions into leadership, the Team recommends that OHRS leadership meet annually with the leadership of each program office to discuss leadership succession. The intent of these meetings would be to identify whether avenues exist for qualified staff within that office to be promoted into the leadership pipeline or leadership cohort. This would allow the SBA to identify and remedy any structural barriers that may be negatively impacting leadership succession at the agency. The Team expects this will be particularly impactful for offices such as ODA that are structured differently than most of the SBA.

Recommendation 6. Consider utilizing detail assignments to identify staff for future pipeline vacancies

Based on suggestions made by SBA staff during data collection, the Team recommends that the SBA consider the option of using detail assignments as an avenue for identifying potential staff to apply for future pipeline vacancies. However, before implementing this approach the SBA would need to address concerns that were raised around equity and inclusivity, given that not all field staff have the capability

to take a detail assignment at headquarters. A potential solution would be to offer the first week or two of the detail assignment in person at headquarters before shifting the remaining assignment to remote. Another possible solution is to provide trainings or increased communications to supervisors on how to establish a detail position, which would help create more opportunities.

5.3 Maximize program benefits

The final set of recommendations center around maximizing the benefits that the SBA receives from the various leadership development trainings and programs offered. These benefits include a greater applicant pool for programs and trainings, increased ability for staff to implement learned skills, and ensuring that the programs provide enough benefit to the agency to warrant their cost. Ensuring that the agency reaps the benefits of leadership development trainings and programs is particularly important given the high cost of some of these opportunities, such as the EIG program.

Recommendation 7. Ensure trainings and programs address agency needs

Conduct a gap analysis to determine whether current trainings meet the SBA's needs. Although the Team took the first step toward mapping skills learned from various programs and the skills gaps identified in the Dual-Rater Assessment, this analysis focused on the outcomes of trainings. The Team recommends that the SBA conduct a similar analysis focusing specifically on what trainings are currently offered. For example, if conflict management is an identified skill gap, what trainings are available that are specifically intended to fill that gap? Who are those trainings available to? Are there limitations to who those trainings are accessible to? This gap analysis would allow the SBA to ensure trainings are offered (and accessible) to all relevant staff to address and close skills gaps. The goal of this analysis would be to ensure that the training budget is allocated to trainings that fill skills gaps, benefiting the current and future leadership pipeline.

There are many options for on-demand trainings, such as updating/developing existing SBA-specific courses or procuring existing courses through other government agencies (such as the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System [FAITAS] and Defense Acquisition University [DAU]). An examination of costs is needed, but the use of existing courses may be a more cost-effective approach.

Consider other leadership development programs in addition to or in place of the EIG and PMC programs. Similar to the gap analysis proposed above for trainings, the Team also recommends the SBA conduct an evaluation of all currently offered leadership development programs. This analysis would not be limited to the EIG and PMC programs (as the current evaluation was), but would encompass all programs currently offered, such as TEI, Franklin Covey's Leadership Learning Journeys, and OPM 360 Assessments. The results would determine whether the current menu of programs is meeting the SBA's needs and whether alternate programs might meet the same needs while offering other benefits (such as lower cost). This type of analysis would allow the SBA to make an informed decision to streamline the leadership development programs that are offered, which is particularly important in a smaller agency like the SBA, which may have fewer HR resources to implement these programs. The goal would be to reduce the number of programs that do not appear to provide a return on investment (potentially



including the PMC program, from which participants generally felt they were unable to implement the skills they had learned).

After conducting this gap analysis, the Team recommends that the SBA use the results to update and/or develop on-demand trainings to ensure: (1) the workforce can continue to grow their skills; (2) identified skills gaps are filled; and (3) there is a pool of qualified candidates to fill leadership vacancies.

Offer supervisor trainings on leadership development. In addition to current trainings on management and daily operations, the Team recommends that the SBA offers supervisor trainings specific to leadership development. Shifting the focus of these trainings from daily operations to leadership and tailoring them more to the public sector may make learnings more applicable.

Recommendation 8. Target recruitment communication to improve applicant pools for leadership development programs

The SBA can improve the applicant pool for the EIG and PMC programs through increased and more targeted communications. Although these programs are marketed through agency emails such as the SBA Daily, focus group participants felt it was likely that many qualified SBA employees are unaware of these programs' existence and benefits. The Team recommends that the SBA (1) send more frequent and targeted marketing emails to eligible staff, (2) publish past participants' contact information (internally within the agency) so employees can learn more about the opportunities, and (3) establish an ambassador program in which program participants help other employees learn more about the program offerings to help bridge the gap between interest and participation. An important component of this would be providing additional information about these programs to supervisors and encouraging supervisor involvement throughout the application process, which would address unequal supervisor involvement and therefore create a more level playing field for applicants. These measures would increase staff awareness of and interest in these leadership development programs, thereby widening applicant pools.

Any steps taken to target recruitment communications in the way proposed here should also be documented in the targeted communication plan recommended above. This documentation will ensure steps are standardized and continue to be completed at the appropriate intervals, regardless of any future turnover in the positions responsible for these communications.

Recommendation 9. Create a more formalized implementation structure for returning EIG and PMC participants

The Team recommends that the SBA consider soliciting EIG and PMC program alumni to create more formalized implementation structures for skills learned from each program, such as progress tracking, alumni committees, and mentoring opportunities to share best practices. This would address EIG participants' desires for these structures (from which PMC participants would likely also benefit) and allow program alumni to use their leadership skills. EIG and PMC alumni can also be tapped to create an informal community of practice for returning participants, which would include consistent (monthly or quarterly) group sessions to discuss experiences and ways to implement skills at the SBA. In this approach, participants hold one another accountable for implementation and learn from each other on best practices for implementation.

Recommendation 10. Increase the number of participating mentors in the mentorship program

Given the finding from follow-up focus groups that there is a lack of participating mentors in the mentorship program, the Team recommends the following measures to address the current shortage of mentors.

Follow up directly with TDNS respondents. Because the TDNS data showed many staff were interested in acting as mentors, the Team recommends that OHRS include an optional question in the survey to allow interested respondents to provide their email address; it should be clearly defined for respondents that their contact information will only be used to send more information about the mentorship program. This would allow the TDNS to reach out directly to these staff who indicated interest in being a mentor and provide clear details about the mentorship program, next steps for mentors, program structure, and expectations for mentors.

Provide more in-depth instruction and training for mentors. The Team recommends addressing mentors' lack of clarity on expectations for their participation by providing more instruction and training on this topic. Providing more clarity on the mentor role will also help solicit additional interested staff to act as mentors.

Increase program awareness by expanding communication. The Team recommends sending communication via different avenues (for example, not all staff may read the SBA Daily or Ask the CLO), to increase program awareness and, by extension, participation. All communications about the mentorship program should include information on program structure (particularly given that it has evolved in recent years), expectations for mentors and mentees, and guidelines for participation. Communication topics, frequency, mode, and target population should be documented in the communication plan outlined in Recommendation 2.

Make mentoring appealing to staff. Finally, the Team recommends that the SBA consider other avenues to make mentoring appealing to staff, such as offering incentives to mentors or recognizing mentors as ambassadors for the program.

Recommendation 11. Increase awareness and usage of IDPs through tracking and communication

The Team recommends that the SBA take several steps to help increase staff awareness of how to use IDPs and the benefits of their usage beyond the existing communications sent to staff, as well as improving utility of IDPs within the agency. Increasing staff understanding of the benefits of IDPs and how to use them as well as tracking IDP use will result in higher usage rates across the agency. Given the SBA's internal finding from the 2020 TDNS that staff actively using an IDP were 10% more likely to have taken trainings, increasing the number of staff actively using IDPs could help the agency close skills gaps.

Make IDPs a required component of leadership development opportunities. First, the Team recommends that the SBA tie IDP use to leadership development opportunities such as the mentorship program in the way the PMC program already does. This will automatically increase the number of

people using IDPs within the structured environment of the leadership development opportunity, which will help encourage active IDP use.

Encourage sharing of Dual-Rater Assessments with supervisors. Consider strongly encouraging staff to share their Dual-Rater Assessments with their supervisor and continue training supervisors to set up IDPs based on those assessment results. This will help target the focus of individuals' IDPs, which can improve utility by making them more effective for each individual, thereby encourage active use of IDPs throughout the agency.

Continue offering trainings. Additionally, the Team recommends that the SBA continue offering the trainings on IDP use and on building an IDP based on Dual-Rater Assessments. As these trainings reach more individuals (who may also participate in leadership development programs), they will contribute to greater awareness of the benefits of IDPs. A particularly important population to reach with these trainings is supervisors, to help ensure they guide their staff in designing effective IDPs for each staff member's needs and interests. Ensuring sufficient training of this population will help improve the utility of IDPs within the agency.

Track individual IDP use in the "succession snapshot" dashboard. Finally, the Team recommends that IDP use (and "active" IDP use as reported in the TDNS) is tracked in the succession snapshot dashboard proposed above. This will help the SBA understand how active IDP use changes as a result of the recommendations made above, which will inform future decisions on what initiatives do (or do not) help promote IDP use. The ultimate goal would be to improve active IDP use, since staff will not fully reap the benefits of IDPs if they are not actively used.

Appendix A Final Process Map

**Please note that the process map is most easily viewed as a PDF, as delivered to the SBA on September 21, 2020.*

SBA Succession Planning Process Map

PREPARED FOR: Small Business Administration (SBA)

September 18, 2020

PREPARED BY:	CONTACT:
Summit Consulting, LLC	Oswaldo Urdapilleta
601 New Jersey Ave NW	Director
Suite 400	202.769.9471 Tel
Washington, DC 20001	509.984.8943 Fax
www.summitllc.us	oswaldo.urdapilleta@summitllc.us
DUNS: 134631675	
Taxpayer ID: 95-4816438	
CAGE Code: 3GZS9	

PROCESS MAP PURPOSE: This process map graphically illustrates SBA's current succession planning process, including existing actions, the flow of the individual steps, and direct inputs, outputs, and outcomes. This visualization will help identify critical strengths and gaps in the existing process to inform recommendations tied to SBA's future succession planning goals and facilitate the necessary process improvements.

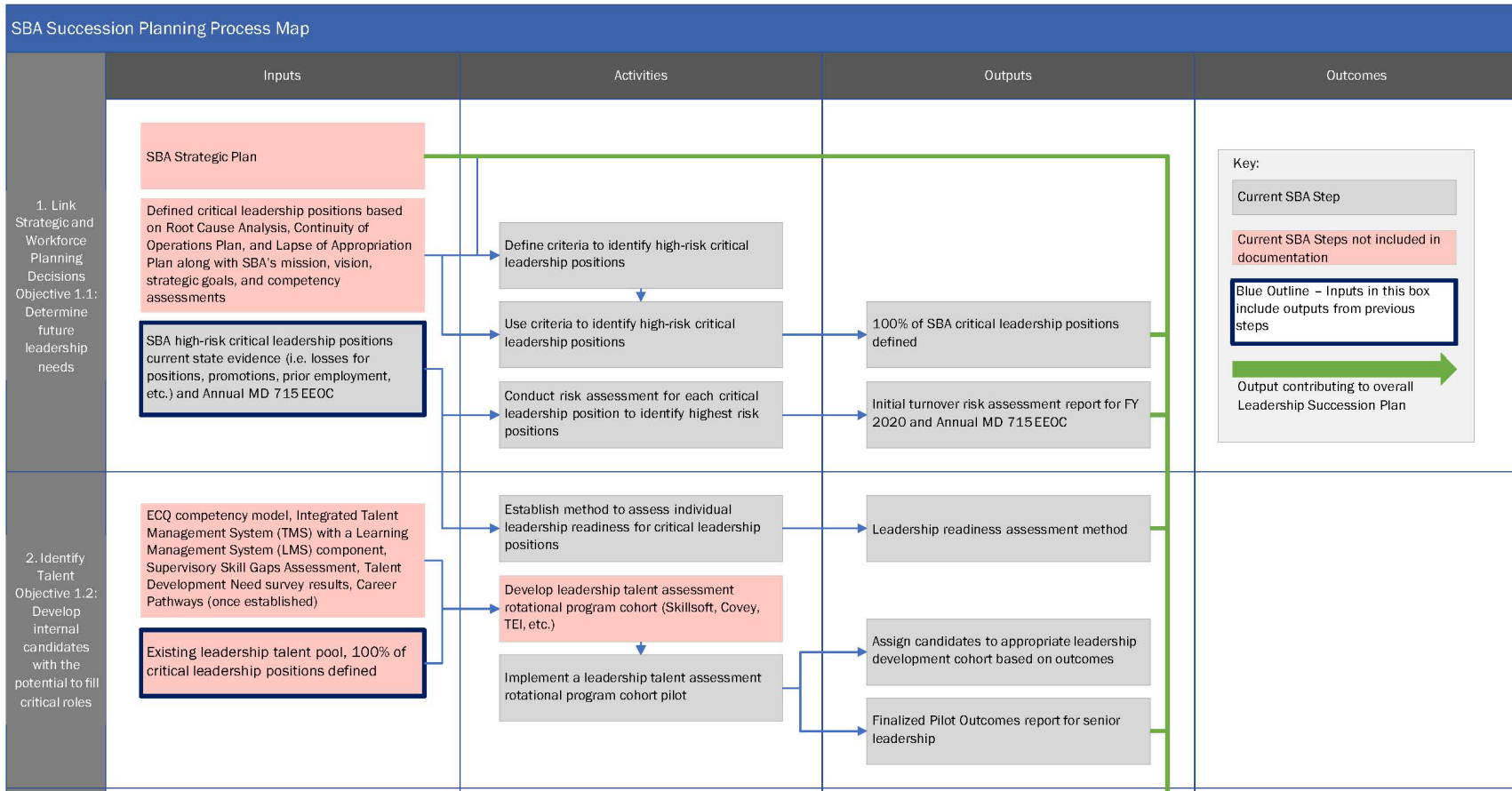
OBJECTIVES:

