

**BEYOND SUCCESSION PLANNING: PRESERVING ORGANIZATIONAL MEMORY  
IN STATE COURT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**



Institute for Court Management  
ICM Fellows Program  
2014-2015 Court Project Phase  
May 2015

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## **Acknowledgment**

The ICM Fellows Program has proven to be all that I thought it would be and more! Upon admittance into the program, I knew this program would not be an easy feat coupled with existing responsibilities, but one I felt would prove rewarding in the end. With my faith in tow; support and understanding of my family, co-workers and the ICM Fellows Program staff, this phase of the program would not be possible.

The Fellows Program Dean, Dr. Dan Straub, is such a wealth of knowledge about all things court administration, and he freely shares his experiences with the Fellows Program candidates. I'd like to extend a special note of thanks to Nicole Waters Ph.D., for her intervention and gentle persuasion during the early Court Project Phase, and to Amy McDowell for her encouraging words, support and commitment during this final phase.

I also wish to express appreciation and gratitude to Director and Fellows Alumna Class of 2000, Marla Moore, for her continued support and encouragement. Throughout my tenure at the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts (JC/AOC), she has challenged me and opened pathways which have allowed me to hone my craft and expand my professional footprint. There are few greater rewards bestowed upon an employee than a leader who sees potential in her employees, and is willing to invest in them so they, too, may succeed and achieve.

I would also like to thank the staff of the JC/AOC Offices of Human Resources and Research, Planning and Statistical Analysis. Your understanding, technical assistance with my charts and maps, and willingness to answer my questions were invaluable.

To my family who has always shown me unconditional love and supported me in the pursuit of my dreams and aspirations – a heartfelt thank you! Your encouraging words, unselfish acts and deeds have made this endeavor possible. I trust I have made you all proud while setting an example for my little one to always set his goals high and give your best.

Throughout my adult life, I have been blessed with exciting job opportunities and encountered talented minds along the way. Out of each experience I have gained invaluable knowledge or experiences which have prepared me for advancements in my career. I acknowledge it is through God's grace and mercy that I am at this appointed place and time. I humbly receive His blessings, and am eternally grateful for all that I have, and for those things yet to come.

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# **BEYOND SUCCESSION PLANNING: PRESERVING ORGANIZATIONAL MEMORY IN STATE COURT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**

**Stephanie Hines**

## **Abstract**

Organizational memory, commonly referred to as institutional memory, is not a new phenomenon. Mainly due to the many technology advancements made within the last decade has this concept come to light, particularly in the private sector. The opposite is true in the public sector. This concept is almost non-existent in courts and court administrative offices. The lack of organizational memory and knowledge transfer mechanisms in the judicial system is most disturbing since courts are in the business of recordkeeping. Sadly, recordkeeping management is primarily limited to archival of court citations, dispositions, orders, and dockets.

In the last decade, economists, human resources professionals, and workforce planning experts have predicted a mass exodus of Baby-Boomers in the workplace. It was just a few years ago that this group of workers comprised the largest workforce within many companies and organizations. As time brings about changes, employers now face the harsh reality of not only losing a significant percentage of their workforce, but also critical knowledge possessed by those workers in linchpin positions. As a result many organizations will likely experience what is most commonly known as “brain drain.” The courts, like other private and public sector entities, grapple with the dilemma of how to preserve valuable institutional knowledge and experiences that will leave with these workers. Although succession planning is a widely recognized practice,

oftentimes used to prepare a pipeline of skilled and talented workers, additional measures are needed to retain organizational memory.

This court project seeks to expand beyond the scope of traditional succession planning in court state administrative offices (SAOs) (for the purposes of this research, Administrative Offices of the Courts (AOC) and Offices of the State Court Administrator (OSCA)) specifically to examine how SAOs are working to preserve organizational memory – the history, experiences, specialized knowledge and business processes acquired by key players in the organization who are aging out of the workforce. As a result, the following research questions were presented:

- *Which state court administrator's offices have a formal succession plan program?*
- *Which employees are selected to participate in succession planning programs? Are all given the same level of priority? Is participation in the program voluntary or by appointment?*
- *What roles do court administrators/senior managers/ and human resources professionals play in succession planning?*
- *In addition to performance evaluations, what tools or criteria are used to identify emerging leaders within the organization?*

Human resources leaders and equivalents, assigned with oversight of personnel responsibilities, in SAOs from across the country were invited to participate in a survey. A questionnaire was administered to glean: 1) the number of succession planning programs which have been planned and/or implemented to date; 2) methods by which offices capture and preserve organizational memory from an aging workforce; 3) how often essential business processes and procedures are documented; and 4) the frequency agencies rehire retirees (specifically, former employees). As a follow-up to

the survey, phone interviews were conducted among a convenience sampling of respondents to assess the value in preserving institutional knowledge, if any, and the types of knowledge transfer systems used.

Based on the feedback received from the questionnaire and phone interviews, the majority of respondents reported no formal or planned succession planning programs; however, many offices have developed informal initiatives used to capture the institutional knowledge and organizational memory from workers in key positions. Examples of knowledge transfer systems include, but are not limited to, mentoring programs, digitized and written records captured during exit interviews, rehiring of retired staff, cross training, desk manuals, and training initiatives. Most actions are initiated by human resources staff versus other court leaders, meaning that there are additional opportunities to enhance knowledge transfer by involving other key SAO members.

Research also revealed that those SAO's which offer succession planning options such as professional development or leadership opportunities typically identify candidates through a selective or hybrid process. The hybrid process consists of employees who either volunteer to participate or management identifies staff to enroll in such programs. Both methods of selection were equally utilized. As a result, no formal selection criterion was used to select candidates for leadership development. Not only were performance evaluations considered, but employees who expressed interest were granted entry, or managers observed growth potential in said candidates.

