



**Environmental  
Finance  
Center**  
Syracuse University



# Knowledge Transfer:

How to make sure you know what you don't know when you experience staffing changes

Thursday, April 6, 2023

[efc.syr.edu](http://efc.syr.edu)

# What do we know?

“There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. These are things we don't know we don't know.”

--Donald Rumsfeld



What Keeps  
You Up At  
Night?

# Human Capital Management



# Human Capital Criticality



# Succession Planning





Employees Leave.

They always do.

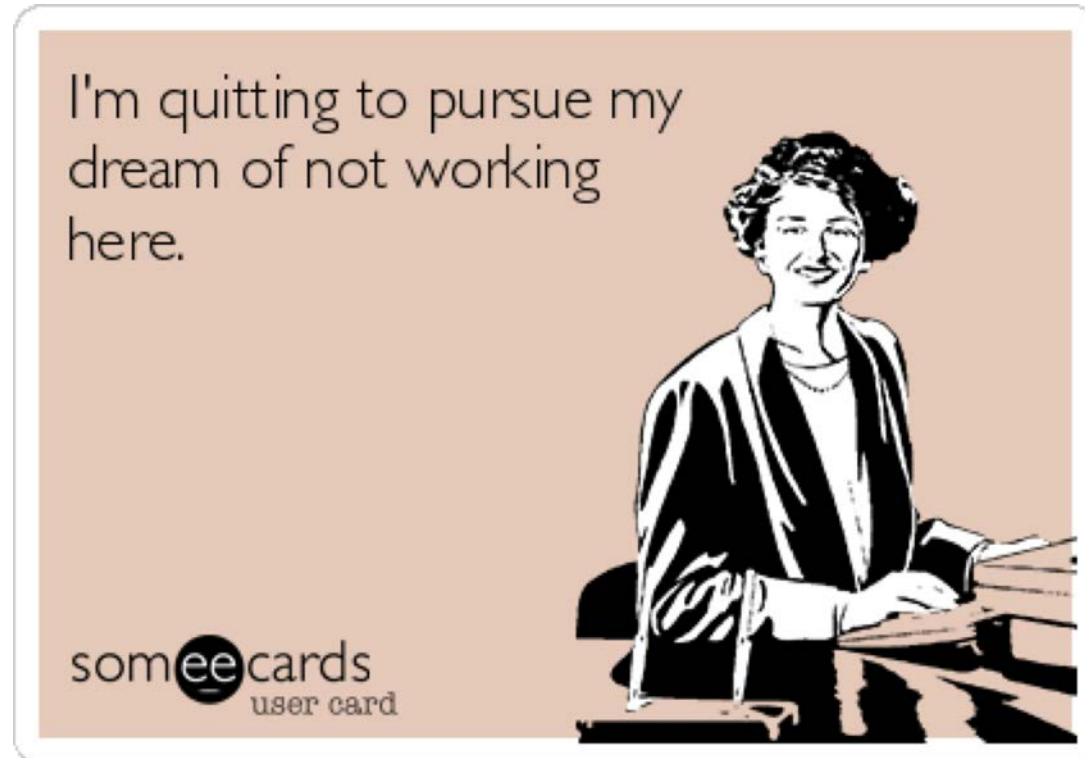
Preparation for that day  
is Succession Planning



# Identify Who is Leaving...and When

Which jobs are likely to experience retirements in the next five years?