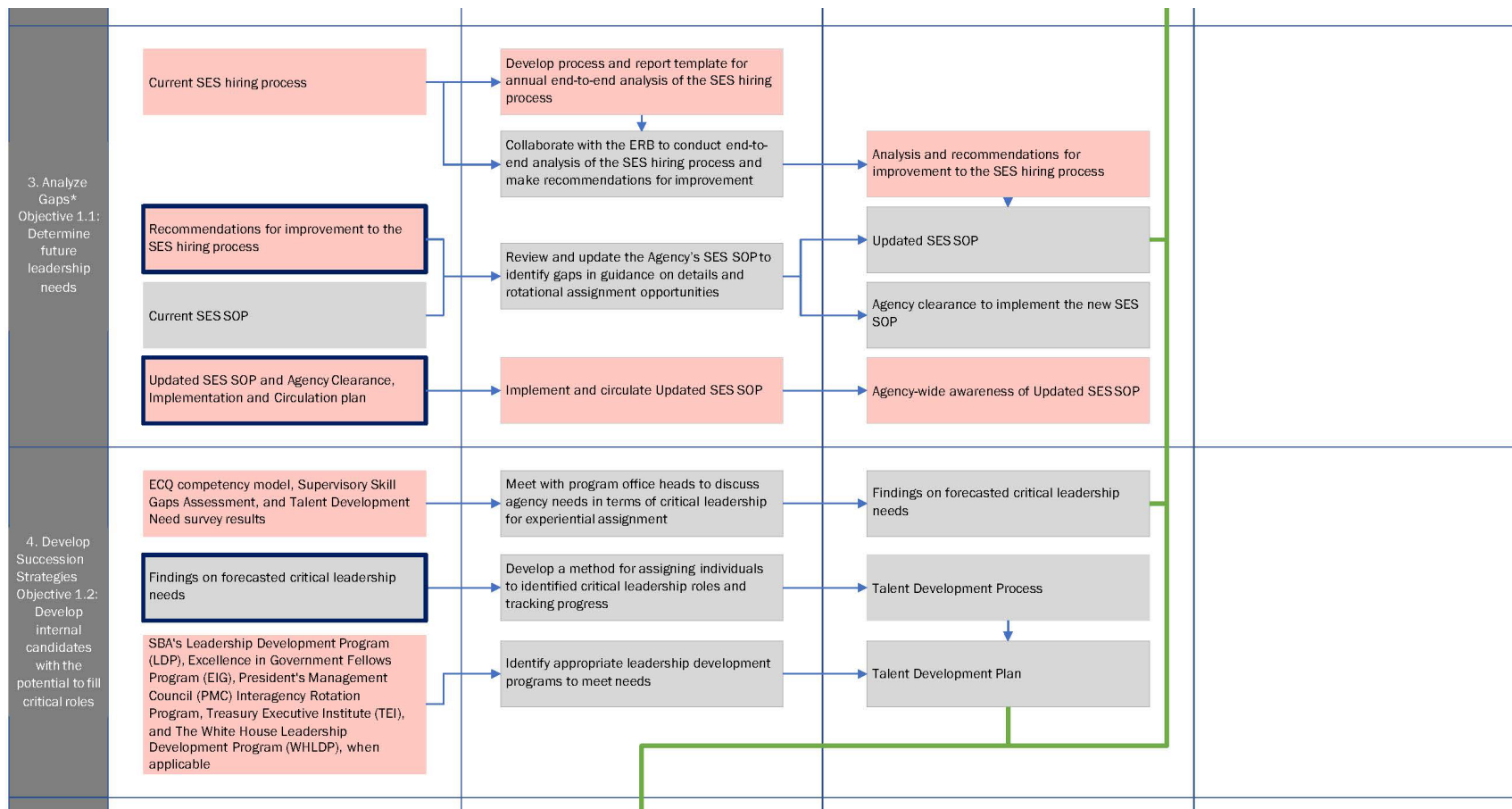
1. Provide a visual representation of SBA's current succession planning process; and,
2. Identify gaps to inform recommendations for the agency's future succession planning actions.

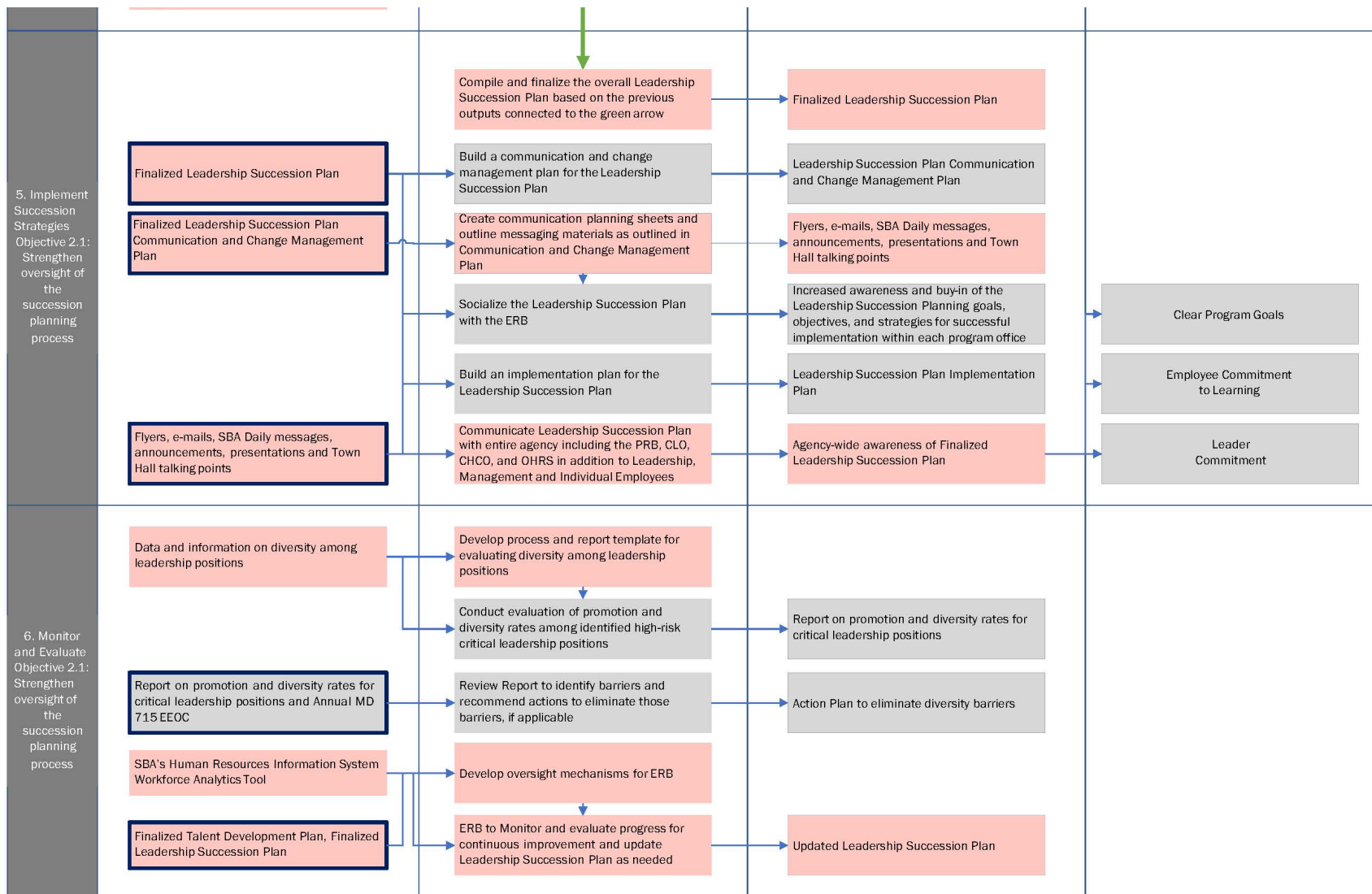
BACKGROUND: Summit and Fors Marsh Group (FMG) created the "SBA Succession Planning Process Map" using information from the following documents:

- *U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Human Resources Solutions FY 2020-2022 Leadership Succession Plan* (Specifically, the section on "Succession Plan Strategy", pages 14-16, and Appendix A - Action Plan, pages 21-23)
- *U.S. SBA Leadership Succession Plan 2013-2016*
- *SBA Leadership Succession Plan Implementation, Communications, and Change Management Plans*
- *SBA FY20 Talent Development Needs Assessment*
- *SBA Strategic Workforce Plan FY 2017-2020*
- *PMC Interagency Rotational Program Cohort Overview*
- SBA SOPs relevant to succession planning









*Current SBA Succession Planning documentation only contains these steps pertaining to the SES hiring

Appendix B Survey Instruments

Survey Instrument: Current SBA Employees

Introductory Language

The SBA is conducting this survey as part of a program evaluation to learn about your views and experiences with Leadership Succession within your organization. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be anonymous. The results of this survey will be used to build a more effective Agency Leadership Succession Program.

This survey is anonymous. This means that all data will be reported in the aggregate, with no individually identifiable data being reported or discussed. We want to emphasize that your information will not be provided to supervisors and will not be used for any personnel decisions.

Survey Instructions

This survey was designed to take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete, but please take the time you need to complete the survey to your satisfaction.

Specific instructions for responding to the questions are provided throughout the survey. Please read the instructions carefully.

Remember that your responses will be kept confidential.

Thank you for participating in this survey, your feedback is important!

Demographics (18)

Questions 1 through 18 will be used to report demographic information. Responses to these questions will allow the SBA to compare survey results across multiple groups.

1. Including both your time with the SBA and other employers, what best describes your total years of work experience?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1 to 3 years
 - 4 to 5 years
 - 6 to 10 years
 - 11 to 20 years
 - More than 20 years
 - Prefer not to respond

2. What best describes your prior employer(s) before starting at the SBA? Choose all that apply.
 - The SBA is my first employer
 - For-profit company
 - Federal Government agency
 - State/Local Government agency

- Academic organization
- Non-profit organization
- Other
- Prefer not to respond

3. How long have you worked at the SBA?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 20 years
- More than 20 years
- Prefer not to respond

4. In which SBA office do you currently work?

- Office of the Administrator
- Office of Advocacy
- Office of Capital Access
- Office of the Chief Information Officer
- Office of Communications and Public Liaison
- Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs
- Office of Continuous Operations and Risk Management
- Office of Disaster Assistance
- Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights
- Office of Entrepreneurial Development
- Office of Executive Management, Installation, and Support Services
- Office of Field Operations
- Office of General Counsel
- Office of Government Contracting and Business Development
- Office of Hearings and Appeals
- Office of Human Resources Solutions
- Office of Inspector General
- Office of International Trade
- Office of Investment and Innovation
- Office of the National Ombudsman
- Office of National Women's Council
- Office of Native American Affairs
- Office of Performance Management and the Chief Financial Officer
- Office of Veterans Business Development
- Other: Please specify
- Prefer not to respond

5. In which region or area is your work location?

- Headquarters
- Region 1 (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)

- Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, USVI)
 - Region 3 (DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV)
 - Region 4 (AL, FL, KY, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN)
 - Region 5 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI)
 - Region 6 (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX)
 - Region 7 (IA, KS, MO, NE)
 - Region 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY)
 - Region 9 (AZ, CA, GU, HI, NV)
 - Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, WA)
 - Prefer not to respond
6. Do you work in a Service Center or Processing Center?
- Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to respond
7. What is your supervisory status?
- Non-Supervisor
 - Team Leader
 - Supervisor
 - Manager
 - Senior Executive Service or Senior Leader
 - Other: Please specify
 - Prefer not to respond
8. How many direct reports do you supervise?
- 10+
 - 6-9
 - 3-5
 - 1-2
 - 0 – *go to Q10*
 - Prefer not to respond – *go to Q10*
9. Of your direct reports, how many do you believe are prepared with the necessary skills and experience to progress into your position?
- 10+
 - 6-9
 - 3-5
 - 1-2
 - 0
 - Prefer not to respond
10. Which of the following are included in your personal career goals? Choose all that apply.
- Improved technical skills
 - Improved interpersonal skills

- Improved critical thinking and strategic skills
- Management experience (i.e. administration, day-to-day activities)
- Leadership experience (i.e. vision, influence, motivation)
- New career path or interests
- Expanded professional networks
- Personal satisfaction
- Career advancement/promotion
- Other: Please specify
- None of these

11. Have you ever had an Individual Development Plan (IDP) at the SBA?

- Yes, I currently have an active IDP and find it useful – *go to Q13*
- Yes, I currently have an active IDP but do not find it useful – *go to Q13*
- Yes, I had an IDP in the past and found it useful
- Yes, I had an IDP in the past and did not find it useful
- No, I have never had an IDP

12. Why don't you currently have an Individual Development Plan (IDP)?

- Open-ended

13. What is your current job series?

- GS-0201, Human Resource Specialist
- GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors and Senior Level Managers)
- GS 1101, Outreach and Marketing Specialist, Business Opportunity Specialist, Business Development Specialist
- GS-1102, Contract Specialists, Acquisition/Procurement Analysts
- GS-1160, Financial Analysts
- GS-1165, Loan Specialists
- GS-2210, Information Technology Specialists
- Other: Please specify
- Prefer not to respond

14. What is your current GS level?

- GS-13 or lower
- GS-14 or GS-15
- SES
- Prefer not to respond

15. What gender do you identify as?

- Male
- Female
- Other: Please specify
- Prefer not to respond

16. What is your race?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more races
- Prefer not to respond

17. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to respond

18. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School Diploma, GED, or equivalent
- Trade or Technical Certificate
- Some College (no degree)
- Associates Degree (e.g., AA, AS)
- Bachelor's Degree (e.g., BA, BS)
- Master's Degree (e.g., MA, MS, MBA)
- Doctor/Professional Degree (e.g., Ph.D., MD, JD)
- Prefer not to respond

PMC Program (16)

19. Are you aware of the President's Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation Program?

- Yes
- No – *go to EIG section*

20. Have you ever participated in the President's Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation Program?

- Yes, I was accepted on my first attempt at application – *go to Q24*
- Yes, I was accepted after more than one attempt at application – *go to Q24*
- No, I applied but was never accepted – *go to Q24*
- No, I never applied

21. Were you interested in applying to the PMC program?

- Yes – *go to Q23*
- No

22. Why weren't you interested in applying? Choose all that apply. [*Then go to EIG section*]

- Lack of time to complete application
- Lack of time to participate
- Lack of program information (i.e. purpose, details, experiences, etc.)

- Lack of awareness
- Lack of supervisor support
- I did not fully understand the benefits
- I did not think it would benefit my upward movement within the SBA
- I did not think I was eligible
- Other: Please specify

23. Why did you choose not to apply? Choose all that apply. [*Then go to EIG section*]

- Lack of time to complete application
- Lack of time to participate
- Lack of program information (i.e. purpose, details, experiences, etc.)
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of supervisor support
- I did not fully understand the benefits
- I did not think it would benefit my upward movement within the SBA
- I did not think I was eligible
- Other: Please specify

24. What made you interested in applying to the PMC program? Choose all that apply. [*Then go to EIG section if did not participate in PMC*]

- Skill development
- Networking
- Exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility outside the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership
- Addition to resume experience
- Provides me with a change in work without leaving my current job
- Other: Please specify

25. What do you believe you gained from participation? Choose all that apply.

- Skill development
- Networking
- Exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility outside the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership
- None of the above
- Other: Please specify

26. What skills **did** you learn or improve through the PMC program? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation

- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

27. What skills were you **hoping** to learn or improve through the PMC program? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience

- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

28. What skills do you **wish** you had learned through the PMC program? Please list all applicable skills in the space provided.