The general consensus echoed by most respondents was that judges and court administrators are too busy with pressing issues which take priority over efforts to

preserve organizational memory. In recent years, e-filing, case management systems, docket backlogs and budget shortfalls have become hot-button issues. Yet, it is equally important for court leadership to recognize that human capital is one of the single most critical elements which drive the courts. Absent the human capital - the knowledge, skills and abilities that employees bring to the workplace, SAO's and courts would be adversely impacted in their efforts to do justice.

## Introduction

The Court Services Division managers and staff were feverishly working together to put the finishing touches in place for Michael Cornell's retirement reception in the Judicial Conference Room. Plans for the reception had been in the works for quite some time and the day had finally come for Michael's colleagues and co-workers to recognize him for his many contributions and service to the courts. Michael had rendered 36 years of faithful service to the State of Georgia, twenty years to the Office of the State Court Administrator (OSCA).

Tomorrow Michael transitions into retirement, the next phase of life revered by so many. At this juncture, he like other Baby Boomers are presented with the option of tossing out the alarm clock and trading in the crisp ironed button-down shirts or pristine dresses in exchange for their favorite cotton t-shirts, jeans or chinos. Michael has tendered his last Court Services monthly report; submitted his final whitepaper in support of program budget enhancements for FY 16, and facilitated the last meeting of the Judicial Council Strategic Plan Special Implementation Committee. Michael has reached the pivotal moment in his career where it's time to pass the torch - step aside and allow his successor Jenny to take the reins.

For the last year and half Jenny has been an active participant in the agency's leadership development program. This program is one component of the agency's succession plan program. Although Jenny has demonstrated great potential and readiness in assuming her new role, she probably has not been privy to all the intricate details, inner workings, and 30 plus years of unique experience Michael acquired during

his tenure at the OSCA. Hence, much of the institutional knowledge and organizational memory acquired by Michael will leave when he walks out the door.

While the agency's leadership development program curriculum is quite robust as it addresses the prescribed core competencies for court leaders and other management essentials, it lacks specific practices and processes for mitigating the impact of critical knowledge loss. In an ideal world, the availability of such systems or processes could very well expedite Jenny's learning curve time, exponentially; especially if confronted with non-procedural challenges in the workplace. During her time in the program, Jenny has only been introduced to a few external and internal key players. She has not been made privy to the countless unwritten practices and conventions – all of which may adversely impact her decision-making. For these reasons and others, preserving organizational memory is beneficial because it can serve as a resource. In Jenny's case, the availability of a similar repository may provide her with some immediate options to consider which could direct her to the appropriate person(s) for guidance, or lend some insight to her dilemma.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2015) defines retirement as “withdrawal from one's position or occupation or active working life.” Unfortunately for the agency described above, Michael's departure may cause a slight interruption in workflow and production for a period of time. This observation is not to suggest that Michael or anyone in the workplace is indispensable, but rather that the institutional knowledge he acquired during his career, if not properly curated, may adversely impact the workflow of those left behind.

From the time employees enter the workforce, and throughout their tenure of service, they are often reminded by human resources, the employee retirement system or others *to plan for retirement*. The resounding message is heard over and over again. Yet, when it comes to planning and developing talent within the courts to fill positions vacated by retirees and others, such efforts are minimal or nonexistent. So, why are court leaders not as proactive when it comes to devoting the same level of attention to planning and developing new talent? Is it not a mutually beneficial investment for the court? Some common explanations for the lack of succession plans and organizational memory systems range from economic downturn, attrition, lack of internal expertise, or that it is not a priority. Whatever the reason, taking steps to ensure the viability of a competent workforce is always a prudent business decision.

Succession planning is a commonly used talent management process purposed for preparing a talented pool of staff available to transition into linchpin positions. While this type of systematic approach is widely utilized in the private sector, the public sector - especially the courts - has been slow to integrate succession planning into organizational or strategic business plans. Some obvious benefits to having such plans are that it allows for continuity of operations, promotes retention of highly skilled workers by creating career paths and helps to preserve organizational memory. While the three areas referenced above are important, maintaining organizational memory is the primary concept on which this court project focused.

Only within the last decade has there been a concerted effort within some SAO's (for the purposes of this research, Administrative Offices of the Courts (AOC) and Offices of the State Court Administrator (OSCA)) and local courts to steer their

organizations towards succession planning. In general, today's workforce is comprised of a cadre of multi-generational workers spanning across four generations. In any SAO around the country, there is the presence of Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X'ers and Y'ers, and soon to be a fifth group known as Generation Z (Shah, 2014).

Court offices, like many other organizations, find that Boomers make up approximately 35 to 43% of the total workforce. Many of the Baby Boomers are projected to age out of the workplace and into retirement within 5 years (Jackson 2014). If this representation holds true for most SAOs, a tremendous amount of institutional knowledge and specialized skillsets will disappear with these workers.

What can be done to minimize the effects of this exodus? Succession planning is a feasible option designed to increase the pool of high potential staff; yet, there is one more critical aspect to the planning process. It is merely not enough to run emerging leaders through a series of leadership development courses. How do they become adept at learning the processes and inner workings of the organization, as well as building on relationships forged by the former worker? This concept of maintaining organizational memory, sometimes referred to as institutional memory, isn't always clearly leveraged or articulated. The question then becomes how is it achieved? Through additional research and exploration, this court project examined what processes or strategies are used, and to what extent, court executives and judicial leaders use to preserve organizational memory. The research reviewed SAOs efforts towards succession planning, and the existence that organizational memory plays in such strategic workforce planning efforts.

## **Literature Review**

In 2009, Keith E. Robinson, Ed.D conducted research to evaluate the effect of succession planning in trial court systems. The recommendations of the research revealed that court leaders see the value in creating a strong judicial workforce through succession planning, but lack the organizational culture to foster such efforts. This preliminary evidence suggests that most court systems do not champion such planning as a high ranking priority. Typically, a state court administrator's priorities are set by the presiding (or chief) judge. Therefore, formal preservation of institutional memory is believed unlikely to be on their radar unless one or more key players are on board.

