Zoom Logistics
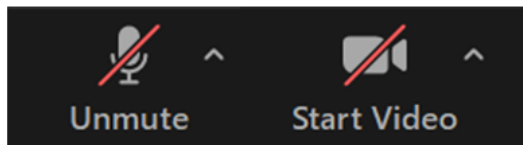
Audio/Webcam Settings
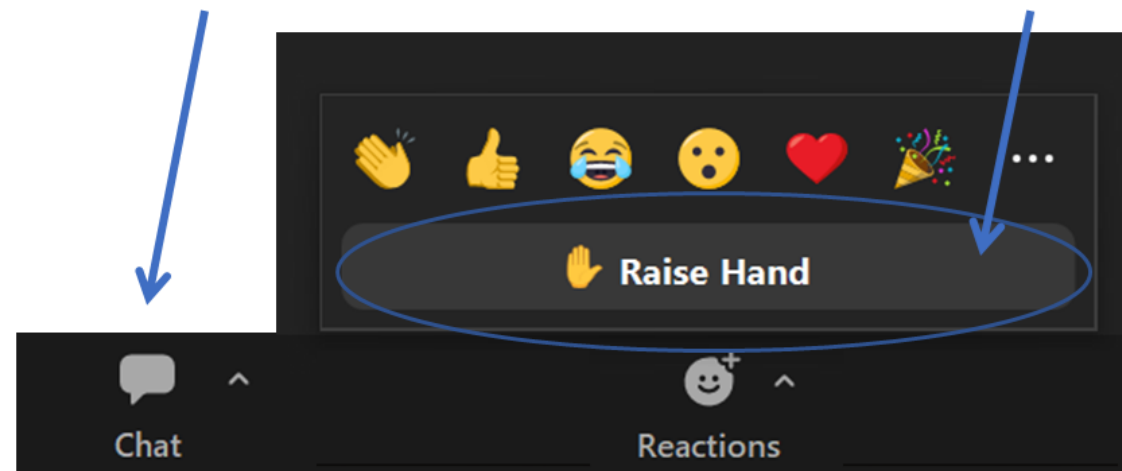
Mute, Unmute, select your audio source, or test audio settings.

Turn webcam on or off

Asking a Question

Type questions into the chat box any time throughout the session

If you would like to unmute to ask a question, please raise your hand under the Reactions tab.

👏 👍 😂 😮 ❤️ 🎉 ...

✋ Raise Hand

Chat

Reactions

Unmute   Start Video

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Certificate of Completion

This session has **NOT** been submitted for pre-approval of Continuing Education Credits, but eligible attendees will receive a certificate of attendance for their personal record.

To receive a certificate:

- You must attend the entire session
- You must register and attend using your real name and unique email address - group viewing credit will not be acceptable
- You must participate in polls
- Certificates will be sent via email within 30 days

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact smallsystems@syr.edu.

About Us

The **Environmental Finance Center Network (EFCN)** is a university- and non-profit-based organization creating innovative solutions to the difficult how-to-pay issues of environmental protection and water infrastructure.

The EFCN works collectively and as individual centers to address these issues across the entire U.S, including the 5 territories and the Navajo Nation. The EFCN aims to assist public and private sectors through training, direct professional assistance, production of durable resources, and innovative policy ideas.

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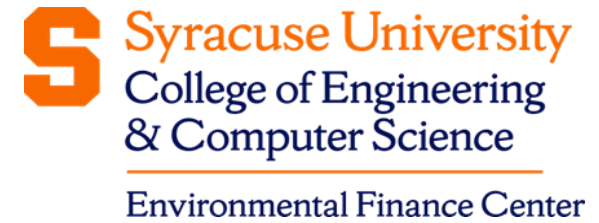
SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR SMALL WATER and WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

"10 Jobs Americans Can't Live Without"

Water and Wastewater Treatment Jobs were listed as #9

BRACE YOURSELF

I QUIT

What is Succession Planning?

Definition:

Succession planning ensures critical roles in a company are filled by employees with the necessary skills or knowledge.

What else could it mean?

- **Succession planning ensures that the company continues to run smoothly and uninterrupted after key employees move to new opportunities, retire, or pass away.**

- **Succession planning accounts for emergencies that may occur in a company.**

- **Succession planning may require cross-training employees in other positions.**

- **View it as a "Backup Plan"**

- **Not just finding the right employees, but RETAINING GOOD EMPLOYEES!!!**

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Are you going to need to spend a lot of money or hire another company to start your Succesion Plan?