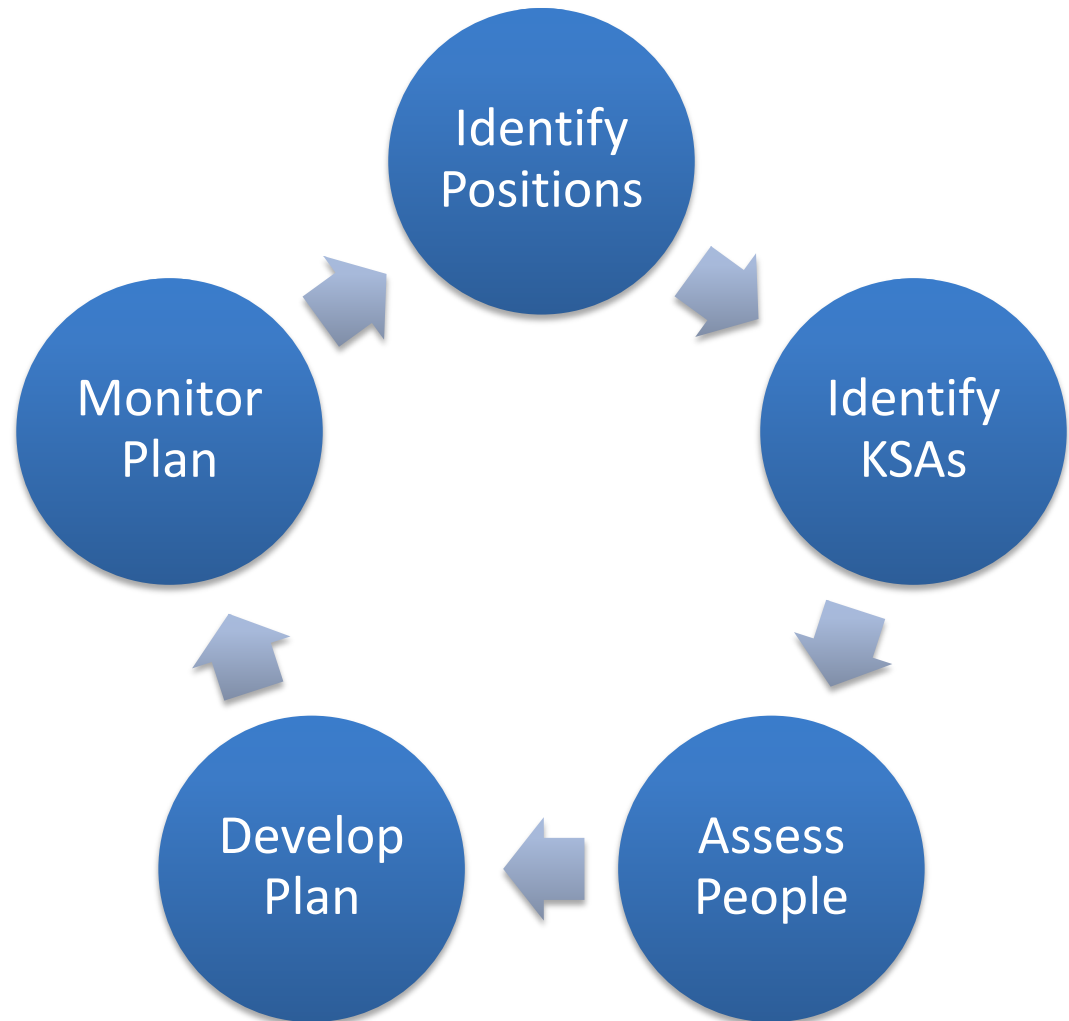
What is the impact?





# Succession Plan

Proactive approach to **building replacement workers** to ensure **continuity**, by identifying potential successors in ***critical*** tasks



# Gap Analysis



Current  
State

GAP



Key factors for change



Desired  
State



Action Plan

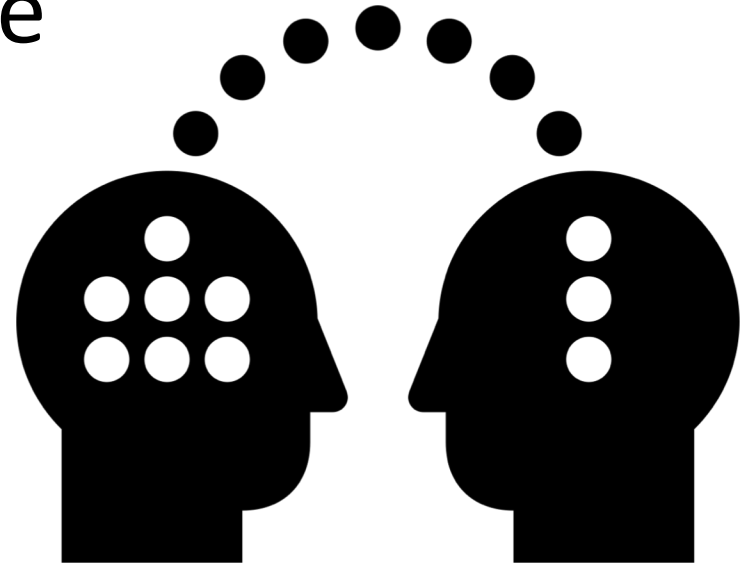
# Knowledge Transfer

Keeping the  
“know-how”  
when you lose  
employees



# What to Transfer

- Institutional knowledge
- Technical know-how
- Tips and habits
- Internal and external relationships





## Knowledge Transfer

It's not about what you know... it's about what you share

# Knowledge Transfer Exercise

*If I Knew Then...What I Know Now...*







If you could go back in time...  
what 3 pieces of advice would you go  
back and tell yourself?