### **Repository for Stability**

A group of judicial officials from Louisiana hold an annual conference entitled, *Nuts and Bolts*. The group convenes to discuss trending issues occurring in courthouses throughout their state. In June of 2014, one of the conference topics featured succession planning, which included a presentation slide that referenced, "Courts must retain institutional knowledge and memory...to maintain organizational stability." (LA Nuts & Bolts Succession Planning Seminar, 2014). Although not a hugely popular issue among courts in general, these judicial officials recognized the importance institutional memory plays in sustaining organizational stability. Establishing a repository of information allows organizations to archive research activities, grants, organizations and outputs; therefore, ultimately making them more effective and efficient. This idea

further iterates the premise of this research – the need for state administrative offices to become proactive in maintaining organizational memory and knowledge.

In recent years, courts have begun to adopt and integrate many practices found in the private sector, such as succession planning. Unfortunately, they lag behind in the area of knowledge transfer among workers. Therefore, one might surmise that the development of preserving organizational memory in the courts is light-years away. Perhaps if state administrative offices and court leaders understood the value of knowledge retention, greater effort and resources would be devoted to this area.

David DeLong, author of *Lost Knowledge: Confronting the Threat of an Aging Workforce*, asserts there are three types of knowledge that workers may possess: 1) Human knowledge: specific expertise or skills, such as understanding a critical legacy database; 2) Social knowledge: relationships between people, such as the networks cultivated by senior leaders and sales professionals; and 3) Cultural knowledge: understanding the way things actually get done in an organization, such as how to quickly find the right person to answer an important question.

One quasi-governmental organization that seemingly grasps the breadth of DeLong's theory is the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). The TVA was established by Congress in 1933 but by the late 1990's it had become a self-sustaining public power provider. Boasting more than 12,000 employees and faced with a projection of nearly 40% of its workforce affected by attrition within 3-5 years, mainly due to retirement, its leaders realized something had to be done to retain the "unique, undocumented knowledge" of its workers from walking out the door (Tennessee Valley Authority, n.d.). To minimize the adverse effects and loss of organizational memory, the company

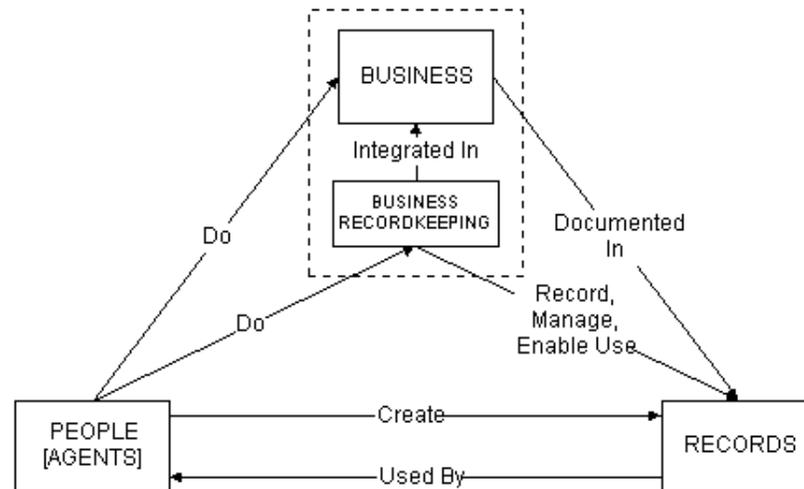
leaders developed several workforce planning programs to aide with capturing the critical information acquired over the years by retiring workers.

### **Repository to Aid in Problem-Solving**

As referenced by Joan-Josep Valibe' (2009), a researcher with the Institute of Law and Technology, the process of knowledge management is a dubious one for these organizations. For decades, courts, AOC's and SAO's have excelled at preserving organizational memory as applied to judicial administration. Important information has been routinely captured by case management systems, and scanning file systems such as Laserfiche. Is it not the nature of courts to store, manage, and track records of legal proceedings? This role has been nearly perfected when it comes to procedural matters. However, the means to share or draw upon the practical knowledge that lies within its own members is absent. The absence of a repository with potential ready-made solutions to access organizational memory hampers the learning of new staff.

Figure 1 below displays a flowchart of a Recordkeeping Repository. It exhibits how a business or organization is reliant on its ability to record and retain information. The repository is created and used by its employees and agents.

**Figure 1. Recordkeeping Repository**



(Credit: <http://www.sims.monash.edu.au/subjects/ims5010/topics/t1fig2.gif>)

### **Technology Enterprise: The Brokering Model**

One popular school of thought for knowledge transfer is the use of technology enterprise as a mechanism for preserving institutional memory. While technology is a viable resource, unless workers feel compelled to share what they know and know where to go and how to retrieve the information, the repository is of little benefit. Ken Berlack (2010) suggests that not only are advanced IT systems needed, but organizations must integrate “responsibly open [office] policies around social media.” His theory coincides with that of David Gilmour’s (2003) argument that technology is paramount, but that utilizing a brokering model is the best approach. Through the brokering model, technology is used to connect people, which in turn help to promote information sharing. It is incumbent that court leaders and HR professionals create a work environment that encourages sharing of information. This position may call for a culture change in the workplace, but one that is well worth it. Technology should not be

used solely for the purpose of “flooding people with information” but also used to build connections and relationships (Gilmour, 2003).

In fact, one HR Director interviewed for this project alluded to such fact. His office uses technology to promote this type of brokering or sharing of information as a way to preserve organizational memory. A bonus is that the process is a simple one – the office uses a database in Microsoft Access to document by topic or subject matter how judicial disciplinary matters are handled. Although the database does not contain sensitive or confidential information, it provides an immediate “go to” place to retrieve valuable information on past practices or processes which have been used.