You can if you want too, but for the basics of a succesful Succession Plan you will be able to handle everything within your company and at minimal cost.
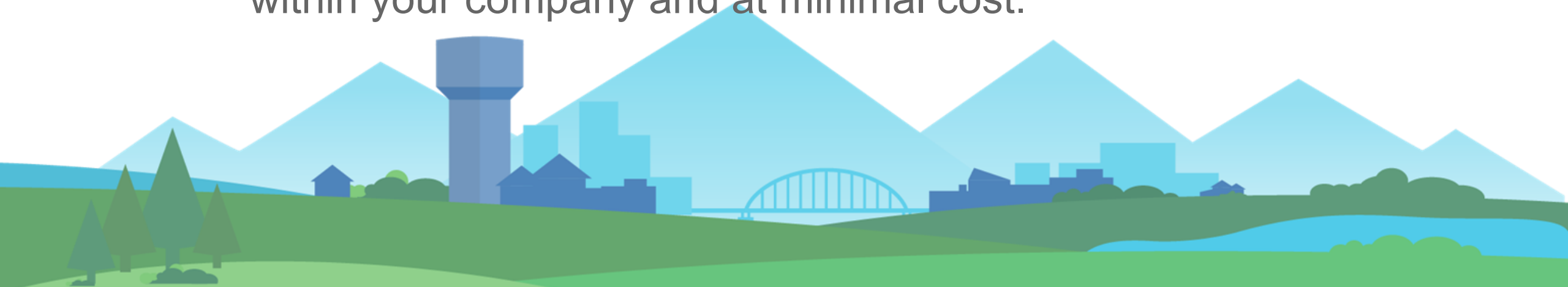
How to keep your cost down when planning

- Create a planning committee
- Allow all employees to provide input
- Take a close look at your current plans and procedures
- Identify key and critical tasks that are required in the roles
- Budget for Professional Development of Internal Employees
- Get knowledge from long time employees
- Talk to other communities
- Talk to Technical Assistance Providers

How does Succesion Planning benefit the community?

- Employees are empowered, knowing they can advance within the company.
- Future opportunities reinforce employees' career development.
- Succession planning ensures that supervisors will mentor employees.
- Management tracks the value of employees so positions can be filled internally when opportunities arise.
- Leadership and employees share company values and vision.
- A new generation of leaders is available when resignations or retirements occur.

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Additional benfits

- Cost savings from retaining and promoting employees
- Cost savings of improved daily processes from training the staff in the same manner and in multiple tasks

Who should be on the planning committee?

Mayor, Council, City Manager, 1 employee from each department. You want a wide range of people to ensure that the whole planning committee doesn't leave at the same time.

What to look for in members

People with a deep interest in the community

Individuals that have expressed their passion for growth in their career and their community

Try to bring a diverse skillset, knowledge, and background

IDENTIFY

- Meet with current employees

- Assess Gaps in the Workforce

- Identify Capable Current Staff

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Allowing for Employee Input

This is one of the most critical aspects

Why are operators leaving?

- Retirement
- More pay
- Lack of advancement opportunities
- Better benefits
- Scheduling
- Management
- Councils

What would help them stay?

- Pay
- Incentives
- Properly staffed
- Valued
- Heard
- Respected

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How can you help them stay?

- Leadership Opportunities
- Work/Life Balance

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Notes from the State of the water industry 2025, AWWA

-Aging workforce with insufficient recruitment of young workers

-Difficulty hiring and retaining qualified operators

-Need for better compensation (wages, benefits, hazard pay)

-Training and education needs (continuing education, operator certification)

-Need for workforce development programs in schools and colleges

-Rotating shifts causing issues

-Long term job vacancies."

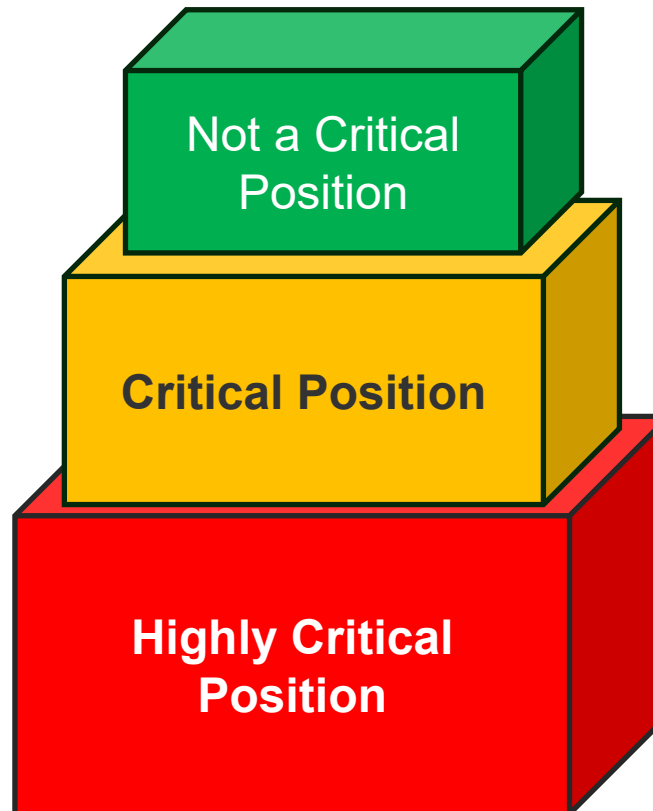# Taking a look at current plan and procedures

Are you properly staffed?