- Open-ended

29. How did participation in the PMC program impact your interest in moving into a leadership position at the SBA?

- I was always interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA but after participation in the PMC program I am interested
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA, and after participation in the PMC program I am still not interested
- I am still unsure whether I am interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA

30. Please rate the following statement on a 1 to 5 scale of agreement: I have been able to implement this skill that I learned from the PMC program in my current role at SBA.

	1, Strongly disagree	2, Disagree	3, Neither agree nor disagree	4, Agree	5, Strongly agree
Skill 1					
Skill 2					
Skill 3					
...					

31. What, if any, were the barriers to implementing what you learned from the PMC program in your current role at the SBA?

- I did not gain skills from PMC
- The skills I learned were not applicable to my current role at the SBA
- I learned skills, but did not feel confident implementing them in my current role at the SBA
- Management was not supportive of me implementing the skills I learned in my role at the SBA
- I did not face barriers implementing what I learned from the PMC program in my current role at the SBA
- Other: Please specify

32. Do you believe the skills you developed in the PMC program changed your career path?

- Yes, I was promoted within the SBA

- Yes, I moved laterally within the SBA
- Not yet, but I anticipate movement within the SBA soon
- Not yet, but I anticipate movement outside the SBA soon
- No, these skills have not yet had an effect on my career path

33. What factors, if any, do you think **should** be considered **more** heavily in choosing individuals for participation in PMC? Choose all that apply.

- Potential for upward mobility
- Performance
- Consistency in performance
- Tenure at the SBA
- Institutional knowledge
- Motivation to lead
- Number of positions held within the SBA
- Number of direct reports
- Experience outside the SBA
- Other: Please specify

34. What factors, if any, do you think **should** be considered **less** heavily in choosing individuals for participation in PMC? Choose all that apply.

- Potential for upward mobility
- Performance
- Consistency in performance
- Tenure at the SBA
- Institutional knowledge
- Motivation to lead
- Number of positions held within the SBA
- Number of direct reports
- Experience outside the SBA
- Other: Please specify

EIG Program (16)

35. Are you aware of the Excellence in Government Fellows (EIG) Program?

- Yes
- No – *go to Skills section*

36. Have you ever participated in the Excellence in Government Fellows (EIG) Program?

- Yes, I was accepted on my first attempt at application – *go to Q40*
- Yes, I was accepted after more than one attempt at application – *go to Q40*
- No, I applied but was never accepted – *go to Q40*
- No, I never applied

37. Were you interested in applying to the EIG program?

- Yes – *go to Q39*

- No

38. Why weren't you interested in applying? Choose all that apply. *[Then go to Skills section]*

- Lack of time to complete application
- Lack of time to participate
- Lack of program information (i.e. purpose, details, experiences, etc.)
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of supervisor support
- I did not fully understand the benefits
- I did not think it would benefit my upward movement within the SBA
- I did not think I was eligible
- Other: Please specify

39. Why did you choose not to apply? Choose all that apply. *[Then go to Skills section]*

- Lack of time to complete application
- Lack of time to participate
- Lack of program information (i.e. purpose, details, experiences, etc.)
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of supervisor support
- I did not fully understand the benefits
- I did not think it would benefit my upward movement within the SBA
- I did not think I was eligible
- Other: Please specify

40. What made you interested in applying to the EIG program? Choose all that apply. *[Then go to Skills section if did not participate in EIG]*

- Skill development
- Networking
- Exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility outside the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership
- Addition to resume experience
- Provides me with a change in work without leaving my current job
- Other: Please specify

41. What do you believe you gained from participation? Choose all that apply.

- Skill development
- Networking
- Exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility outside the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership
- None of the above



- Other: Please specify

42. What skills **did** you learn or improve through the EIG program? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

43. What skills were you **hoping** to learn or improve through the EIG program? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating



- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

44. What skills do you **wish** you had learned through the EIG program? Please list all applicable skills in the space provided.

- Open-ended

45. How did participation in the EIG program impact your interest in moving into a leadership position at the SBA?

- I was always interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA but after participation in the EIG program I am interested
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA, and after participation in the EIG program I am still not interested
- I am still unsure whether I am interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA

46. Please rate the following statement on a 1 to 5 scale of agreement: I have been able to implement this skill that I learned from the EIG program in my current role at SBA.

	1, Strongly disagree	2, Disagree	3, Neither agree nor disagree	4, Agree	5, Strongly agree
Skill 1					
Skill 2					
Skill 3					
...					

47. What, if any, were the barriers to implementing what you learned from the EIG program in your current role at the SBA?

- I did not gain skills from EIG
- The skills I learned were not applicable to my current role at the SBA
- I learned skills, but did not feel confident implementing them in my current role at the SBA
- Management was not supportive of me implementing the skills I learned in my role at the SBA

- I did not face barriers implementing what I learned from the EIG program in my current role at the SBA
- Other: Please specify

48. Do you believe the skills you developed in the EIG program changed your career path?

- Yes, I was promoted within the SBA
- Yes, I moved laterally within the SBA
- Not yet, but I anticipate movement within the SBA soon
- Not yet, but I anticipate movement outside the SBA soon
- No, these skills have not yet had an effect on my career path

49. What factors, if any, do you think **should** be considered **more** heavily in choosing individuals for participation in EIG? Choose all that apply.

- Potential for upward mobility
- Performance
- Consistency in performance
- Tenure at SBA
- Institutional knowledge
- Motivation to lead
- Number of positions held within SBA
- Number of direct reports
- Experience outside of SBA
- Other: Please specify

50. What factors, if any, do you think **should** be considered **less** heavily in choosing individuals for participation in EIG? Choose all that apply.

- Potential for upward mobility
- Performance
- Consistency in performance
- Tenure at the SBA
- Institutional knowledge
- Motivation to lead
- Number of positions held within the SBA
- Number of direct reports
- Experience outside the SBA
- Other: Please specify

Skills Development, Promotions, Formal Feedback (16)

51. What skills do you believe **are** taught at the SBA? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy



- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

52. What skills do you believe **should** be taught at the SBA? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building

- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

53. Please rate the following statement on a 1 to 5 scale of agreement: Through my time with the SBA I have been interested in career progression and upward mobility.

- 1, Strongly Disagree
- 2, Disagree
- 3, Neither agree nor disagree
- 4, Agree
- 5, Strongly Agree

54. Have you ever been promoted in the SBA?

- Yes
- No – *go to Q59*

55. Were the skills necessary for promotion clearly defined at each level you reached?

- Yes, and I was made aware of the skills needed to get promoted – *go to Q57*
- Yes, but I was not made aware of the skills needed to get promoted
- No

56. How would you prefer to get information about the skills necessary for promotion? [*Then go to Q58*]

- Readily available resources (i.e. best practices, criteria, success stories, etc.)
- Communication from leadership
- Communication from supervisor through feedback process
- Periodic notices
- Trainings
- Human Resources
- Mentoring
- Peers
- Other: Please specify

57. How were you made aware of the skills necessary to get promoted to the next level?

- Open-ended

58. Are there any skills you **wish** you had to succeed in your new role? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy



- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

59. Do you feel you have a clear understanding of your current performance level in your role at the SBA?

- Yes, I understand my performance level through a formal feedback loop
- Yes, I understand my performance level through an informal feedback loop and ad hoc conversations
- I think I understand my performance level, but have not had conversations about it
- No, I would like to learn more about my current performance level
- No, I am not interested in understanding my current performance level

60. Do you participate in a formal feedback process?

- Yes
- No – go to Q65

61. What kind of formal feedback process do you participate in?

- Annual performance appraisal
- Office of Personnel Management (OPM) 360
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know

62. How effective is the formal feedback process in communicating your current performance level?

- 1, Not at all effective
- 2, Slightly effective

- 3, Moderately effective
- 4, Very effective
- 5, Extremely effective

63. How effective is the formal feedback process in communicating your potential promotion paths?

- 1, Not at all effective
- 2, Slightly effective
- 3, Moderately effective
- 4, Very effective
- 5, Extremely effective

64. How could the formal feedback process be improved?

- Open-ended

65. In your opinion, what are the SBA leadership's strongest skills?

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

66. In your opinion, which skills are the most important for SBA leadership to have? Choose all that apply.



- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

Mentorship (14)

67. Are you aware of the SBA Mentorship Program?

- Yes
- No – *go to Temporary Promotion section*

68. Have you ever participated in the SBA Mentorship Program? Choose all that apply.

- Yes, as a **mentee**– *go to Q73*
- Yes, as a **mentor**– *go to Q73*
- No, I never applied

69. Were you interested in applying to the SBA Mentorship Program?

- Yes – *go to Q71*
- No

70. Why weren't you interested in applying to the SBA Mentorship Program? Choose all that apply.
[Then go to Q72]



- Lack of time to complete application
- Lack of time to participate
- Lack of program information (i.e. purpose, details, experiences, etc.)
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of supervisor support
- I did not fully understand the benefits
- I did not think it would benefit my upward movement within the SBA
- I did not think I was eligible
- Other: Please specify

71. Why did you choose not to apply? Choose all that apply.

- Lack of time to complete application
- Lack of time to participate
- Lack of program information (i.e. purpose, details, experiences, etc.)
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of supervisor support
- I did not fully understand the benefits
- I did not think it would benefit my upward movement within the SBA
- I did not think I was eligible
- Other: Please specify

72. What, if anything, would motivate you to participate in the SBA Mentorship program? *[Then go to Temporary Promotion section]*

- Open-ended

73. What made you interested in applying to the SBA Mentorship program? Choose all that apply.

- Skill development
- Networking
- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility outside the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership
- None of the above
- Other: Please specify

74. What do you believe you gained from participation? Choose all that apply.

- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Skill development
- Networking
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility outside the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership
- None of the above
- Other: Please specify

75. What skills **did** you learn or improve through the SBA Mentorship Program? Choose all that apply.



- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

76. What skills were you **hoping** to learn or improve through the SBA Mentorship program? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration



- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

77. What skills do you **wish** you had learned through the SBA Mentorship Program? Please list all applicable skills in the space provided.

- Open-ended

78. How did participation in the SBA Mentorship program impact your interest in moving into a leadership position at the SBA?

- I was always interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA but after participation in the SBA mentorship program I *am* interested
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA, and after participation in the SBA mentorship program I am still *not* interested
- I am still unsure whether I am interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA

79. Please rate the following statement on a 1 to 5 scale of agreement: I have been able to implement this skill that I learned from the SBA Mentorship program in my current role at SBA.

	1, Strongly disagree	2, Disagree	3, Neither agree nor disagree	4, Agree	5, Strongly agree
Skill 1					
Skill 2					
Skill 3					
...					

80. What, if any, were the barriers to implementing what you learned from the SBA Mentorship program in your current role at the SBA?

- I did not gain skills from the SBA mentorship program
- The skills I learned were not applicable to my current role at the SBA
- I learned skills, but did not feel confident implementing them in my current role at the SBA
- Management was not supportive of me implementing the skills I learned in my role at the SBA
- I did not face barriers implementing what I learned from the SBA Mentorship program in my current role at the SBA
- Other: Please specify



Temporary Promotion (10)

81. Have you ever received a temporary promotion?

- Yes, I was appointed without application – *go to Q83*
- Yes, I was accepted on my first attempt at application – *go to Q83*
- Yes, I was accepted after more than one attempt at application – *go to Q83*
- No, I applied but was never accepted – *go to Supervisory Detail Assignments section*
- No, I never applied

82. Why did you choose not to apply for a temporary promotion? [*Then go to Supervisory Detail Assignments section*]

- Open-ended

83. What do you believe you gained from your temporary promotion? Choose all that apply.

- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Skill development
- Networking
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility outside of the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership
- None of the above
- Other: Please specify

84. What skills **did** you learn or improve through your temporary promotion? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building



- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

85. What skills were you **hoping** to learn or improve through your temporary promotion? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

86. What skills do you **wish** you had learned through your temporary promotion? Please list all applicable skills in the space provided.

- Open-ended

87. How did participation in a temporary promotion impact your interest in moving into a leadership position at the SBA?

- I was always interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA



- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA but after participation my temporary promotion I *am* interested
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA, and after my temporary promotion I am still *not* interested
- I am still unsure whether I am interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA

88. Please rate the following statement on a 1 to 5 scale of agreement: I have been able to implement this skill that I learned from my temporary promotion in my current role at SBA.

	1, Strongly disagree	2, Disagree	3, Neither agree nor disagree	4, Agree	5, Strongly agree
Skill 1					
Skill 2					
Skill 3					
...					

89. What, if any, were the barriers to implementing what you learned from your temporary promotion in your current role at the SBA?

- I did not gain skills from my temporary promotion
- The skills I learned were not applicable to my current role at the SBA
- I learned skills, but did not feel confident implementing them in my current role at the SBA
- Management was not supportive of me implementing the skills I learned in my role at the SBA
- I did not face barriers implementing what I learned from my temporary promotion or in my current role at the SBA
- Other: Please specify

90. How much do you think your temporary promotion increased your likelihood of permanent promotion?

- 1, Not at all
- 2, Slightly
- 3, Somewhat
- 4, Moderately
- 5, Strongly

Supervisory Detail Assignments (10)

91. Have you ever received a supervisory detail assignment?

- Yes, I was appointed without application – *go to Q93*
- Yes, I was accepted on my first attempt at application – *go to Q93*
- Yes, I was accepted after more than one attempt at application – *go to Q93*
- No, I applied but was never accepted – *go to Follow-up Focus Group section*
- No, I never applied

92. Why did you choose not to apply for a supervisory detail assignment? [*Then go to Follow-up Focus Group section*]



- Open-ended

93. What do you believe you gained from your supervisory detail assignment? Choose all that apply.

- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Skill development
- Networking
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility outside of the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership
- None of the above
- Other: Please specify

94. What skills **did** you learn or improve through your supervisory detail assignment? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

95. What skills were you **hoping** to learn or improve through your supervisory detail assignment? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability



- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

96. What skills do you **wish** you had learned through your supervisory detail assignment? Please list all applicable skills in the space provided.

- Open-ended

97. How did participation in a supervisory detail assignment impact your interest in moving into a leadership position at the SBA?

- I was always interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA but after participation my supervisory detail assignment I *am* interested
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA, and after my supervisory detail assignment I am still *not* interested
- I am still unsure whether I am interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA

98. Please rate the following statement on a 1 to 5 scale of agreement: I have been able to implement this skill that I learned from my supervisory detail assignment in my current role at SBA.