### **Continuity through Workforce Assessment**

Dr. Andrew Pena (2013) references a recommendation made by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) about the importance of governmental agencies identifying leadership competencies within their workforce in an effort to ensure continuity. He contends that continuity can only be achieved through workforce assessments. Based on assessments, organizations are better positioned to create customized programs designed to help retain critical information which may be lost with retiring workers. Such strategies include mentoring, specialized training, job sharing and documentation of job processes. The utilization of senior staff – those either aging out into retirement or in key leadership positions - can be effective serving as trainers or mentors for upcoming leaders.

In conclusion, the literature review reveals there are an abundance of methods and processes which can be utilized by court organizations to retain organizational

memory. While some of the methods may be cost-prohibitive, especially when considering complex electronic storage systems, other options are available. Some simple steps that SAO leaders can take to facilitate preservation of organizational memory include taking at-risk knowledge assessments, ramping up exit interviews to incorporate tactical questions about internal operations, creating simple databases as repositories and expanding succession programs to incorporate shadowing of veteran workers by less experienced workers. Regardless of the organizational memory method selected, any of the above measures can be used to achieve organizational stability.

## Methods

Two data collection methods were used for this project. The first phase entailed a brief 12 question survey distributed to human resources professionals via the COSCAHR listserv (See Appendix A). The listserv was comprised of approximately 85 members, which also included some AOC/AOC directors, employment attorneys, and others who are peripherally involved in employment and staffing matters. To filter duplicative responses as part of the survey pre-test, and for the purpose of conducting follow-up interviews, respondents were asked to provide contact information if willing to participate in a follow-up interview.. The survey was circulated for an initial 2.5 weeks during the month of September with the deadline extended until September 30, 2014 to increase the response rate.

The survey questions explored the issues of succession planning, methods of knowledge transfer and retention within the courts. The questions were entered into a survey tool – Survey Monkey - which allowed survey participants to remain anonymous if desired. A web link was forwarded for distribution through the COSCAHR listserv. Results from the survey were checked two times per week. After the survey window closed, twenty-two responses were received and compiled; providing a response rate of 26%. Tools were applied to explore relationships between the questions and interpret the survey results; specifically, machine learning and a statistical package (SPSS) were used to interpret responses. Survey responses provided insight regarding the influence of succession planning and leadership programs on the hiring of internal candidates for top management positions. In addition, respondents provided information regarding methods currently used for knowledge transfer and retention.

Following the survey, six individuals were selected for interviews using a convenience sampling method based on the provision of contact information by survey respondents. Interviews commenced at the conclusion of the survey period and were conducted via telephone. Five follow-up interview questions were posed to delve into the internal practices of courts and to identify strategies used to preserve organizational memory. Interview questions followed an open-ended format. For a copy of the interview script, see Appendix B.

## Findings

### **Finding 1: Survey Results Reveal that Greater Than One-third of Respondents' Workforce is Retirement-eligible Within the Next Three to Five Years.**

Among the SAOs that are represented by survey respondents, a sizeable portion of the workforce is retirement eligible, as depicted in Figure 1. Responses suggest that more than one-third of the workforces of participating SAOs will be eligible to retire within the next three to five years. This suggests that efforts to preserve organizational memory are timely, and that the urgency of preserving organizational memory is driven by the loss of institutional memory or knowledge by aging workers.