Can all staff perform the required tasks?

Could a new employee take off on their own on day 1?

ASSESS CRITICAL ROLES

Assess Positions Critical to your System

Identifying Key and Critical Tasks

- Do the tasks require a special skill or lots of training? Is filter backwashing multiple steps with none written down? Do you need some level of knowledge in electrical? Is there certain safety protocol to follow?

- Are the tasks clearly identified and explained?

- Do they need recorded or reported to a regulatory agency or a notice to the community?

Budget for Professional Development

- Some trainings can be free
- Look at local management classes
- Do other employees have the required licenses to take over?
- Are Employees on the right path to get the required licenses
- Ask the Employees where they would like to be in the future
- Ask the Employees what skill they would like to develop this year?

Standard Operating Procedures

- One phrase that needs to be eliminated from the industry is "That's how we have always done it" This doesn't teach any employee why that is the way it is done. Secondly how long has it always been done that way? This is the importance of the Standard Operating Procedures.   They can be updated as Regulations, Staff, and Equipment change.

1.4 Writing Styles

- SOPs should be written in a concise, step-by-step, easy-to-read format. The information presented should be unambiguous and not overly complicated. The active voice and present verb tense should be used. The term "you" should not be used, but implied. The document should not be wordy, redundant, or overly lengthy. Keep it simple and short. Information should be conveyed clearly and explicitly to remove any doubt as to what is required. Also, use a flow chart to illustrate the process being described. In addition, follow the style guide used by your organization, e.g., font size and margins. EPA QA/G-6 2 April 2007 2.0 SOP PROCESS

2.1 SOP Preparation

- The organization should have a procedure in place for determining what procedures or processes need to be documented. Those SOPs should then be written by individuals knowledgeable with the activity and the organization's internal structure. These individuals are essentially subject-matter experts who actually perform the work or use the process. A team approach can be followed, especially for multi-tasked processes where the experiences of a number of individuals are critical, which also promotes "buy-in" from potential users of the SOP. SOPs should be written with sufficient detail so that someone with limited experience with or knowledge of the procedure, but with a basic understanding, can successfully reproduce the procedure when unsupervised. The experience requirement for performing an activity should be noted in the section on personnel qualifications. For example, if a basic chemistry or biological course experience or additional training is required that requirement should be indicated.

2.2 SOP Review and Approval

- SOPs should be reviewed (that is, validated) by one or more individuals with appropriate training and experience with the process. It is especially helpful if draft SOPs are actually tested by individuals other than the original writer before the SOPs are finalized. The finalized SOPs should be approved as described in the organization's Quality Management Plan or its own SOP for preparation of SOPs. Generally the immediate supervisor, such as a section or branch chief, and the organization's quality assurance officer review and approve each SOP. Signature approval indicates that an SOP has been both reviewed and approved by management. As per the Government Paperwork Elimination Act of 1998, use of electronic signatures, as well as electronic maintenance and submission, is an acceptable substitution for paper, when practical.

2.3 Frequency of Revisions and Reviews

- SOPs need to remain current to be useful. Therefore, whenever procedures are changed, SOPs should be updated and re-approved. If desired, modify only the pertinent section of an SOP and indicate the change date/revision number for that section in the Table of Contents and the document control notation. SOPs should be also systematically reviewed on a periodic basis, e.g. every 1-2 years, to ensure that the policies and procedures remain current and appropriate, or to determine whether the SOPs are even needed. The review date should be added to each SOP that has been reviewed. If an SOP describes a process that is no longer followed, it should be withdrawn from the current file and archived. The review process should not be overly cumbersome to encourage timely review. The frequency of review should be indicated by management in the organization's Quality EPA QA/G-6 3 April 2007 Management Plan. That plan should also indicate the individual(s) responsible for ensuring that SOPs are current.

2.4 Checklists

- Many activities use checklists to ensure that steps are followed in order. Checklists are also used to document completed actions. Any checklists or forms included as part of an activity should be referenced at the points in the procedure where they are to be used and then attached to the SOP. In some cases, detailed checklists are prepared specifically for a given activity. In those cases, the SOP should describe, at least generally, how the checklist is to be prepared, or on what it is to be based. Copies of specific checklists should be then maintained in the file with the activity results and/or with the SOP. Remember that the checklist is not the SOP, but a part of the SOP."