	1, Strongly disagree	2, Disagree	3, Neither agree nor disagree	4, Agree	5, Strongly agree
Skill 1					
Skill 2					
Skill 3					
...					

99. What, if any, were the barriers to implementing what you learned from your supervisory detail assignment in your current role at the SBA?

- I did not gain skills from my supervisory detail assignment
- The skills I learned were not applicable to my current role at the SBA
- I learned skills, but did not feel confident implementing them in my current role at the SBA
- Management was not supportive of me implementing the skills I learned in my role at the SBA
- I did not face barriers implementing what I learned from my supervisory detail assignment in my current role at the SBA
- Other: Please specify

100. How much do you think your supervisory detail assignment increased your likelihood of permanent promotion?

- 1, Not at all
- 2, Slightly
- 3, Somewhat
- 4, Moderately
- 5, Strongly

Follow-up Focus Groups

101. We will be conducting follow-up focus groups with a subset of survey respondents, to gather more information on the topics covered in this survey. If you are interested in participating, please provide your email address in the space below. Please note that we will not contact all survey respondents who provide their email address.

If you do provide your email address below, your name and email will **not** be linked to your responses in this survey. This survey is anonymous.

- Open-ended

Closing

Thank you for participating!

Survey Instrument: Former SBA Employees

Introductory Language

The SBA is conducting this survey as part of a program evaluation to learn about your views and experiences with Leadership Succession during your time at the SBA. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be anonymous. The results of this survey will be used to build a more effective Agency Leadership Succession Program at the SBA.

This survey is anonymous. This means that all data will be reported in the aggregate, with no individually identifiable data being reported or discussed.

Survey Instructions

This survey was designed to take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete, but please take the time you need to complete the survey to your satisfaction.

Specific instructions for responding to the questions are provided throughout the survey. Please read the instructions carefully.

Remember that your responses will be kept confidential.

Thank you for participating in this survey, your feedback is important!

Demographics (15)

Questions 1 through 15 will be used to report demographic information. Responses to these questions will allow the SBA to compare survey results across multiple groups.

1. How many years have you worked for your current Federal Agency?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 20 years
- More than 20 years
- Prefer not to respond

2. How many years did you work at the SBA?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- 11 to 20 years
- More than 20 years
- Prefer not to respond



3. What best describes your prior employer(s) before starting at the SBA? Choose all that apply.

- The SBA was my first employer
- For-profit company
- Federal Government agency
- State/Local Government agency
- Academic organization
- Non-profit organization
- Other
- Prefer not to respond

4. In which region or area was your work location?

- Headquarters
- Region 1 (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)
- Region 2 (NJ, NY, PR, USVI)
- Region 3 (DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV)
- Region 4 (AL, FL, KY, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN)
- Region 5 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI)
- Region 6 (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX)
- Region 7 (IA, KS, MO, NE)
- Region 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY)
- Region 9 (AZ, CA, GU, HI, NV)
- Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, WA)
- Prefer not to respond

5. Did you work in a Service Center or Processing Center?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to respond

6. What was your supervisory status at the time you left the SBA?

- Non-Supervisor
- Team Leader
- Supervisor
- Manager
- Senior Executive Service or Senior Leader
- Other: Please specify
- Prefer not to respond

7. How many direct reports did you supervise at the time you left the SBA?

- 10+
- 6-9
- 3-5
- 1-2
- 0 – go to Q9



- Prefer not to respond – *go to Q9*
8. Of your direct reports, how many did you believe were prepared with the necessary skills and experience to progress into your position?
- 10+
 - 6-9
 - 3-5
 - 1-2
 - 0
 - Prefer not to respond
9. Did you ever have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) at the SBA?
- Yes, at the time I left the SBA I had an active IDP and found it useful – *go to Q11*
 - Yes, at the time I left the SBA I had an active IDP but did not find it useful – *go to Q11*
 - No, I did not have an IDP
10. Why didn't you have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) at the SBA?
- Open-ended
11. What was your job series at the time you left the SBA?
- GS-0201, Human Resource Specialist
 - GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors and Senior Level Managers)
 - GS 1101, Outreach and Marketing Specialist, Business Opportunity Specialist, Business Development Specialist
 - GS-1102, Contract Specialists, Acquisition/Procurement Analysts
 - GS-1160, Financial Analysts
 - GS-1165, Loan Specialists
 - GS-2210, Information Technology Specialists
 - Other: Please specify
 - Prefer not to respond
12. What gender do you identify as?
- Male
 - Female
 - Other: Please specify
 - Prefer not to respond
13. What is your race?
- American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Two or more races

- Prefer not to respond

14. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to respond

15. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School
- High School Diploma or GED equivalent
- Trade or Technical Certificate
- Some College (no degree)
- Associates Degree (e.g., AA, AS)
- Bachelor's Degree (e.g., BA, BS)
- Master's Degree (e.g., MA, MS, MBA)
- Doctor/Professional Degree (e.g., Ph.D., MD, JD)
- Prefer not to respond

Skills, Promotions, Formal Feedback (14)

16. What skills do you believe **were** taught at the SBA? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision



- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

17. What skills do you believe **should** have been taught at the SBA? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

18. What skills do you believe are taught at your current agency that were not, but **should** have been, taught at the SBA? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management



- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

19. Please rate the following statement on a 1 to 5 scale of agreement: During my time with the SBA I was interested in career progression and upward mobility

- 1, Strongly Disagree
- 2, Disagree
- 3, Neutral
- 4, Agree
- 5, Strongly Agree

20. Were you ever promoted while at the SBA?

- Yes
- No – *go to Q24*

21. Were the skills necessary for promotion clearly defined at each level you reached?

- Yes, and I was made aware of the skills needed to get promoted – *go to Q23*
- Yes, but I was not made aware of the skills needed to get promoted
- No

22. How would you have preferred to get information about the skills necessary for promotion? [*Then go to Q24*]

- Readily available resources (i.e. best practices, criteria, success stories, etc.)
- Communication from leadership
- Communication from supervisor through feedback process
- Periodic notices
- Trainings
- Human Resources
- Mentoring
- Peers



- Other: Please specify
23. How were you made aware of the skills necessary to get promoted to the next level?
- Open-ended
24. Do you feel you had a clear understanding of your performance level in your past role at the SBA?
- Yes, I understood my performance level through a formal feedback loop
 - Yes, I understood my performance level through an informal feedback loop and ad hoc conversations
 - I think I understood my performance level, but did not have conversations about it
 - No, I wish I had known more about my past performance level
 - No, I was not interested in understanding my past performance level
25. Did you participate in a formal feedback process?
- Yes
 - No – *go to PMC section*
26. What kind of formal feedback process do you participate in?
- Annual performance appraisal
 - Office of Personnel Management (OPM) 360
 - Other: Please specify
 - I do not know
27. How effective was the formal feedback process in communicating your past performance level?
- 1, Not at all effective
 - 2, Slightly effective
 - 3, Moderately effective
 - 4, Very effective
 - 5, Extremely effective
28. How effective was the formal feedback process in communicating your past potential promotion paths?
- 1, Not at all effective
 - 2, Slightly effective
 - 3, Moderately effective
 - 4, Very effective
 - 5, Extremely effective
29. How could the formal feedback process have been improved?
- Open-ended

PMC (16)

30. When at the SBA, were you aware of the President's Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation Program?



- Yes
- No – *go to EIG section*

31. When at the SBA, did you participate in the President’s Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation Program?

- Yes, I was accepted on my first attempt at application – *go to Q35*
- Yes, I was accepted after more than one attempt at application – *go to Q35*
- No, I applied but was never accepted – *go to Q35*
- No, I never applied

32. When at the SBA, were you interested in applying to the PMC program?

- Yes – *go to Q34*
- No

33. When at the SBA, why weren’t you interested in applying? Choose all that apply. [*Then go to EIG section*]

- Lack of time to complete application
- Lack of time to participate
- Lack of program information (i.e. purpose, details, experiences, etc.)
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of supervisor support
- I did not fully understand the benefits
- I did not think it would benefit my upward movement within the SBA
- I did not think I was eligible
- Other: Please specify

34. When at the SBA, why did you choose not to apply? Choose all that apply. [*Then go to EIG section*]

- Lack of time to complete application
- Lack of time to participate
- Lack of program information (i.e. purpose, details, experiences, etc.)
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of supervisor support
- I did not fully understand the benefits
- I did not think it would benefit my upward movement within the SBA
- I did not think I was eligible
- Other: Please specify

35. When at the SBA, what made you interested in applying to the PMC program? Choose all that apply. [*Then go to EIG section if did not participate in PMC*]

- Skill development
- Networking
- Exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility outside of the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership



- Addition to resume experience
- Provided me with a change in work without leaving my current job
- Other: Please specify

36. What do you believe you gained from participation? Choose all that apply.

- Skill development
- Networking
- Exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility outside of the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership
- None of the above
- Other: Please specify

37. What skills **did** you learn or improve through the PMC program? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

38. What skills were you **hoping** to learn or improve through the PMC program? Choose all that apply.



- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

39. What skills do you *wish* you had learned through the PMC program? Please list all applicable skills in the space provided.

- Open-ended

40. When at the SBA, how did participation in the PMC program impact your interest in moving into a leadership position at the SBA?

- I was always interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA but after participation in the PMC program I *was* interested
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA, and after participation in the PMC program I was still *not* interested
- I was still unsure whether I was interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA

41. Please rate the following statement on a 1 to 5 scale of agreement: I was able to implement this skill that I learned from the PMC program in my role at SBA.

	1, Strongly disagree	2, Disagree	3, Neither agree nor disagree	4, Agree	5, Strongly agree
Skill 1					
Skill 2					
Skill 3					
...					

42. When at the SBA, what, if any, were the barriers to implementing what you learned from the PMC program in your past role?

- I did not gain skills from PMC
- The skills I learned were not applicable to my past role at the SBA
- I learned skills, but did not feel confident implementing them in my past role at the SBA
- Management was not supportive of me implementing the skills I learned in my past role at the SBA
- I did not face barriers implementing what I learned from the PMC program in my past role at the SBA
- Other: Please specify

43. Do you believe the skills you developed in the PMC program changed your career path at the SBA?

- Yes, I was promoted within the SBA
- Yes, I moved laterally within the SBA
- Yes, they spurred my movement outside the SBA
- Not yet, but I believe they made an impact on my performance
- No, these skills had no effect on my career path

44. What factors, if any, do you think the SBA **should** consider **more** heavily in choosing individuals for participation in PMC? Choose all that apply.

- Potential for upward mobility
- Performance
- Consistency in performance
- Tenure at SBA
- Institutional knowledge
- Motivation to lead
- Number of positions held within SBA
- Number of direct reports
- Experience outside of SBA
- Other: Please specify

45. What factors, if any, do you think the SBA **should** consider **less** heavily in choosing individuals for participation in PMC? Choose all that apply.

- Potential for upward mobility



- Performance
- Consistency in performance
- Tenure at SBA
- Institutional knowledge
- Motivation to lead
- Number of positions held within SBA
- Number of direct reports
- Experience outside of SBA

EIG (16)

46. When at the SBA, were you aware of the Excellence in Government Fellows (EIG) Program?

- Yes
- No – *go to Reasons for Leaving section*

47. When at the SBA, did you participate in the Excellence in Government Fellows (EIG) Program?

- Yes, I was accepted on my first attempt at application – *go to Q51*
- Yes, I was accepted after more than one attempt at application – *go to Q51*
- No, I applied but was never accepted – *go to Q51*
- No, I never applied

48. When at the SBA, were you interested in applying to the EIG program?

- Yes – *go to Q50*
- No

49. When at the SBA, why weren't you interested in applying? Choose all that apply. [*Then go to Reasons for Leaving section*]

- Lack of time to complete application
- Lack of time to participate
- Lack of program information (i.e. purpose, details, experiences, etc.)
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of supervisor support
- I did not fully understand the benefits
- I did not think it would benefit my upward movement within the SBA
- I did not think I was eligible
- Other: Please specify

50. When at the SBA, why did you choose not to apply? Choose all that apply. [*Then go to Reasons for Leaving section*]

- Lack of time to complete application
- Lack of time to participate
- Lack of program information (i.e. purpose, details, experiences, etc.)
- Lack of awareness
- Lack of supervisor support
- I did not fully understand the benefits



- I did not think it would benefit my upward movement within the SBA
- I did not think I was eligible
- Other: Please specify

51. When at the SBA, what made you interested in applying to the EIG program? Choose all that apply.
[Then go to Reasons for Leaving section if did not participate in EIG]

- Skill development
- Networking
- Exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility outside the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership
- Addition to resume experience
- Provided me with a change in work without leaving my current job
- Other: Please specify

52. What do you believe you gained from participation? Choose all that apply.

- Skill development
- Networking
- Exposure to other career opportunities outside the SBA
- Career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility within the SBA
- Higher potential for career progression and upward mobility outside of the SBA
- Anticipated positive impression on Leadership
- None of the above
- Other: Please specify

53. What skills **did** you learn or improve through the EIG program? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy



- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

54. What skills were you **hoping** to learn or improve through the EIG program? Choose all that apply.

- Accountability
- Conflict Management
- Creativity and Innovation
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis and Literacy
- Decisiveness
- Developing Others
- Entrepreneurship
- External Awareness
- Financial Management
- Flexibility
- Human Capital Management
- Influencing/Negotiating
- Leveraging Diversity
- Organizational Awareness
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Political Savvy
- Problem Solving
- Resilience
- Strategic Thinking
- Team Building
- Technical Credibility
- Technology Management
- Vision
- Other: Please specify
- I do not know
- None of these

55. What skills do you **wish** you had learned through the EIG program? Please list all applicable skills in the space provided.

- Open-ended

56. When at the SBA, how did participation in the EIG program impact your interest in moving into a leadership position at the SBA?



- I was always interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA but after participation in the EIG program I *was* interested
- I was not interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA, and after participation in the EIG program I was still *not* interested
- I was still unsure whether I was interested in moving into a leadership position at the SBA

57. Please rate the following statement on a 1 to 5 scale of agreement: I was able to implement this skill that I learned from the EIG program in my role at SBA.

	1, Strongly disagree	2, Disagree	3, Neither agree nor disagree	4, Agree	5, Strongly agree
Skill 1					
Skill 2					
Skill 3					
...					

58. When at the SBA, what, if any, were the barriers to implementing what you learned from the EIG program in your past role?