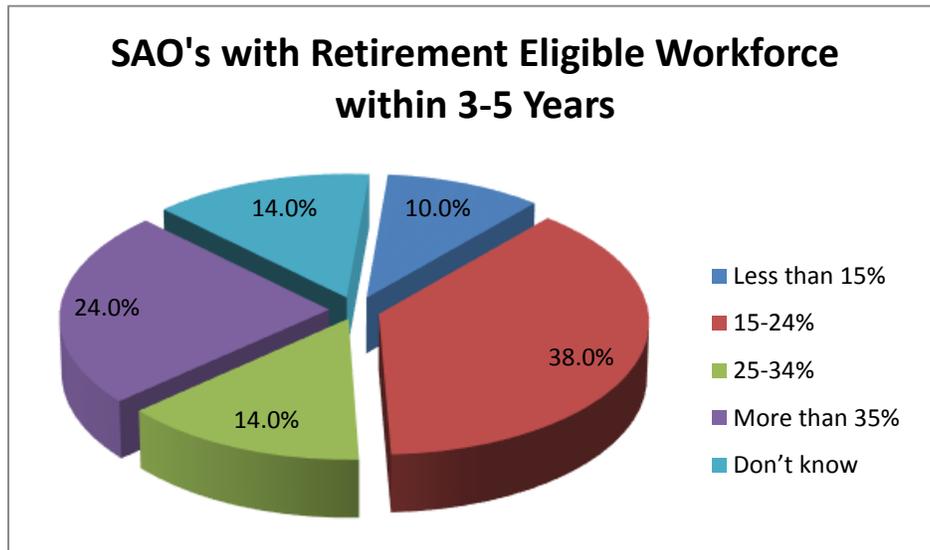


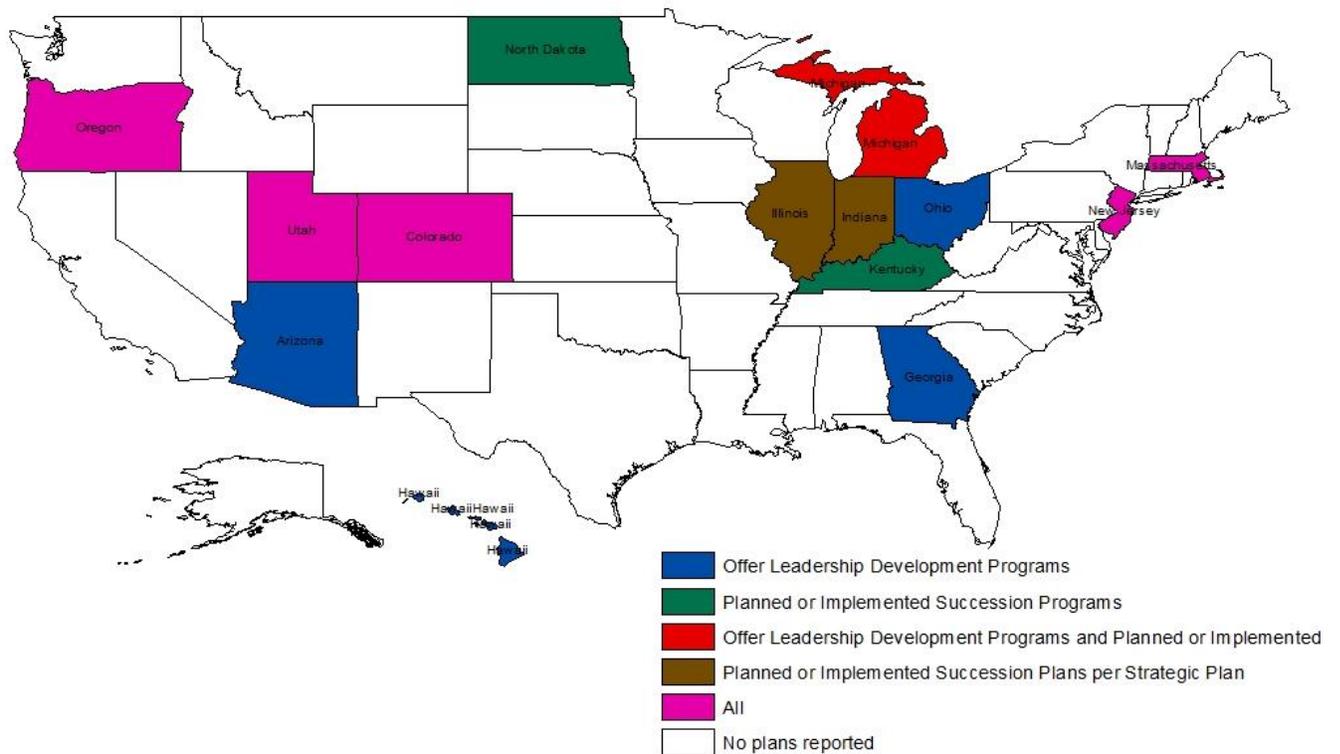
Figure 1

**Finding 2: Survey Respondents Indicate a Presence of Succession Planning Programs Within State Administrative Offices.**

Twenty-two respondents participated in the survey. An analysis of the responses reveals that at least 10 SAOs, or roughly 45% of the respondents have active succession planning programs in practice, or have developed a formal succession plan program yet to be implemented. The majority of respondents, approximately 55% reported that the SAO did not have succession plans either in practice nor planned.

The map depicted in Figure 2 below illustrates SAOs with active or planned succession plan programs. Some SAOs have succession plans which are included in their state's judicial strategic plan.

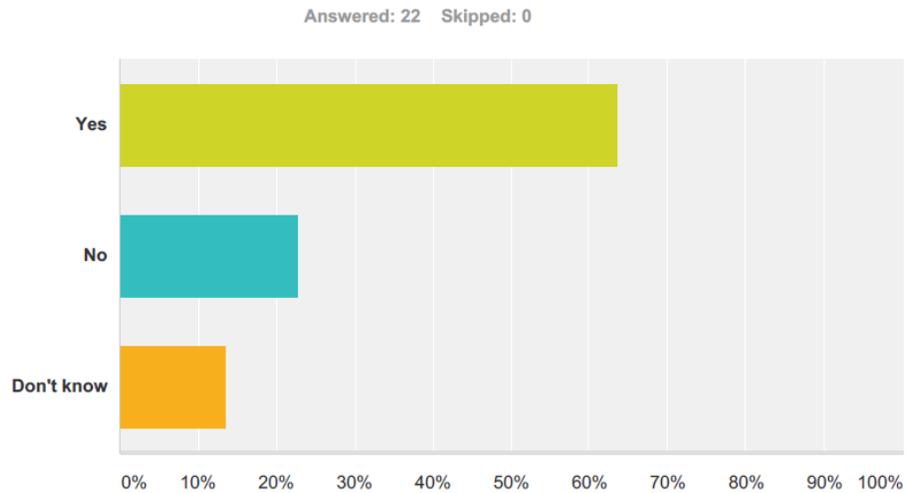
**Figure 2 – Map of SAOs with Succession Plans or Leadership Development Programs**



**Finding 3: Survey Respondents Reveal Some SAOs Consider Succession Planning an Integral Business Function.**

An analysis of the survey responses further reveal that an overwhelming 64% of respondents consider succession planning to be an integral business function within their organizations (see Figure 3). Approximately 23% of the respondents do not believe it is an essential function.