Who knows what, and when are they  
leaving? Are you worried about knowledge  
loss? Capacity?



If you had to leave the job quickly,  
what would you need to pass along,  
and how?

# Types of Knowledge

## EXPLICIT vs. TACIT KNOWLEDGE



### • **Explicit Knowledge:**

- ✓ Manuals
- ✓ Documents
- ✓ Procedures
- ✓ How-To-Guides
- ✓ Videos
- ✓ Databases
- ✓ Memos
- ✓ Notes
- ✓ Records

### • **Tacit Knowledge:**

- ✓ Individual Skills
- ✓ Expertise
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Experience
- ✓ Ideas
- ✓ Insights
- ✓ Intuition
- ✓ Observations
- ✓ Cultural Beliefs
- ✓ Values
- ✓ Attitudes
- ✓ Mental Models

# Methods for Transferring

Overlapping positions

Desk manuals

Pictures, video

Interviews

Work teams

Job shadowing



# Transfer Through **Documentation**



*Manuals*



*Maps*



*Photos*



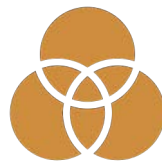
*Videos*



*Notebooks*



*GIS*



*system  
diagrams*



*as-built  
drawings*



*policy guides*

# Transfer Through **Training & Development**



*Online*



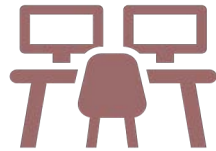
*Workshops*



*Mentoring*



*Computer  
simulations*



*Classroom*



*Inter-agency*



*In house  
training*

# Transfer Processes & Practices



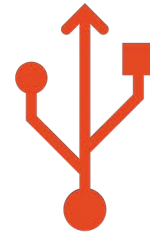
Maintenance  
schedules



Day-to-day  
Operations



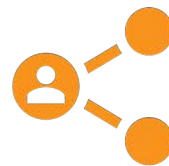
regulated work



Technology



Training and  
Mentoring



Job sharing



# Position Knowledge Inventory

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Community/Organization/Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Years in your current position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Years since you first started at your Community/Organization/Department:**

\_\_\_\_\_

## Step 1: Organizational Goals

*The purpose of this Inventory is to get an idea of the knowledge and responsibilities required to fulfill your current job position. Before we get to your specific knowledge, it's important to think about your organization's mission or goals so that the community can continue receiving all the services your job provides long after you leave that position.*

Attach a copy of your community, organization, or department's overall mission, vision, and/or goals. Highlight the sections of these organizational documents to which you have contributed during your tenure.

Expand on the previous task by explaining in detail how your position helps your community, organization, or department achieve their mission or goals. In what ways does your job help carry out the mission?

## Step 2: Critical Responsibilities and Activities

*There are probably some aspects of your work that only you know how to address. In this step you are developing a list of those tasks and activities. Use questions below to help guide you in creating your list.*

What are you the “go to” person for in your current position?

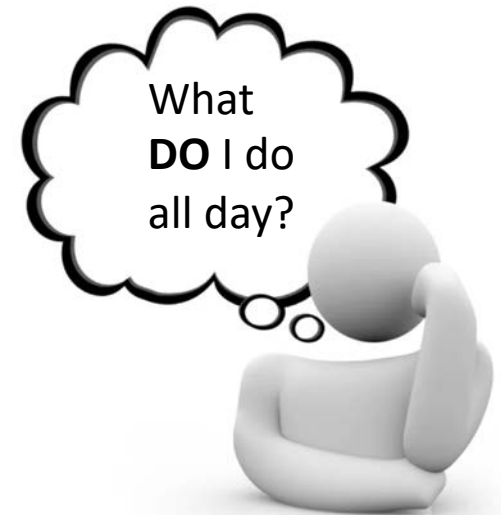
What things in your position do only you know how to do?

What responsibilities does your office rely on you for?

If you left your position today,  
what wouldn't get done because  
no one else knows how to do it?

When you return from vacation or otherwise being away from work, what work is usually waiting for you because no one else knows how to do it? When you're not working, is there anything you worry won't be done well while you're gone? If so, what?

If you are a supervisor, who reports to you and how often do you meet with them? Who counts on you to accomplish their own responsibilities? Are there other people outside of your official supervisory role who also tend to come to you for help because of your experience?



What information or experience would someone need to have in order to carry out your main responsibilities? Focus especially on things only you know and that others need to learn.

Is this knowledge and expertise currently available and accessible from anyone else in your work area? If so, who? If not, who might be the ideal person to take on those responsibilities?