- I did not gain skills from EIG
- The skills I learned were not applicable to my past role at the SBA
- I learned skills, but did not feel confident implementing them in my past role at the SBA
- Management was not supportive of me implementing the skills I learned in my past role at the SBA
- I did not face barriers implementing what I learned from the EIG program in my past role at the SBA
- Other: Please specify

59. Do you believe the skills you developed in the EIG program changed your career path at the SBA?

- Yes, I was promoted within the SBA
- Yes, I moved laterally within the SBA
- Yes, they spurred my movement outside the SBA
- Not yet, but I believe they made an impact on my performance
- No, these skills had no effect on my career path

60. What factors, if any, do you think the SBA **should** consider **more** heavily in choosing individuals for participation in EIG? Choose all that apply.

- Potential for upward mobility
- Performance
- Consistency in performance
- Tenure at SBA
- Institutional knowledge

- Motivation to lead
- Number of positions held within SBA
- Number of direct reports
- Experience outside of SBA
- Other: Please specify

61. What factors, if any, do you think the SBA **should** consider **less** heavily in choosing individuals for participation in EIG? Choose all that apply.

- Potential for upward mobility
- Performance
- Consistency in performance
- Tenure at SBA
- Institutional knowledge
- Motivation to lead
- Number of positions held within SBA
- Number of direct reports
- Experience outside of SBA

Reasons for Leaving (2)

62. What was your main reason for leaving the SBA?

- Compensation
- Promotion
- More opportunities for future promotion in another agency
- Change in industry/role
- Team dynamics
- Management
- Other: Please specify

63. Was there anything the SBA could have done to convince you to stay?

- Open-ended

Closing

Thank you for participating!



Appendix C Focus Group Guides

Follow-up Focus Group Guide

Matrix of focus group population by moderator guide section

Table C-1 shows which section of this moderator guide will be covered in each focus group. For example, in Focus Group 1 (with PMC program participants), the moderator will cover Section 1 (PMC program), Section 5 (supervisor trainings), and Section 6 (IDPs). Note that all focus groups will receive Sections 5 and 6.

Table C-1: Focus group topics by population

Focus Group	Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 5	Section 6
Focus Group 1: PMC participants	●				●	●
Focus Group 2: EIG participants		●			●	●
Focus Group 3: SBA Mentorship Program participants			●		●	●
Focus Group 4: Staff who received temporary promotions or supervisory detail assignments				●	●	●

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is [NAME] and I am a [POSITION] at Summit Consulting. [INTRODUCE OTHER SUMMIT/FMG STAFF ON CALL.]

Summit has been contracted by the SBA to conduct an evaluation of leadership succession within the agency. Although this evaluation covers a variety of topics, the three main research questions are:

1. How does leadership succession currently occur at the SBA?
2. How do the Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows and President’s Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation programs contribute to successful succession within the SBA?
3. What gaps exist in current staff skills and abilities that may prevent effective succession planning within the SBA?

Findings will be used to demonstrate how leadership succession activities contribute to the SBA’s strategic and performance goals to build a high-performing workforce and deliver a comprehensive, mission-focused talent development strategy that fosters professional development and continuous learning.

As part of this evaluation, we recently conducted a Leadership and Succession Survey with a sample of current SBA staff. Some of you may have completed that survey. Today’s discussion will build on findings from the survey, to get more detail to answer the three main research questions. To do that, our discussion will focus on [the Excellence in Government Fellows Program (EIG); the President’s Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation Program; the SBA Mentorship Program; your

temporary promotion or supervisory detail assignment] as well as supervisor trainings and individual development plans (IDPs).

Our conversation will take about 75 minutes, but I have scheduled a full 90 minutes so that no one feels rushed. With everyone's permission, I'd like to record our discussion. This helps ensure that we don't miss anything important that you say. This recording will only be available to researchers working on this project. All information you provide will be anonymous; we will not identify you by name in any reports that we produce. All questions are voluntary. Do I have everyone's permission to record this focus group?

Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

START RECORDING. So that I have it on the recording, today is [DATE] and the time is [TIME].

Conversation Guidelines

Before we get started, I would like to present some guidelines for this conversation.

- Because we are having this conversation online, to help me keep track of everyone, please do try to turn your video on. (But if you are not able to use your video, that is ok).
- When you speak, please start by stating your first name—this will help me know who's speaking.
- There are no right or wrong answers—everyone's perspective is important.
- I will moderate our conversation by asking some questions and ensuring we hear from everyone.
- I would like to hear from everyone. If I don't hear from you, I may ask you a specific question.
- If there are certain questions you don't want to answer, or have no opinion on, that's perfectly fine.
- And finally, everyone please silence your cell phones.

1. President's Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation Program

Population: SBA staff who participated in the PMC program.

Program Awareness and Interest

- How did you first hear about the PMC program?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Did you receive any targeted emails or marketing encouraging your participation in the program? Did you hear about the program from previous participants?
- Why did you decide to apply for the PMC Program?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Some of the survey respondents reported they were interested in skill development, exposure to other career opportunities, and career progression/upward mobility within or outside the SBA. Did any of these influence your decision to apply?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Did your supervisor or SBA leadership expect the same benefits?
- What specific skills were you hoping to learn?
 - Why did you choose the PMC program to learn these skills?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Did you consider any alternative programs to learn these skills?

Program Selection

Now I'd like to talk about the application process for the program.

- Did you receive any support or encouragement throughout the application process from your supervisor or other leadership?
 - **IF YES**, What type of support or encouragement did you receive?
- Did you take any measures outside of your actual application to increase your chances of acceptance (i.e. networking with selection panel, pursuit of other leadership recommendations, discussions with former PMC program selectees)?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Do you believe these measures increased your chances of acceptance?

Program Experience

- **[INTERVIEWER: PROBE TO DETERMINE HOW LONG SINCE PARTICIPANTS COMPLETED THE PROGRAM]** Who in this group has finished the PMC program in the past year? Past two years? Further back than that?
- Thinking about whether what you gained from participation aligns with the reasons you applied for the program, who in the group feels the program met your expectations? How?
 - Who feels it fell short of your expectations? How?
- In your opinion, how has participation in the PMC program influenced your career path so far (i.e. promotion, lateral move, anticipated promotion)?
 - Did you learn or have a refresher on skills that will help you progress upwards in your career?
 - Do you think the skills you learned will still be relevant in 5-10 years? Why or why not?
 - As I mentioned earlier, in a survey we recently conducted with PMC participants, several reported that they hoped to learn the following skills: developing others, partnering and collaboration, political savvy, and strategic thinking. Did you learn any of these skills?
 - Did you learn other leadership skills?
- Thinking about all PMC program participants from the SBA, in your opinion, how does participation in the program impact participants' career paths (i.e. upward mobility, improved performance, movement outside the SBA etc.)?
- To what extent were you able to implement the skills you learned in your current role at the SBA?
 - **IF NOT ABLE**, For those of you who said you were unable, why were you unable to implement these skills?
 - **IF ABLE**: For those of you who said you were able, how were you able to apply the skills you learned to your current role?
 - Did your supervisor provide you with opportunities to implement these skills? Are there other ways in which opportunities were provided?
 - Were there any barriers to applying what you learned from the program? If yes, what barriers?
 - What could the SBA do to make sure PMC program participants can directly apply learned skills in their current roles? For example, are there ways supervisors could better encourage

and support the application or learned skills, or ways management could be more supportive?

2. Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows Program

Population: SBA staff who participated in the EIG program.

Program Awareness and Interest

- How did you first hear about the EIG program?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Did you receive any targeted emails or marketing encouraging your participation in the program? Did you hear about the program from previous participants?
- Why did you decide to apply for the EIG Program?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Our survey asked respondents what skills they hoped to learn, and some survey respondents said skill development, networking, and career progression/upward mobility within the SBA. Did any of these influence your decision to apply?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Did your supervisor or SBA leadership expect the same benefits?
- What specific skills were you hoping to learn?
 - Why did you choose the EIG program to learn these skills?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Did you consider any alternative programs to learn these skills?

Program Selection

Now I'd like to talk about the application process for the program.

- Did you receive any support or encouragement throughout the application process from your supervisor or other leadership?
 - **IF YES**, What type of support or encouragement did you receive?
- Did you take any measures outside of your actual application to increase your chances of acceptance (i.e. networking with selection panel, pursuit of other leadership recommendations, discussions with former EIG program selectees)?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Do you believe these measures increased your chance of acceptance?

Program Experience

- **[INTERVIEWER: PROBE TO DETERMINE HOW LONG SINCE PARTICIPANTS COMPLETED THE PROGRAM]** Who in this group has finished the EIG program in the past year? Past two years? Further back than that?
- Thinking about whether what you gained from participation aligns with the reasons you applied for the program, who in the group feels the program met your expectations? How?
 - Who feels it fell short of your expectations? How?
- In your opinion, how has participation in the EIG program influenced your career path so far (i.e. promotion, lateral move, anticipated promotion)?
 - Did you learn or have a refresher on skills that will help you progress upwards in your career?

- Do you think the skills you learned will still be relevant in 5-10 years? Why or why not?
- As I mentioned earlier, in a survey we recently conducted with EIG participants, several reported that they hoped to learn the following skills: strategic thinking, partnering and collaboration, organizational awareness, and influencing and negotiating. Did you learn any of these skills?
 - Did you learn other leadership skills?
- Thinking about all EIG program participants from the SBA, in your opinion, how does participation in the program impact participants' career paths (i.e. upward mobility, improved performance, movement outside the SBA etc.)?
- To what extent were you able to implement the skills you learned in your current role at the SBA?
 - **IF NOT ABLE**, For those of you who said you were unable, why were you unable to implement these skills?
 - **IF ABLE**: For those of you who said you were able, how were you able to apply the skills you learned to your current role?
 - Did your supervisor provide you with opportunities to implement these skills? Are there other ways in which opportunities were provided?
 - Where there any barriers to applying what you learned from the program? If yes, what barriers?
 - What could the SBA do to make sure EIG program participants can directly apply learned skills in their current roles? For example, are there ways supervisors could better encourage and support the application or learned skills, or ways management could be more supportive?

3. Mentorship Program

Population: SBA staff who participated in the mentorship program.

Program Awareness and Interest

- How was the opportunity to participate in the mentorship program communicated to staff? [Email, internal notice, supervisor, word of mouth]
 - **IF NEEDED**, Did you receive any targeted emails or marketing encouraging your participation in the program? Did you hear about the program from previous participants?
- Why did you decide to participate in the mentorship program?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Many of the survey respondents reported they were interested in skill development, networking, sharing best practices, and the opportunity to give back. Did any of these influence your decision to participate?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Did your supervisor or SBA leadership expect the same benefits?
 - For those of you who participated as a mentor, what was your primary purpose for participating?
 - **IF NEEDED**: Was your primary purpose of participation personal or to impact another individual in the organization? Or both?
- Were there specific skills you hoped to learn by participating in the mentorship program?
 - Why did you choose the mentorship program to learn these skills?

- **IF NEEDED**, Did you consider any alternative programs to learn these skills?

Program Experience

- **[INTERVIEWER: PROBE TO DETERMINE HOW MANY PARTICIPANTS WERE MENTORS/MENTEES]**
Who in this group participated as a mentor? Mentee? Both?
- Thinking about whether what you gained from participation aligns with the reasons you participated, who in the group feels the program met your expectations? How?
 - Who feels it fell short of your expectations? How?
- In your opinion, how has participation in the mentorship program influenced your career path so far (i.e. promotion, lateral move, anticipated promotion)?
 - Did you learn or have a refresher on skills or gain experiences that will help you progress upwards in your career?
 - Do you think the skills you learned will still be relevant in 5-10 years? Why or why not?
 - As I mentioned earlier, in a survey we recently conducted with mentorship program participants, several reported that they hoped to learn the following skills: developing others, creativity and innovation, and strategic thinking. Did you learn any of these skills?
 - Did you learn other leadership skills?
- Thinking about all mentorship program participants from the SBA, in your opinion, how does participation in the program impact participants' career paths (i.e. upward mobility, improved performance, movement outside the SBA etc.)?
- **IF MENTEE:** For those of you who participated as a mentee, is there anything the program could have offered that would have increased your learning or improved your experience?
 - Did you feel like you had a good match with your mentor? Why or why not?
- Were you able to apply what you learned in your role at the SBA?
 - **IF NOT ABLE**, For those of you who said you were unable, why were you unable to implement these skills?
 - **IF ABLE:** For those of you who said you were able, how were you able to apply the skills you learned to your current role?
 - Did your supervisor provide you with opportunities to implement these skills? Are there other ways in which opportunities were provided?
 - Where there any barriers to applying what you learned from the program? If yes, what barriers?
 - What could the SBA do to make sure program participants can directly apply what they've learned in their current roles? For example, are there ways supervisors could better encourage and support the application or learned skills, or ways management could be more supportive?

4. Temporary Promotions/Supervisory Detail Assignments

Population: SBA staff who have experienced temporary promotions.

Program Awareness and Interest

- How was the opportunity to participate communicated to you? [I.e., email, internal notice, supervisor, word of mouth]
 - **IF NEEDED**, Did you receive any targeted emails or marketing encouraging your participation? Did you hear about the program from previous participants?
- Why did you decide to participate in a temporary promotion?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Did your supervisor or SBA leadership expect the same benefits?
- What specific skills were you hoping to learn?
 - Why did you think the temporary promotion or supervisory detail assignment was the right opportunity to learn these skills?
 - **IF NEEDED**, Did you consider any alternative opportunities or programs to learn these skills?

Program Experience

- Who in the group feels the experience met your expectations? How?
 - Who feels it fell short of your expectations? How?
- In your opinion, how has your temporary promotion or a supervisory detail assignment influenced your career path so far (i.e. promotion, lateral move, anticipated promotion)?
 - Did you learn or have a refresher on skills that will help you progress upwards in your career?
 - Do you think the skills you learned will still be relevant in 5-10 years? Why or why not?
 - As I mentioned earlier, in a survey we recently conducted with SBA staff, several reported that they hoped to learn the following skills: developing others, external awareness, and organizational awareness. Did you learn any of these skills?
 - Did you learn other leadership skills?
- Thinking about all SBA staff who have had temporary promotions or supervisory details, in your opinion, how does participation in the program impact participants' career paths (i.e. upward mobility, improved performance, movement outside the SBA etc.)?
- When you returned to your previous role, to what extent were you able to implement the skills you learned during the temporary promotion?
 - **IF NOT ABLE**, For those of you who said you were unable, why were you unable to implement these skills?
 - **IF ABLE**: For those of you who said you were able, how were you able to apply the skills you learned to your current role?
 - Did your supervisor provide you with opportunities to implement these skills? Are there other ways in which opportunities were provided?
 - Were there any barriers to applying what you learned? If yes, what barriers?
 - What could the SBA do to make sure staff returning from temporary promotions or supervisory details can directly apply learned skills in their current roles? For example, are there ways supervisors could better encourage and support the application or learned skills, or ways management could be more supportive?