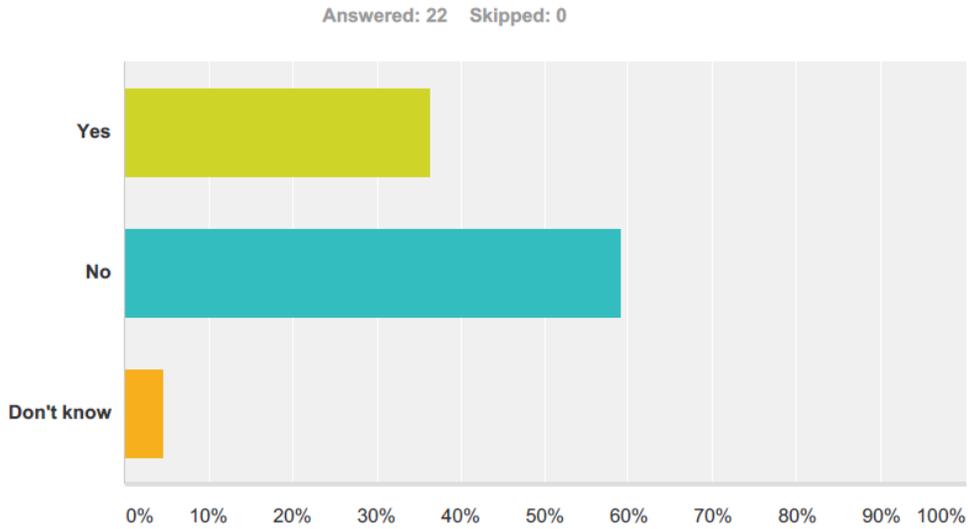
**Figure 3: SAOs with Succession Planning as an Integral Business Function**



**Finding 4: Survey Respondents Reveal that Succession Planning Is Incorporated in the Strategic Plan.**

For the SAOs that recognize the importance of succession planning programs, the survey sought to explore whether succession planning was included in the judiciary’s strategic plan. Thirty-six percent of the respondents indicated that succession planning is incorporated in their strategic plans. The majority (59%) of the participants the programs grams, the survey sought to discover if succession planning was indicated that such plans are not included. See Figure 4.

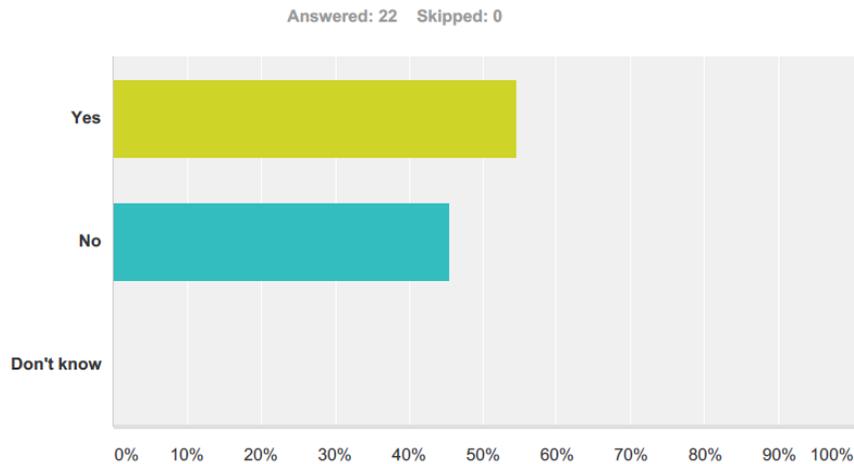
**Figure 4 – SAOs with Succession Plans as Part of Strategic Plans**



**Finding 5: Survey Respondents Reveal that Some SAOs Offer Leadership Development Programs.**

In the absence of succession plans, it was hypothesized that some SAOs may choose to offer leadership development programs. Of the respondents, 55% indicated that their offices provide leadership development opportunities to staff (see Figure 5). Almost half (44%) reported that their SAO does not offer leadership development programs.

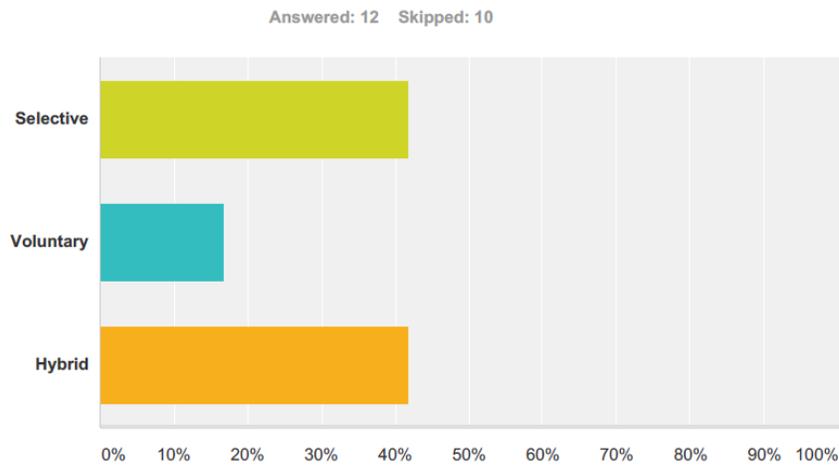
**Figure 5 – SAOs that Offer Leadership Development Programs**



**Finding 6: Survey Respondents Reveal How Employees Are Identified to Participate in Leadership Development Programs.**

For those SAOs that offer leadership development programs, the survey explored how employees are selected to participate. Respondents were asked to indicate how staff or emerging leaders were identified to participate. Respondents selected from three response options – selective, voluntary or a hybrid process. The hybrid process is utilized when employees are allowed to participate in programs either through a self-selection process, or management may make recommendations for trainings. With the selective process, participation in leadership opportunities is solely left to management’s discretion; unlike the voluntary option where employees can elect to participate or not. Of the twelve respondents who offer leadership development programs, 83% utilize either a selective or hybrid process (see Figure 6). The remaining 17% allow voluntary enrollment into such programs.

**Figure 6 – Method of Selection Used to Participate in Leadership Development Programs**



**Finding 7: Survey Respondents Reveal How Organizational Memory Is Captured and Preserved.**

Respondents provided rich information about the methods used to preserve organizational memory through write-in responses to the survey. These responses reflect a variety of methods and processes which SAOs use to capture organizational memory. Examples of methods used include cross-training, development of manuals, digitization of records and other electronic means. See Appendix C for a full list of methods provided by respondents.