### **Step 3: Position Knowledge & Experience**

*Now that you have identified aspects of your work that only you know how to address, use the questions below to start thinking about other knowledge and experience required to fulfill your job responsibilities*

Do you have a list of physical assets that are ‘assigned’ to you, or that you use exclusively? Examples would include a computer, vehicle, software programs, files, or other equipment or documents.

Yes    No

If Yes, do these assets require Usernames/Passwords/keys?

If Yes, would someone be able to find them if you were absent?

If Yes, are there any other physical assets assigned to you that you did not mention above (e.g. Equipment)?

Yes    No

If Yes, what are those physical assets?

Do any of the assets you mentioned above come with a written Manual/Instructions?

Yes  No  Not Sure

If Yes, are the instructions helpful or would you add to them? Please mention which asset(s) they are for.

Does your position depend on communication with any key contacts (internal or external)? Examples would include vendors, contractors, city/county staff, or employees at other departments.

Yes  No

If Yes, do those contacts include external agencies or regulatory groups (e.g. City/State/Federal)?

Yes  No

If Yes, do you maintain a list of these contacts, and if so where would someone be able to locate it?

Yes  No

Does your position require you to frequently visit any key locations (training rooms, offices, etc.)?

Yes  No

If Yes, do you maintain a list of these locations, and if so where would someone be able to locate it?

Yes  No

Are you responsible for managing financial or budgetary documents as part of your job?

Yes  No

If Yes, which documents are you in charge of? Are they also managed by other people or do you have sole responsibility for each of them?

Are there other critical or historic files that one must know about or use in your position?

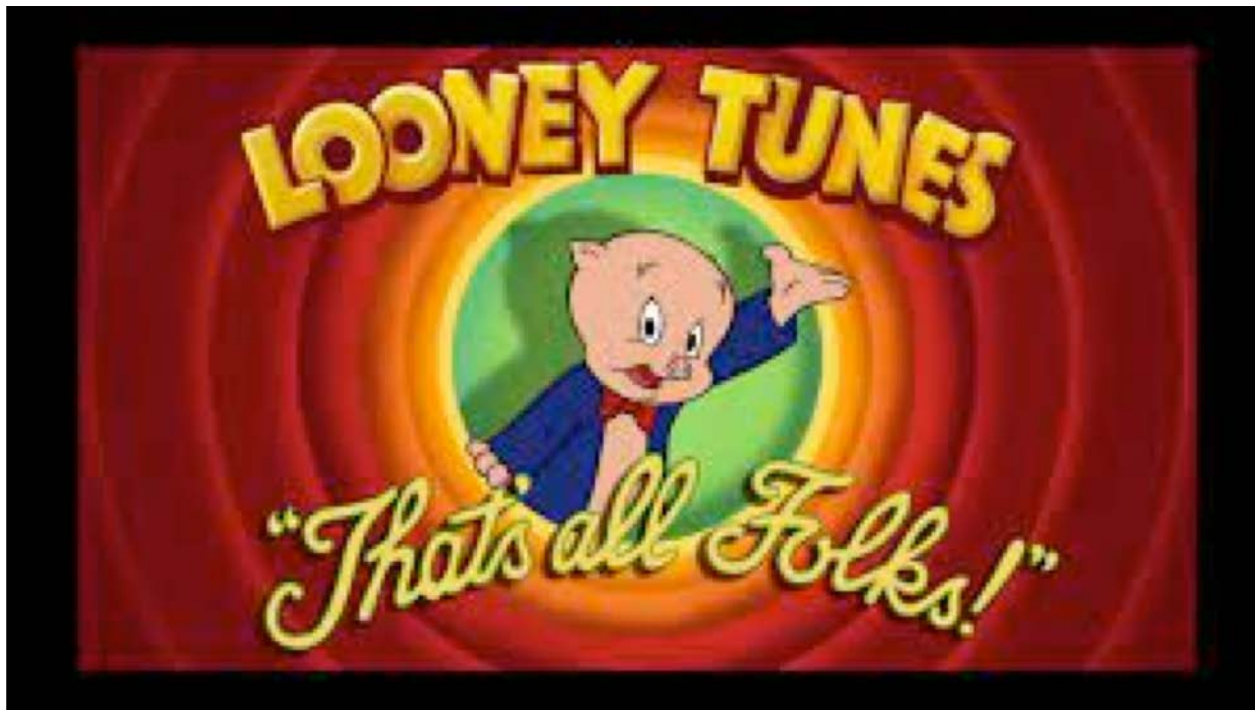
Yes  No  Not Sure

If Yes, what historic or critical files are required for your position?

If Yes, do you know where one would access these files?

Yes  No





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