5. IDPs

Population: All focus group participants

- Does anyone in this group have an individual development plan (IDP)?
 - **IF YES:** For those of you who do have an IDP, do you use your IDP? If yes, how?
 - **IF NEEDED,** Does your supervisor use your IDP?
 - Does your IDP impact your career development? If yes, how?
 - How could the IDP program be improved?
 - **IF NO:** For those of you who do not have an IDP, are there other tools you use to track or plan your professional development?
 - Are you interested in having an IDP? Why or why not?

6. Supervisor Trainings

Population: SBA staff who participated in the supervisor trainings.

- Who in this group has participated in any supervisory trainings?
- How do you typically hear about the opportunity to participate in supervisory trainings?
 - **IF NEEDED,** Did you receive any targeted emails or marketing encouraging your participation in the program? Did you hear about the trainings from previous participants?
- Which types of supervisory trainings have you participated in?
 - Why did you select these topics?
 - Are there any trainings you were required to take?
- What skills were you hoping to gain from these trainings?
 - Why did you choose supervisory trainings to learn these skills?
 - **IF NEEDED,** Did you consider any alternative programs to learn these skills?
- To what extent were you able to implement the skills you've learned from these trainings in your current role at the SBA?
 - **IF NOT ABLE,** For those of you who said you were unable, why were you unable to implement these skills?
 - **IF ABLE:** For those of you who said you were able, how were you able to apply the skills you learned to your current role?
 - Did your supervisor provide you with opportunities to implement these skills? Are there other ways in which opportunities were provided?
 - Were there any barriers to applying what you learned? If yes, what barriers?
 - What could the SBA do to make sure staff who participate in these trainings can directly apply learned skills in their current roles? For example, are there ways supervisors could better encourage and support the application or learned skills, or ways management could be more supportive?
 - Did you receive any follow-up from the trainer after participating in these trainings?
 - **IF YES,** Was this follow-up beneficial?
- In your opinion, how has participation in these supervisory trainings influenced your career path so far? Have you learned skills that will help you progress upwards in your career?
 - Have these trainings impacted your career growth or advancement? How?
 - Which trainings have benefitted your career development?
 - Are there specific trainings that help SBA staff develop leadership skills to move upwards?

- Thinking about all SBA staff who've participated in these trainings, in your opinion, how does participation in the program impact participants' career paths (i.e. upward mobility, improved performance, movement outside the SBA etc.)?

Closing

Those are all the questions that I have for you today. Is there anything we have not discussed that anyone would like to mention? Thanks again for speaking with us today.

Confirmatory Focus Group Guide

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is **[NAME]** and I am a **[POSITION]** at Summit Consulting. **[INTRODUCE OTHER SUMMIT/FMG STAFF ON CALL.]**

As you are all aware, Summit has been contracted by the SBA to conduct an evaluation of leadership succession within the agency. Although this evaluation covers a variety of topics, the three main research questions are:

1. How does leadership succession currently occur at the SBA?
2. How do the Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows and President's Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation programs contribute to successful succession within the SBA?
3. What gaps exist in current staff skills and abilities that may prevent effective succession planning within the SBA?

Findings will be used to demonstrate how leadership succession activities contribute to the SBA's strategic and performance goals to build a high-performing workforce and deliver a comprehensive, mission-focused, talent development strategy that fosters professional development and continuous learning.

As part of this evaluation, we have completed a Leadership and Succession Survey with a sample of current SBA staff, conducted focus groups with SBA staff and benchmarking interviews with three similar agencies, and performed analysis of secondary data provided by the SBA. Our discussion today will be focused on the early results of those analyses. Our goal is to better understand early findings (such as how contextual factors might be impacting findings), explore opportunities, and gather information to inform the final recommendations we make for this evaluation. Please do keep in mind that the analysis is not complete. The findings and recommendations are still evolving, and we will be making changes based on your feedback.

We have scheduled 60 minutes for today's conversation. With everyone's permission, I'd like to record our discussion. This helps ensure that we don't miss anything important that you say. This recording will only be available to researchers working on this project and will not be shared with the SBA. All information you provide will be anonymous; we will not identify you by name in any reports that we produce. All questions are voluntary. Do I have everyone's permission to record this focus group?

Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

START RECORDING. So that I have it on the recording, today is **[DATE]** and the time is **[TIME]**.

Defining the leadership pipeline and the leadership cohort

The target populations of interest for this evaluation are SBA staff in the leadership pipeline and leadership cohort, as defined in the FY 2020–2022 Leadership Succession Plan.

The SBA **leadership pipeline** includes all permanent GS-12 through GS-15 employees and Senior Executive Service (SES) or Senior Level (SL) positions within the following MCOs:

- GS-0201, Human Resource Specialist
- GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)
- GS-1101, Outreach and Marketing Specialist, Business Opportunity Specialist, Business Development Specialist
- GS-1102, Contract Specialists, Acquisition/Procurement Analysts
- GS-1160, Financial Analysts
- GS-1165, Loan Specialists
- GS-2210, Information Technology Specialists

The pipeline is composed of all employees eligible for promotion or progression into leadership positions, namely supervisory or management roles.

The SBA **leadership cohort** is composed of supervisors and managers in permanent GS-13 through GS-15 positions as well as SES levels in the following MCOs:

- GS-0201, Human Resource Specialist
- GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)
- GS-1101, Outreach and Marketing Specialist, Business Opportunity Specialist, Business Development Specialist
- GS-1102, Contract Specialists, Acquisition/Procurement Analysts
- GS-1160, Financial Analyst
- GS-1165, Loan Specialists
- GS-2210, Information Technology Specialists

Research Question 1: How does leadership succession currently occur at the SBA?

Characteristics of promoted personnel

Background: To determine the characteristics of promoted personnel, we analyzed the leadership pipeline and cohort employment personnel dataset, which included 11 years of data on all permanent GS-12 through GS-15 employees and SES/SL positions within specified MCOs as defined in the FY 2020–2022 Leadership Succession Plan¹⁴. The employment personnel dataset showed that over a 11-year period (2010–2020), 2,200 individuals were in the leadership pipeline and cohort. Of these, 504 (22.9%) experienced at least one promotion. Notably, 375 (17.0%) of these promotions occurred when individuals first showed up in the dataset in the leadership cohort or pipeline, suggesting they could potentially be new hires. The Team does not have a reliable variable to indicate whether the new hire is external to the SBA, external to the office, or internal to the office. Therefore, the Team hypothesizes

¹⁴ U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Human Resources Solutions: FY 2020–2022 Leadership Succession Plan, March 2020.

that these 375 hires into the leadership pipeline or cohort could be external hires (from outside SBA) rather than internal promotions.

- Based on your observations and experiences regarding hiring at the SBA, are leadership positions most frequently filled from within or with an external hire?
- How effective would you say the SBA's current leadership pipeline practices are, in terms of yielding a diverse leadership cohort?
- Based on the data we have shared with you and your own observations/ experience, from a strategic perspective, what changes (if any) would you suggest for SBA to take to grow a leadership pipeline reflective of a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible culture?

Research Question 2: How do the Excellence in Government Fellows and President's Management Council Interagency Rotation programs contribute to successful succession within the SBA?

Utility of existing leadership development programs and other options

Background: Other agencies use alternative leadership development programs (including some developed in-house) and some don't offer the EIG or the PMC programs. In the focus groups, PMC participants were less enthused by their experience than EIG participants. Results from the Leadership and Succession Survey and the secondary data are still pending, however there were few EIG and PMC participants represented in these data (although all EIG/PMC participants were recruited for the survey).

Opportunity: Consider other leadership development trainings or programs, to determine which offer the best returns for the SBA, in addition to or in place of EIG and PMC. Potential training programs include the Treasury Executive Institute (TEI), which offers in-person and online leadership development trainings to GS-14s, GS-15s, and SES and more than 40 federal agencies. TEI aligns their efforts with the OPM ECQs and supporting competencies. They develop leadership candidates through exposure to the best practices in leadership models, new technologies, and executive competencies. A potential leadership development program to consider is The White House Leadership Development Program, which offers development opportunities through targeted trainings and rotational assignments focused on pressing, high-impact challenges faced by the federal government; however, positions in this program are limited and competitive.

- If the SBA were evaluating other leadership development trainings or programs, what benefits might be most important for these trainings to offer (i.e., increased retention, paths to promotions, learning valued skills, learning industry best practices, accessibility/number of open spots, networking/connections with other agencies)?
- Still thinking about potential additional leadership development trainings or programs, what challenges or barriers might the SBA want to monitor in evaluating potential leadership development trainings (i.e., cost, duration, location, extent to which participants return to/stay in their roles at the SBA, accessibility/number of open spots)?

Background: The employment personnel dataset showed that half of the observed EIG participants in the dataset (5 out of 10) and 2 out of 8 observed PMC participants were not in the leadership pipeline or cohort. (Refer to the *defining the leadership pipeline and the leadership cohort* page for definitions of these terms.) Some EIG participants in the follow-up focus groups noted that they participated in the



program in hopes of receiving a promotion but have not yet experienced upward mobility. Determining the SBA's intention behind supporting participation in these programs will help the Team make relevant recommendations regarding access to and awareness of leadership development programs. It may also help determine ways to garner interest in target participants and widen and improve the EIG and PMC applicant pools, in turn benefiting the succession pipeline.

- How does the SBA view participation in these programs: is the intent to develop individuals already within the pipeline and on track for leadership positions? Is there interest in allowing individuals outside of the pipeline to participate in these programs as a way of beginning their leadership development journeys?
- Is the SBA interested in more successfully recruiting staff outside of the leadership cohort and pipeline into these programs (for example, high-performing GS-13 employees)?
- How does the SBA market these programs to interested individuals?
 - Are emails released and the SBA Daily the only forum in which they are communicated?
 - Are emails targeted to specific individuals in any way?
- Does the SBA target individuals for participation based on upcoming projects and needs? Is there an existing strategy to align program participation with agency goals and needs?

Research Question 3: What gaps exist in current staff skills and abilities that may prevent effective succession planning within the SBA?

Trainings to address skills gaps

Background: Half or more than half of the 106 Leadership and Succession Survey respondents thought that SBA should be teaching skills such as conflict management, creativity and innovation, customer service, developing others, leveraging diversity, organizational awareness, and strategic thinking. Moreover, while almost 70% of survey respondents experienced a promotion, approximately 42% of those who experienced a promotion thought that the skills necessary for a promotion were not clearly defined at each level they reached. Among the 58% of respondents reporting that the skills necessary for promotion were clearly defined, 11% indicated that they were not made aware of the skills. Analysis of skills gaps based on the TDNS and Dual-Rater Core Competency Assessment is still ongoing.

Opportunity: Consider conducting a gap analysis between identified skill gaps and the trainings that are currently available to remediate those gaps.

- Does the SBA currently do any analyses using both the Dual-Rater Core Competency Assessment and the TDNS to answer this question?
- Are there virtual training opportunities available to staff not located at headquarters, to allow them to continue to grow their competencies?
- [How] Does the SBA communicate to employees what gaps they should be filling based on SBA's Dual-Rater Core Competency Assessment?
- [How] Does the SBA track gaps and employee progress against filling gaps? Is there any incentive for employees to fill gaps outside of personal development?

Preparation for vacancies

Background: SBA has existing concerns about how skill gaps may impact ability to fill leadership (or leadership pipeline) vacancies. We learned from the focus groups that temporary promotions from regional offices to HQ are often expected to become permanent; these detail assignments may be an avenue for the SBA to identify staff interested in and capable of filling leadership pipeline vacancies.

- What are your initial reactions to using temporary detail assignments as a method of identifying staff in advance of leadership pipeline vacancies?
 - Are there enough openings for temporary detail assignments? **IF NO**, How could SBA standardize the creation of these openings, to ensure greater availability?
- Focus group participants identified travel, expense, leaving family behind, and a de facto pay cut (due to regional pay grade differences) as barriers to pursuing temporary detail assignments (particularly without assurance that it will be a permanent change or will result in promotion). Are these barriers that the SBA would consider addressing? Any initial ideas on how they could be mitigated?

Other findings and recommendations

IDPs

Background: We have heard much interest in fostering a “learning culture” at the SBA during the informational meetings and follow-up focus groups. However, some focus group participants noted that there is an occasional push to discuss individual development plans (IDPs) “every few years,” yet there has not been much progress in developing or rolling out an influential IDP program. The Leadership and Succession Survey found that almost half of respondents (44%) had never had an IDP. Among those that had a current IDP or an IDP in the past, less than half (48%) reported that they found the IDPs useful. Understanding SBA’s interest in and goals for an IDP program will help the Team develop meaningful recommendations to meet these goals.

- What is the SBA’s strategic interest in IDPs? What’s the “big-picture” goal?
- How does this goal fit into the big-picture agency strategy for this learning and development culture?
- What would you want us to know about the intention for having IDPs that would influence our Team’s recommendations about what research to do on IDP options?

Closing

Those are all the questions that I have for you today. Before we go, I’d like to ask whether the discussion brought up any other concerns or considerations that we haven’t touched on?

Is there anything else we should know as we complete our analyses and prepare our recommendations?

Thanks again for speaking with us today.



Appendix D Benchmarking Interview Guide

Table D-1: Matrix of benchmarking interview topics to research sub-questions

Research Sub-question	Interview Topic	Focus	Population
<i>Sub-question 1.4.</i> Is there a pool of qualified applicants internal to the SBA? What are the trends at the mission-critical occupations (MCO) level?	Leadership Position Candidate Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on how other agencies develop, maintain, and define a qualified pool of internal applicants 	All
<i>Sub-question 2.4.</i> How are participants selected for these programs?	PMC/EIG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail on the participants' application experience Perspective on the selection process as a whole Use of PMC/EIG and how they feed into leadership succession planning 	Federal agencies who participate in the PMC/EIG programs
<i>Sub-question 2.5.</i> How are opportunities provided to participants to implement learned skills when they return to the SBA?	PMC/EIG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to implement new skills Barriers to implementing new skills PMC/EIG impact on participants 	Federal agencies who participate in the PMC/EIG programs
<i>Sub-question 2.6.</i> Have program participants remained with the SBA? How have program participants progressed along the leadership pipeline at the SBA?	PMC/EIG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PMC/EIG impact on participants' career paths Overall effectiveness of PMC/EIG 	Federal agencies who participate in the PMC/EIG programs
<i>Sub-question 3.1.</i> What gaps in staff skills and abilities are reported?	Competency Identification and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership position general competency valuation and development Leadership position technical competency valuation and development 	All
<i>Sub-question 3.4.</i> How are SBA training programs (mentorship program, temporary promotions, and supervisor trainings) contributing to succession?	Other Leadership Development Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional internal or external training programs 	All

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is [NAME] and I am a [POSITION] at Fors Marsh Group. [INTRODUCE OTHER SUMMIT/FMG STAFF ON CALL.]