**Finding 8: Survey Respondents Reveal that Retired Employees Are Not Often Rehired for Purposes of Preserving Organizational Memory.**

The results of the survey revealed that retirees return to the workplace approximately 14% of the time within SAOs, while 42% rarely are rehired. One explanation for the significantly high no-rehire rate is that many states have strict provisions and policies which prohibit retirees, who earn pensions, from returning to the workplace.

**Figure 7 - Rate of Rehired Retirees**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	4.76% 1	42.86% 9	38.10% 8	14.29% 3	0.00% 0	21	2.62

**Finding 9: Survey Respondents Reveal that Essential Business Practices and Procedures are Often Documented to Capture Organizational Memory.**

**Figure 8 – Frequency of SAOs that Document Essential Business Practices**

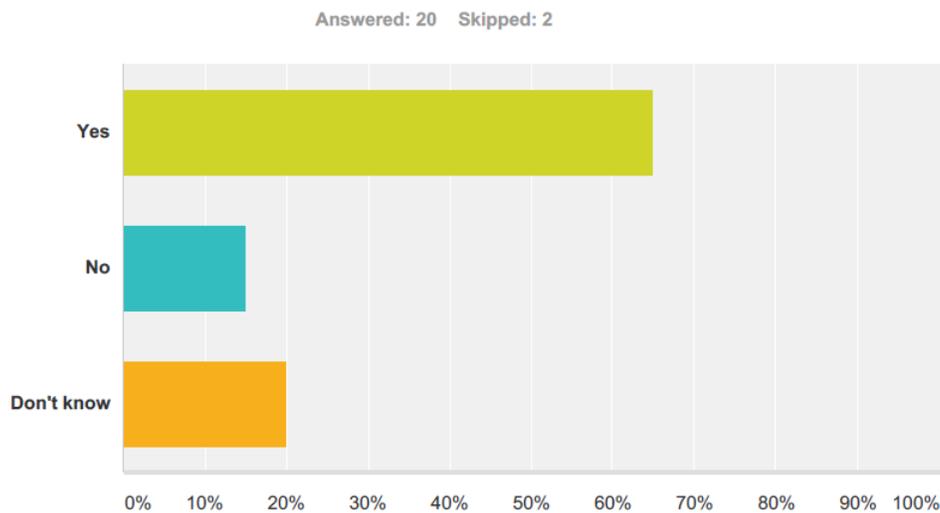
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	10.00% 2	20.00% 4	35.00% 7	35.00% 7	20	3.95

About 70% of the respondents indicate that oftentimes and quite frequently their offices document critical business practices and procedures. Whereas, approximately 30% of SAOs indicate such practices were rarely or sometimes performed. As a result, it appears that the majority of respondents recognize the benefit of capturing organizational memory.

**Finding 10: Survey Respondents Reveal that Key Business Practices and Procedures Are Archived in Electronic Format.**

Based on survey responses, electronic format appears to be the most frequent method of archiving key business practices. A possible explanation for this method is because of its portability and accessibility. Over 60% of the respondents rely on electronic formats as a mechanism for retaining critical business practices and information.

**Figure 9 – SAOs Electronically Archiving Key Business Practices and Procedures**



**Finding 11: Survey Respondents Disclose the Frequency with Which Top Management Positions are Filled by Internal Applicants.**

Survey respondents indicate an overwhelming willingness to fill upper management positions with internal candidates. Fifty-five percent of internal candidates were considered for such positions, and 45% of existing employees were looked at regularly or frequently.

**Figure 10 – The Frequency Internal Applicants are Selected for Top Management Positions**

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Frequently	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	55.00% 11	35.00% 7	10.00% 2	20	3.55

## Conclusions and Recommendations

**Conclusion 1: The Correlation Chart Indicates Relationships Exist Between Questions Q1- SAOs with succession planning program; Q2 – SAOs that view succession planning as an integral business function; and Q3 – SAOs that incorporate succession planning into their strategic plan all take measures to retain organizational memory or business practices.**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q8	Q9	
Q1	1	0.53	0.67	0.24	0.09	0.23	0	0.11	-
Q2	0.53	1	0.49	-0.02	0.16	-0.11	-0.28	0.12	-
Q3	0.67	0.49	1	0.27	-0.14	0.12	-0.1	-0.06	
Q4	0.24	-0.02		1	0	-0.07		-0.43	-0.11
Q5	0.09	0.16	-0.14	0	1	0.03	0.09	0.65	0.29
Q6	0.23	-0.11	0.12	-0.07		1	0.22	0.07	-
Q8	0	-0.28	-0.1	0.07	0.09		1	-0.03	0
Q9	0.11	0.12	-	-0.43	0.65	0.07	-0.03	1	0.5
Q10	-0.15	-0.2	0.06	-0.11	0.29	-0.13		0.5	1

The correlation chart depicted above indicates that there is a relationship between Q1, Q2 and Q3. It is reasonable to surmise that if succession planning is viewed as important by court leaders and integrated into the strategic plan, the support and need for developing processes to preserve organizational memory is also present.

**Recommendation 1: SAOs Should Conduct Succession Planning Readiness Analysis.**

The creation of a succession planning program is a first-step in working towards the preservation of organizational memory. It is a process by which organizations can develop, train and promote internal candidates into linchpin positions, if appropriate. There is an assumption that the candidates will possess

sufficient institutional knowledge which will ultimately prove helpful in maintaining organizational memory.

**Conclusion 2: SAOs Can Take Measures to Formally Preserve Organization Memory within Their Offices.**

The workforce is ever changing. The knowledge, skills and abilities acquired from workers aging out of the workforce is invaluable to SAOs and court organizations, who depend on their experiences and knowledge for business purposes. Therefore, standardized, formal measures should be taken to create repositories, manuals, or databases where critical organizational memory can be accessed to offer guidance or information when confronted with issues encountered by their successors.