Standard Operating Procedures
A few benefits

- SOPs are critical in training your current staff and making a smooth transition for the new employees

- They help cross train other departments

- They can help guarantee compliance with regulators because all samples and tests will be done the same way everytime.

- Employees will feel valued if allowed to create an SOP or edit an outdated SOP

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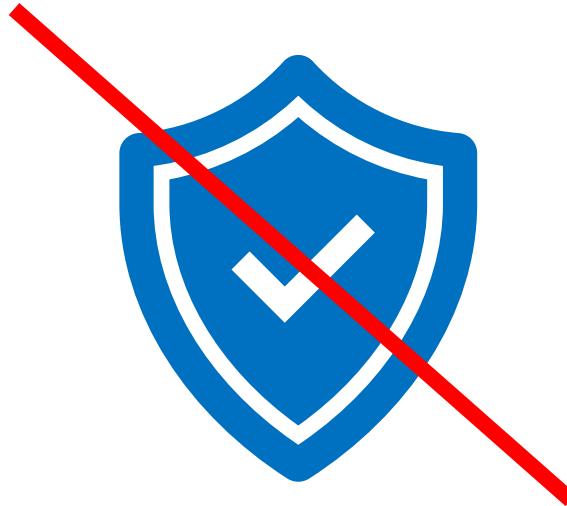environmental finance center network
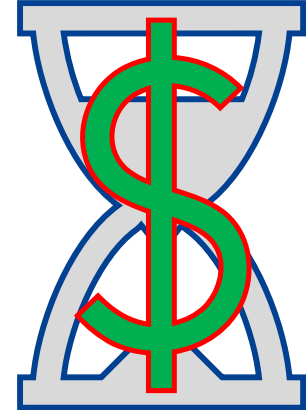
What Happens Without Succession Planning?

Loss of Critical Knowledge

Reduced Public Trust

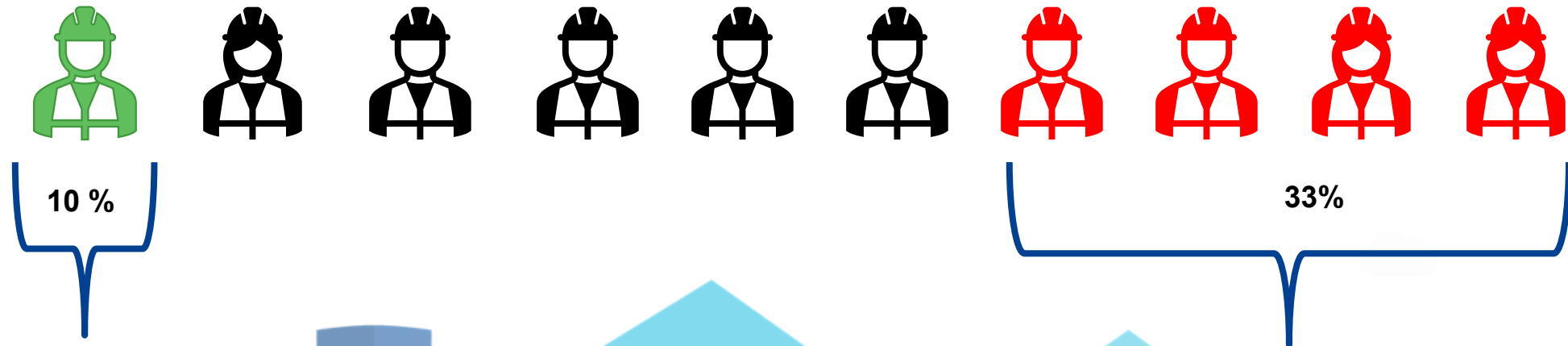**Costly Hiring Delays**

11,200

The number of Americans who exit the workforce every day.

EXIT

62

The average retirement age in the USA, according to the 2024 Mass Mutual survey.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

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Median age of current workforce is 48

10 %

Under age 24

33%

Eligible for retirement within 10 years

Source: money.usanews.com

Source: AWWA State of the Water Industry 2025 Executive Summary

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DEVELOP

- Create development plans

- Commit to training and development

- Make a knowledge transfer plan

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Succession Planning
CHALLENGES

- **Identifying the right talent**

- **Resistance to change**

- **No "buy-in"**

- **Balancing short-term needs with long-term planning**

▶ **Connect with a nearby community** using similar plant technology and consider a backup operations agreement.

▶ Consider establishing an annual **internship program** at your facility.

▶ Consider establishing a **public-private partnership** to outsource your utility operations.

▶ Emphasize the importance of **training your board on operations**.

A contingency plan is essential!

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Shannon
Hazelton

Program Manager

Thank you!

Scan the QR Code to save my contact info!

Shannon Hazelton

Project Manager Iowa

Shannon.Hazelton@wichita.edu

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