Summit Consulting and Fors Marsh have been contracted by the SBA to conduct an evaluation of leadership succession within the agency. The three main research questions are:

1. How does leadership succession currently occur at the SBA?
2. How do the Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows and President's Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation programs contribute to successful succession within the SBA?
3. What gaps exist in current staff skills and abilities that may prevent effective succession planning within the SBA?

Findings will be used to demonstrate how leadership succession activities contribute to the SBA's strategic and performance goals to build a high-performing workforce and deliver a comprehensive, mission-focused, talent development strategy that fosters professional development and continuous learning.

Although this study focuses on leadership succession at the SBA, we are interested in learning from other federal agencies. Understanding your agency's approach to these topics will help identify solutions that can be tailored to the SBA and will help inform the study findings and recommendations. These will be presented in a report to SBA in the spring of 2021.

Our interview today will focus on the following topics:

1. Leadership Position Candidate Pool
2. Competency Identification and Development
3. President's Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation Program
4. Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows Program
5. Other Leadership Development Programs

Our conversation will take 45 to 60 minutes. With your permission, I would like to record our discussion. This recording will only be available to researchers working on this project. Although the report will include insights on lessons learned and best practices specific to your agency, the findings will be presented in aggregate. All information you provide will be anonymous and all questions are voluntary. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

Do you have any questions before we get started?

START RECORDING. So that I have it on the recording, today is [DATE] and the time is [TIME]. This interview is with [RESPONDENT NAME] from [FEDERAL AGENCY].

Leadership Position Candidate Pool

Population: All

1. Does your agency prioritize filling leadership positions with qualified individuals?
 - a. **IF NO**, Why? Do you agree with your agency's approach?
 - b. **IF YES**, What measures are put in place to prioritize filling leadership positions with qualified individuals?
2. Does your agency face any challenges filling leadership positions with qualified individuals?
 - a. **IF NO**, What measures are put in place to overcome these challenges?
 - b. **IF YES**, What specifically does your agency struggle with (i.e. defining criteria, identifying individuals, hiring individuals, attrition, competency development, etc.)?
3. What criteria does your agency generally use to define a qualified internal applicant to fill future open leadership positions (i.e. performance, potential, interest, consistency, tenure, institutional knowledge, motivation to lead, number of positions held within agency, number of direct reports, experience outside of agency)?
 - a. What factors do you believe your agency should consider more heavily in defining qualified internal applicants?
 - b. **IF NEEDED**, In what areas do you believe your agency's qualified internal applicants excel?

- c. **IF NEEDED**, In what areas do you believe your agency's qualified internal applicants could most improve?
4. To your knowledge, does your agency currently have a pool of qualified internal applicants to fill future open leadership positions?
 - a. **IF NO**, Why? Has your agency considered developing one?
 - i. [IF NO QUALIFIED POOL, SKIP TO NEXT SECTION AFTER THIS QUESTION]
 - b. **IF YES**, How was this pool developed?
5. To your knowledge, does your agency actively maintain this pool of qualified internal applicants to fill future open leadership positions?
 - a. **IF YES**, How is this pool maintained and updated?
 - b. **IF NEEDED**, Who is responsible for maintaining and updating this pool?
 - c. **IF NEEDED**, How often is this pool updated?
 - d. **IF YES**, What is the process for selecting a candidate from this pool if and when a leadership position opens?
 - e. **IF NEEDED**, Are internal employees outside of this pool able to apply to open leadership positions?
 - f. **IF YES**, How often are internal employees outside of this pool selected and appointed to open leadership positions?
6. To the best of your knowledge, how does your agency ensure its pool of qualified internal applicants has the depth and breadth to align with anticipated needs?
7. To the best of your knowledge, how does your agency measure the pool to determine if they actually do have a solid pool? (i.e. measure the criteria used to define qualified internal applicants)
8. How do you believe your agency's process for tracking qualified internal applicants for leadership positions could be improved?

Competency Identification and Development

Population: All

9. Thinking specifically about leadership positions at your agency, what general competencies do you believe are most valued?
 - a. What is the process for determining the most valued general competencies?
 - b. **IF NEEDED**, Who is responsible for determining the most valued general competencies?
 - c. **IF NEEDED**, How often are the most valued general competencies reevaluated?
 - d. Are the most valued general competencies published or communicated to the workforce?
 - e. **IF YES**, How are they published or communicated to the workforce?
 - f. **IF NO**, Why aren't they published or communicated to the workforce?
 - g. Are these the general competencies that you believe should be valued for leadership positions at your agency?
 - h. **IF NO**, What general competencies do you believe should be valued for leadership positions at your agency?
 - i. **IF NEEDED**, What makes these general competencies the most important for leadership in your agency to value?

10. Thinking specifically about leadership positions at your agency, what general competencies do you believe are most developed for?
 - a. Are these the general competencies that you believe leadership at your agency should focus on developing?
 - b. **IF NO**, What general competencies do you believe leadership at your agency should focus on developing?
 - c. **IF NEEDED**, What makes these general competencies the most important for leadership at your agency to have developed?
11. Thinking specifically about leadership positions at your agency, what technical competencies do you believe are most valued? Note that technical competencies refer to more specific skills or areas of knowledge used in a particular job or group of jobs within an organization. In this case, technical competencies would include skills or areas of knowledge used and valued specifically by leadership positions at your agency.
 - a. What is the process for determining the most valued technical competencies?
 - b. **IF NEEDED**, Who is responsible for determining the most valued technical competencies?
 - c. **IF NEEDED**, How often are the most valued technical competencies reevaluated?
 - d. Are the most valued technical competencies published or communicated to the workforce?
 - e. **IF YES**, How are they published or communicated to the workforce?
 - f. **IF NO**, Why aren't they published or communicated to the workforce?
 - g. Are these the technical competencies that you believe should be valued for leadership positions at your agency?
 - h. **IF NO**, What technical competencies do you believe should be valued for leadership positions at your agency?
 - i. **IF NEEDED**, What makes these technical competencies the most important for leadership in your agency to value?
12. Thinking specifically about leadership positions at your agency, what technical competencies do you believe your agency focuses on developing most?
 - a. Are these the technical competencies that you believe leadership at your agency should focus on developing?
 - b. **IF NO**, What technical competencies do you believe leadership at your agency should focus on developing?
 - c. **IF NEEDED**, What makes these technical competencies the most important for leadership at your agency to have developed?
13. How does your Agency develop its workforce?
 - a. Do you believe your agency's approach to workforce development is effective?
 - i. **IF YES**, Why?
 - ii. **IF NO**, How could it be improved?
 - b. What would you recommend other agencies do to make sure staff in the leadership pipeline have developed valued competencies?

President's Management Council (PMC) Interagency Rotation Program

Population: Federal agencies who participate in the PMC program

Program Selection

14. To your knowledge, is the PMC program offered to individuals in all offices and regions of your agency?
15. To your knowledge, is the PMC program offered to individuals in all levels of your agency?
16. To your knowledge, what is the process for staff to apply to the PMC program?
 - a. What are the application requirements?
 - b. What are the selection criteria (i.e. performance, potential, interest, consistency, tenure, institutional knowledge, motivation to lead, number of positions held within agency, number of direct reports, experience outside of agency)?
 - c. How many individuals from your agency can participate in this PMC program each year?
 - d. What percentage of applicants from your agency are accepted?
 - e. Are individuals able to apply to the PMC program again if denied acceptance in a previous year?
 - f. **IF NEEDED**, Do you believe that most individuals that want to participate in the PMC program are able to?
17. Are supervisors able to nominate or suggest individuals for the PMC program?
 - g. **IF YES**, Do supervisors nominate or suggest individuals for the program?
 - h. **IF NEEDED**, How often do supervisors nominate or suggest individuals for the program?
18. Are there any measures outside of the formal application process that individuals can take to affect chances of acceptance (i.e. networking with selection panel, supervisor/leadership support)?
19. What factors, if any, do you think should be considered more heavily in choosing individuals for participation in the PMC program?
 - i. What factors should be considered less heavily?

Skill Application

20. Do you believe there are opportunities provided for participants to implement learned skills when they return to the agency from their PMC rotation?
 - a. **IF NO**, Why? Has your agency considered creating opportunities?
 - b. **IF YES**, What opportunities were provided?
21. Is management supportive of participants implementing learned skills when they return to the agency?
22. What barriers [if any] do participants face in applying what they learned from the PMC program?
23. What do you recommend agencies do to make sure PMC program participants can directly apply learned skills in their current roles?

Program impact

24. How does your agency market the impact of PMC program participation on participants' career paths (i.e. upward mobility, improved performance, etc.)?
 - a. Was it ever explicitly stated or indicated that participation in this program would benefit an individual's upward mobility within your agency?
25. In your opinion, how does participation in the PMC program realistically impact participants' career paths?

- b. Do most participants remain with your agency? For how long?
 - i. **IF NO**, What exit opportunities do they pursue (i.e. for-profit companies, other government organizations, academic organizations, non-profit organizations)
 - ii. **IF YES**, Do most PMC participants experience upward mobility within the agency?
 - iii. **IF NEEDED**, What differentiates PMC participants that experience upward mobility within the agency from PMC participants that do not experience upward mobility within the agency?
 - c. Do most participants demonstrate improved performance?
 - d. Can you share any success stories?
26. In your opinion, what is your agency's overall purpose/end goal of sending individuals to the PMC program (i.e. professional skill development, relational skill development, experience, networking, etc.)?
27. How does the PMC program contribute to your agency's leadership succession efforts?
28. Overall, do you feel the PMC program has enough of an impact to conclude that its benefits outweigh its costs (i.e. monetary costs, participants time, selection panels time, etc.)?
- e. **IF NEEDED**, How did the program meet/fall short of/exceed its costs?
29. Does the PMC program serve any other purpose aside from leadership succession planning at your agency? If so, please describe.
30. Overall, do you feel the PMC program compares to other leadership development program opportunities?

Excellence in Government (EIG) Fellows Program

Population: Federal agencies who participate in the EIG program

Program Selection

31. To your knowledge, is the EIG program offered to individuals in all offices and regions of your agency?
32. To your knowledge, is the EIG program offered to individuals in all levels of your agency?
33. To your knowledge, what is the process for staff to apply to the EIG program?
- a. What are the application requirements?
 - b. What are the selection criteria (i.e. performance, potential, interest, consistency, tenure, institutional knowledge, motivation to lead, number of positions held within agency, number of direct reports, experience outside of agency)?
 - c. How many individuals from your agency can participate in this EIG program each year?
 - d. What percentage of applicants from your agency are accepted?
 - e. Are individuals able to apply to the EIG program again if denied acceptance in a previous year?
 - f. **IF NEEDED**, Do you believe that most individuals that want to participate in the EIG program are able to?
34. Are supervisors able to nominate or suggest individuals for the EIG program?
- g. **IF YES**, Do supervisors nominate or suggest individuals for the program?
 - h. **IF NEEDED**, How often do supervisors nominate or suggest individuals for the program?

35. Are there any measures outside of the formal application process that individuals can take to affect chances of acceptance (i.e. networking with selection panel, supervisor/leadership support)?
36. What factors, if any, do you think should be considered more heavily in choosing individuals for participation in the EIG program?
 - i. What factors should be considered less heavily?

Skill Application

37. Do you believe there are opportunities provided for participants to apply learned skills after they graduate from the program?
 - a. **IF NO**, Why? Has your agency considered creating opportunities?
 - b. **IF YES**, What opportunities were provided?
38. Is management supportive of participants applying learned skills after they graduate from the program?
39. What barriers [if any] do participants face in applying what they learned from the EIG program?
40. What do you recommend agencies do to make sure EIG program participants can directly apply learned skills in their current roles?

Program impact

41. How does your agency market the impact of EIG program participation on participants' career paths (i.e. upward mobility, improved performance, etc.)?
 - a. Was it ever explicitly stated or indicated that participation in this program would benefit an individual's upward mobility within your agency?
42. In your opinion, how does participation in the EIG program realistically impact participants' career paths?
 - b. Do most participants remain with your agency? For how long?
 - i. **IF NO**, What exit opportunities do they pursue (i.e. for-profit companies, other government organizations, academic organizations, non-profit organizations)
 - ii. **IF YES**, Do most EIG participants experience upward mobility within the agency?
 - iii. **IF NEEDED**, What differentiates EIG participants that experience upward mobility within the agency from EIG participants that do not experience upward mobility within the agency?
 - c. Do most participants demonstrate improved performance?
 - d. Can you share any success stories?
43. In your opinion, what is your agency's overall purpose/end goal of sending individuals to the EIG program (i.e. professional skill development, relational skill development, experience, networking, etc.)?
44. How does the EIG program contribute to your agency's leadership succession efforts?
45. Overall, do you feel the EIG programs has enough of an impact to conclude that its benefits outweigh its costs (i.e. monetary costs, participants time, selection panels time, etc.)?
 - e. **IF NEEDED**, How did the program meet/fall short of/exceed its costs?
46. Does the EIG program serve any other purpose aside from leadership succession planning at your agency? If so, please describe.

47. Overall, do you feel the EIG program compares to other leadership development program opportunities?

Other Leadership Development Programs

Population: All

48. Does your agency offer any additional internal or external training programs as part of your leadership succession efforts (i.e. mentorship programs, temporary promotions, etc.)?
- IF YES**, What are these programs?
 - IF NEEDED**, How do these programs contribute to leadership succession efforts?
 - IF NEEDED**, Do these programs increase likelihood of participants' upward mobility within your agency?
 - IF NEEDED**, Would you recommend these programs for other government agencies?
49. Are there additional training programs that you think would benefit your agency's leadership succession efforts?
- IF YES**, What are these programs?
 - IF NEEDED**, How would these programs contribute to leadership succession efforts if implemented?
 - IF NEEDED**, Would you recommend these programs for other government agencies?

Closing

Those are all of the questions that I have for you today. Is there anything we have not discussed that you would like to mention? Thanks again for speaking with us today.