**Recommendation 2: SAOs Should Continue Efforts to Offer Leadership Programs.**

The top leadership programs reflect a high frequency of hiring internal candidates for top management positions, thus, succession planning and its value to the organization are clearly supported by the survey responses. When less successful leadership programs exist, internal candidates are not chosen over external applicants.

**Recommendation 3: SAOs Should Continue Efforts to Fill Top Management Positions with Internal Candidates as a Means of Preserving Organizational Memory.**

Key factors that support hiring internal candidates for top management include: (1) documentation of current business practices and knowledge; (2) the existence of leadership programs, which includes the selection process; (3)

succession planning currently in practice and; (4) incorporating succession planning as part of the strategic plan.

**Recommendation 4: SAOs Should Improve Data Collection about Employees' Participation in Succession Planning and Leadership Development Programs.**

Standard statistical reporting was used for data collection purposes. However, additional steps are recommended to explore potential relationships that were identified outside of the "reporting". A potential mechanism to explore such data is machine learning.

**Recommendation 5: Court Leaders in SAOs Should Actively Collect Data to Determine Outcome Rates of Employees Who Complete Succession Programs, and the Methods Used for Preserving Organizational Memory.**

The fact is that Baby Boomers are aging out of the workforce daily. SAOs, like other private entities, will lose critical information when these workers retire. Many states have provisions which prevent or limit the rehire of retirees. How will SAOs and others cope with the loss of knowledge, business operations and practices of persons serving in key positions?

**Recommendation 6: SAOs Should Continue to Make Leadership Programs Available as a Means to Document Business Practices.**

The survey results suggest that individuals who complete leadership programs grasp the importance of documenting business practices. At this juncture, it is undetermined if the correlation is a direct or indirect result of the leadership programs and the curriculum presented, but a relationship does exist.

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## Appendix A. Survey Sample

### **Beyond Succession Planning: Preserving Institutional Knowledge in State Administrative Offices**

Succession planning is the process of identifying a talented pool of employees within an organization, and preparing them for advancement into key positions and expanded roles. Additional competencies are acquired through leadership development opportunities, mentoring or other training programs. This survey seeks to examine the frequency of succession planning among State administrative offices and how such programs aid in the preservation of institutional knowledge within such organizations.

**1. Has your office implemented a succession planning program?**

- A). Currently in place
- B). Planned, not yet implemented
- C). Not currently planned or implemented

**2. Is your state office considering succession planning as an integral business function?**

- A). Yes
- B). No
- C). Don't know

**3. Is succession planning a part of your organization's strategic plan?**

- A). Yes
- B). No
- C). Don't know

**4. Does your office offer leadership development programs?**

- a) Yes
- B). No
- C). Don't know

**5. Which type of process best describes how employees are identified to participate in the leadership development programs?**

- A). Selective
- B). Voluntary
- C). Hybrid

**6. Approximately, what percentage of your workforce is retirement-eligible within the next 3-5 years?**

- A) Less than 15 percent
- B) 15 - 24%
- C) 25 - 34%
- D) More than 35%

**7. How does your office plan to capture and preserve the institutional memory (knowledge and experiences) of the aging workers who hold key positions within your organization?**

Write in responses.

**8. How often does your agency rehire retired persons?**

- A). Never
- B). Rarely
- C). Sometimes
- D). Often
- E). Most of the time

**9. How often are essential business processes and procedures documented such as work with funding authorities, judicial council rule changes, creation of new programs, etc?**

- A). Never
- B). Rarely
- C). Sometimes
- D). Often
- E). Frequently

**10. Are key business practices and procedures archived in electronic format?**

- A). Yes
- B). No
- C). Don't know

**11. How often are top management positions filled by internal applicants?**

- A). Never
- B). Seldom
- C). Sometimes
- D). Often
- E). Frequently

**12. Would you be willing to be contacted to participate in follow-up interviews?**

A). Yes

B). No

**13. Contact information**

Written response

## **Appendix B. Interview Script**

### **Phone Interview Questions for AOC/OACS Division Directors**

#### **Beyond Succession Planning: Preserving organizational memory in State administrative offices**

1. What value do you see in preserving knowledge acquired from workers in key roles within your agency?
2. What initiatives has your agency implemented to codify institutional knowledge/organizational memory acquired from workers in key positions? Is this information routinely shared among staff?
3. If your agency has a succession plan, do you believe it has aided in the promotion or recruitment of internal candidates to advance into key positions?
4. If courts leaders see value in the technological advancements when it comes to improving court efficiency, why do you believe courts have made little advancement in the area of knowledge or organizational memory retention?
5. As a manager, what strategies have you taken or can you engage in to promote the sharing of core knowledge with team members?

## Appendix C. Methods of Capturing and Preserving Organizational Memory

Cross-training	Documentation, cross-training if possible, and retention of prior documents
Leadership Development	Informally
Deputy positions have been created	Informal mentoring, and rehiring retirees part-time
Digital and written records from employee exit interview	Exit interviews and create manuals regarding policies and procedures and training
Standard operating procedures (SOPs)	Desk manuals
Promoting from within	Not applicable
Rehiring key contributors after retirement	Knowledge sharing with existing staff
No formal process. The succession planning program in development features a mentoring component so individuals in key positions can work with those identified for future opportunities and share both knowledge and experiences	No formal process; knowledge transition is encouraged through mentoring, documentation of process, regular meetings with key persons, requiring key persons to train staff
Cross-training, mentoring and allowing new employees to start prior to the incumbent leaving or allowing the retiree to return on a limited time basis to instruct the new employee	We have no process in place right now. That is the emphasis of our strategic plan initiative
Desks books, training, verbally passing information	Documentation of procedures via handbooks, training programs, internal procedures, etc.
Unknown	Not applicable