Appendix E SBA Succession Planning Documents Reviewed

Table E-1: Description of documents reviewed

Document Reviewed	Document Content
SBA Leadership Succession Plans (FY 2020–2022 and FY 2013–2016)	These plans identify areas with the highest risk for losing leadership staff in mission-critical positions and present opportunities to mitigate the risk and close the gap through training and development activities.
SBA FY 2018–2020 TDNS	Summary statistics from three years of the Talent Development Needs Survey (TDNS)
SBA Strategic Workforce Plan FY 2017–2020	The framework to assist the agency in meeting its human capital needs, helping to ensure that the SBA employs the right people at the right time in the right positions
Documentation on the PMC Interagency Program Cohort (including the PMC Interagency Rotational Program Cohort Overview and PMC email announcement)	Overview of the PMC Interagency Rotational Program, containing objectives, components, roles and responsibilities, frequently asked questions, and selection criteria
Documentation on the EIG program (including the EIG Information Notice and 2019 evaluation criteria)	High-level overview of the EIG Fellows Program, including selection criteria
SBA Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOP 39203—Senior Executive Service Management SOP • SOP 3306—Business and Professionals Distinguished Fellowship Program SOP • SOP 33021—Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives SOP • SOP 34101—Employee Talent Development Program SOP • SOP 2212—Phased Retirement Program SOP • SOP 3915 Revision 2A—Acquisition Career Development Program SOP
SBA Succession Planning Communications Plan	Describes the strategy for establishing visibility and ensuring support for the strategies and objectives in the leadership succession plan
SBA Succession Planning Implementation Plan	Defines the specific actions, responsibilities, milestones, and measures of success for each strategy of succession planning
SBA Dual-Rater Core Competency Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 summary tables • 2019 assessment reports for eight job occupational series
NFC Data Dictionary	Insight data dictionary for terms from the National Finance Center (employment personnel dataset)

Appendix F Detailed Secondary Data Analysis

This appendix provides additional details about the methodology used to assess the employment personnel dataset and the Dual-Rater Core Competency Assessment. Additional details for the Leadership and Succession Survey and the TDNS are provided separately as Microsoft Excel Workbooks, since both include a significant number of tables.

Employment Personnel Data

The employment personnel dataset, while rich with details and insightful, has a complex data structure. This section outlines the key steps taken in shaping the data and defining key variables. The process involved three distinct steps: the data was appended, cleaned, and then analyzed.

Appending the datasets

The dataset was provided to the Team in two MS Excel files. The process of turning two files into one dataset was straightforward; the Team simply appended all the observations from one file to the bottom of the other. The Team then checked to make sure that no observations were dropped and that data types were consistent and ready to be cleaned.

The appended dataset had 82,665 observations. Each observation had a unique identifier (“ID”), which is the primary unit of analysis. There were 4,781 unique ID records present in the initial raw dataset.

Cleaning the data

In accordance with direction from the SBA, the Team initiated the data cleaning process by excluding several specified observations from the dataset. Individuals with an employment type of “intermittent” or an appointment type that includes “temporary” were dropped, eliminating 2,178 observations, comprising 313 unique ID records. The Team also removed any career histories of less than 6 months, resulting in 763 observations and 356 unique ID records dropped. After all specified observation drops, the dataset contained 79,724 observations, representing 4,112 total unique ID records.

The Team then implemented definitions for program office. The SBA provided a mapping of program offices based on a combination of variables native to the employee personnel dataset, including:

- ORG_CODE_LEVEL_2_DESCR
- ORG_CODE_LEVEL_3_DESCR
- ORG_CODE_LEVEL_4_DESCR

The Team then created leadership status variables using definitions provided by the SBA (as defined in Section 2.2). The definition of promotion (outlined in Section 4.1.2) was incorporated within the data cleaning process. The Team also added data variable labels during this phase—for example, converting each 4-digit occupational code into an occupational title.

Analyzing the data

As previously mentioned, the employment personnel dataset structure is complex. Each observation represents an action within someone’s career, as opposed to each observation representing a single

career. The dataset has multiple observations per person, with dates and career actions scattered throughout each career history. The Team observed multiple career action entries within the same day for the same person. In order to accurately track changes (in office or grade, for example) over time within career histories that have multiple entries on the same date, the Team ignored duplicate date entries. No changes in the number of unique ID records occurred as a result.

Due to the data structure, there were three different sets of analytical variables made in preparation for statistical analysis: 1) instance-level variables, 2) individual-level variables, and 3) time-related variables.

Instance-level variables represent a particular career event, like a promotion or change in grade that occurred for a certain individual on a particular day between January 1, 2010, and December 19, 2020. These were constructed using either one variable or a combination of variables, depending on what was being tracked. In certain cases, where a change in program office, grade, or education level occurs, the instance-level variable created records for the date of the change and their resultant data points.

Individual-level variables represent things that do not change for someone over the course of their career. Many of the individual-level variables created by the Team are simply expanded versions of the instance-level equivalent. If someone received a temporary promotion halfway through their career, for example, their individual-level variable tracking temporary promotions would be flagged for every observation of their career history. These variables make pulling cross-tabulations at the individual level more seamless.

Time-related variables are either a running count of a certain career action or a difference in dates between two similar or equivalent career actions. For example, the Team created a running count that records the number of promotions someone experienced. The Team also constructed variables to track the number of days, weeks, and months between being hired and receiving a promotion, or between promotions. The first and final career action entries per year for each individual are also flagged in order to present year-end statistics for any of the years covered by the dataset.

Outside of these three types of variables, the only other piece of analysis that took place was grouping the quantitative variables into observational ranges or “buckets” so that tables produced by the Team are more easily interpreted. It is important to note that these bounded buckets are inclusive at both extremities. For example, a length of service of “11–15” is inclusive of those who have exactly 11 years of service and those with exactly 15 years of service. In this example, values are consistently whole numbers, so the next inclusive range is “16–20.”

Additional observations in the dataset—occupational series by grade at SBA program offices

This series of tables shows the breakdown of occupational series by grade level at different program offices at the SBA in 2020.

Table F-1: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Capital Access (2020)

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series	1 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.6%)	4 (100.0%)	5 (1.4%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	5 (3.9%)	5 (3.4%)	5 (9.8%)	4 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (5.3%)
GS-1101, General Business & Industry	6 (4.7%)	14 (9.7%)	13 (25.5%)	4 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	37 (10.4%)
GS-1160, Financial Analyst	0 (0.0%)	43 (29.7%)	13 (25.5%)	2 (7.1%)	0 (0.0%)	58 (16.3%)
GS-1165, Loan Specialist	104 (81.3%)	51 (35.2%)	12 (23.5%)	15 (53.6%)	0 (0.0%)	182 (51.1%)
GS-2210, IT Management	0 (0.0%)	12 (8.3%)	3 (5.9%)	1 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (4.5%)
Other	12 (9.4%)	20 (13.8%)	5 (9.8%)	1 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)	38 (10.7%)
Total	128 (100%)	145 (100%)	51 (100%)	28 100%	4 (100%)	356 (100%)

Table Notes:

*There are no employees observed in GS-0201 (Human Resource Management) and GS-1102 (Contract Specialists, Acquisition/Procurement Analysts).

Table F-2: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Government Contracting & Business Development

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series	1 (3.8%)	1 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.9%)
GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (7.1%)	2 (12.5%)	5 (100.0%)	9 (5.6%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	5 (19.2%)	10 (11.6%)	3 (10.7%)	2 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	20 (12.4%)
GS-1101, General Business & Industry	18 (69.2%)	21 (24.4%)	17 (60.7%)	8 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	64 (39.8%)
GS-1102, Contracting	0 (0.0%)	46 (53.5%)	4 (14.3%)	1 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	51 (31.7%)
GS-2210, IT Management	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.6%)
Other	2 (7.7%)	8 (9.3%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (8.1%)
Total	26 (100%)	86 (100%)	28 (100%)	16 (100%)	5 (100%)	161 (100%)

Table Notes:

*There are no employees observed in GS-0201 (Human Resource Management), GS-1160 (Financial Analyst), and GS-1165 (Loan Specialist).

Table F-3: Occupational series by grade at the Office of the General Counsel

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series	1 (16.7%)	1 (5.6%)	1 (2.1%)	1 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.3%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.8%)
GS-2210, IT Management	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.8%)
Other	5 (83.3%)	16 (88.9%)	46 (95.8%)	42 (97.7%)	7 (100.0%)	116 (95.1%)
Total	6 (100%)	18 (100%)	48 (100%)	43 (100%)	7(100%)	122 (100%)

Table Notes:

*There are no employees observed in GS-0201 (Human Resource Management), GS-0340 (Program Management), GS-1101 (General Business and Industry), GS-1160 (Financial Analyst), and GS-1165 (Loan Specialist).

Table F-4: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Performance, Planning, and the Chief Financial Officer

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (13.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.9%)
GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (100.0%)	5 (4.9%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	1 (8.3%)	1 (3.1%)	3 (7.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (4.9%)
GS-1102, Contracting	0 (0.0%)	8 (25.0%)	9 (23.1%)	2 (13.3%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (18.4%)
GS-2210, IT Management	1 (8.3%)	2 (6.3%)	6 (15.4%)	1 (6.7%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (9.7%)
Other	10 (83.3%)	21 (65.6%)	21 (53.8%)	10 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)	62 (60.2%)
Total	12 (100%)	32 (100%)	39 (100%)	15 (100%)	5 (100%)	103 (100%)

Table Notes:

*There are no employees observed in GS-0201 (Human Resource Management), GS-1101 (General Business and Industry), GS-1160 (Financial Analyst), and GS-1165 (Loan Specialist).

Table F-5: Occupational series by grade at the Office Investment and Innovation

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series	1 (33.3%)	1 (2.6%)	2 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (5.9%)
GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (100.0%)	2 (2.9%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	2 (66.7%)	1 (2.6%)	2 (10.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (7.4%)
GS-1101, General Business & Industry	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.3%)	1 (5.3%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (5.9%)

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-1160, Financial Analyst	0 (0.0%)	20 (52.6%)	8 (42.1%)	5 (71.4%)	0 (0.0%)	33 (48.5%)
GS-2210, IT Management	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.5%)
Other	0 (0.0%)	14 (36.8%)	5 (26.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (27.9%)
Total	3 (100%)	38 (100%)	19 (100%)	7 (100%)	1 (100%)	68 (100%)

Table Notes:

*There are no employees observed in GS-0201 (Human Resource Management), GS-1102 (Contracting), and GS-1165 (Loan Specialist).

Table F-6: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Information Technology

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series	1 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.8%)
GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (100%)	2 (5.56%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	0 (0.0%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.56%)
GS-1101, General Business & Industry	0 (0.0%)	4 (44.4%)	17 (89.5%)	4 (80.0%)	0 (0.0%)	25 (69.4%)
GS-2210, IT Management	0 (0.0%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.8%)
Other	0 (0.0%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (5.3%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (13.9%)
Total	1 (100%)	9 (100%)	19 (100%)	5 (100%)	2 (100%)	36 (100%)

Table Notes:

*There are no employees observed in GS-0201 (Human Resource Management), GS-1102 (Contracting), GS-1160 (Financial Analyst), and GS-1165 (Loan Specialist).

Table F-7: Occupational series by grade at the Office of Entrepreneurial Development

Occupational Series	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	Total
GS-0301, Miscellaneous Administration and Program Series	2 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (9.4%)
GS-0340, Program Manager (SES, District Directors, and Senior Level Managers)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (33.3%)	1 (100%)	3 (9.4%)
GS-0343, Management and Program Analysis	0 (0.0%)	2 (33.3%)	10 (58.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (37.5%)
GS-1101, General Business & Industry	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (9.4%)
GS-2210, IT Management	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.1%)
Other	0 (0.0%)	3 (50.0%)	7 (41.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (31.3%)
Total	2 (100%)	6 (100%)	17 (100%)	6 (100%)	1 (100%)	32 (100%)

Dual-Rater Core Competency Assessment

The SBA conducted Dual-Rater Assessments of skills gaps in 2018 and 2019. In this process¹⁵, the SBA used working groups of subject-matter experts (SMEs) to identify competencies needed for each occupation and behavioral indicators for each competency. Employees and their supervisors then rate themselves on their performance for each competency. The Dual-Rater Assessment reveals employee competencies or gaps on core knowledge and skill sets identified by working groups of SMEs chosen by OHRs. The SBA provided the Team with summary statistics for the 2018 and 2019 assessments as well as raw data for the 2019 assessment. The SBA also provided eight 2019 Competency Assessment Report documents summarizing core competencies of SBA staff by eight job occupational series. The Team used the 2018 summary statistics, the 2019 data, and the eight Competency Assessment Reports to address Sub-question 1.4.

Since the 2018 Dual-Rater Assessment was only available as summary statistics, the Team could not make in-depth comparisons between 2018 and 2019 data to assess changes in core skills assessed between the two years. Rather, the Team compared the aggregate data collected at the MCO level to make comparisons between the two assessments. Specifically, the Team used the SBA's definition and highlighted skills with a negative gap of equal to or greater than -1 (negative one) as a skill gap, presenting a developmental opportunity. Using these criteria, the Team identified gaps for each MCO across the two assessment years.

Talent Development Needs Survey

To inform Research Question 1.4, the Team used the 2018–2020 TDNS data to report SBA employees' responses to specific questions regarding training opportunities. The Team assessed questions on two topics:

- Questions that address SBA staff opinions on **general training opportunities** and the SBA's approach to helping employees plan their training for professional development
- Questions that assess SBA staff opinions on **training opportunities for specific skill sets**

TDNS Questions on General Training Opportunities

1. How are your training and professional development needs most frequently assessed?
2. Estimated number of training hours completed in FY XX?
3. If you did not take as much training in the last year as you wanted, please indicate the primary reason why not?
4. Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are living documents that help employees and supervisors identify and agree upon the employee's plan for continued professional development and training. Select the answer(s) that best reflect(s) your current position regarding your Individual Development Plan (IDP).
5. Does your supervisor support/would your supervisor support the idea of using IDPs within your office?

TDNS Questions on Specific Skill-Set Training Opportunities

1. I would benefit from the following Core Skills training. Please select up to 3 of the following choices.

¹⁵ This process was described in documentation provided by the SBA, "The MCO Initiative Summary."

2. What type(s) of Acquisition training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office?
Please select up to 3 of the following choices.
3. What type(s) of Budget & Financial skills development, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office? Please select up to 3 choices from the following choices.
4. What type(s) of Business Management training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office? Please select up to 3 of the following choices.
5. What type(s) of training on Lending activities, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office? Please select up to 3 of the following choices.
6. What type(s) of training on Grants Management activities, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office? Please select your top 3 choices.
7. What type(s) of Supervisory training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office?
Please select up to 3 responses.
8. What types of HR training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office? Please select up to 3 choices.
9. What kinds of training about Data would be useful for you or your office? Choose up to three of the following choices.
10. What type(s) of Information Technology training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office? Please select up to 3 of the following choices.
11. With our goal of moving to high-value IT skills, what interest do you have in developing your proficiency or aptitude in any the following areas: (select all that apply)
12. What type(s) of Leadership training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office?
Please select your top 3 choices.
13. What type(s) of Legal training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office? Please select your top 3 choices.
14. What type(s) of Strategy/Planning training, if any, would benefit you and/or your Program Office? Please select your top 3 choices.