

## Succession Plan

### **Write a *Purpose Statement*.**

To get a full picture of what my succession plan is trying to achieve, I would write a *purpose statement* like the following: To proactively identify and utilize talent from all sources to include the existing clinical nutrition team to maintain continuity of critical high demand roles within the clinical nutrition department and minimize risks associated with unplanned losses and potential gapped positions.<sup>1</sup>

### **Identify Difficult to Replace Roles<sup>1,2</sup>**

I would then identify critical roles that are difficult to replace.<sup>1,2</sup> The roles that would most likely be difficult to replace involve specialized education or certification requirements such as the critical nutrition manager, clinical supervisor, lead clinical dietitian, assistant lead clinical dietitian, RDNs with a specialty area of practice, and other positions such as the education or internship coordinator.<sup>1</sup>

Once the difficult to replace roles are identified, I would want to cultivate open and honest conversations to determine *when* the employees who are in critical roles plan to retire or transfer departments. Understanding individual's long-term plans and goals will allow a proactive approach to finding replacements. It is important to understand the percent of retirement eligible employees and planned transfers in critical positions as I would not want to lose, for example, 30% of my critical workforce at one time.<sup>2</sup> This would help me identify the urgency to select potential successors. However, I would not delay in training as unexpected circumstances may arise that may cause an employee in a critical role to go on emergency family and/or medical leave (FMLA).

I would then evaluate my current 15 employees to identify high performers through Individual Development Plans (IDP) who display desirable leadership qualities and the potential to succeed with increased responsibility. My ultimate goal would be to utilize the talent of the 15 employees that are currently working in the department to fill these roles – so knowing timelines is important to ensure high performing employees (and some medium performing employees) will have enough time to receive appropriate education and training prior to potentially being nominated for a critical role. I would also use this analysis to evaluate when it is appropriate to open hiring processes up to individuals outside my organization to help leverage different processes, talent, and perspectives that could lead to efficiencies within my organization.

### **Developing an IDP<sup>1</sup>**

Once high performing (or medium performing employees that have potential for growth and improvement) have been identified, I would develop an IDP so I could better understand their long-term career aspirations, understand what training they may need to take, identify if they meet any potential degree requirements that may be in place and ensure they receive the training and education required to become a potential successor.<sup>1</sup>

## References

1. Grim J, Roberts SR. *Effective Leadership & Management in Nutrition & Dietetics*. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics; 2023.
2. National Institutes of Health. Succession Planning: A Step-by-Step Guide. Accessed July 18, 2025. [https://hr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/public/documents/2021-03/Succession\\_Planning\\_Step\\_by\\_Step\\_Guide.pdf](https://hr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/public/documents/2021-03/Succession_Planning_Step_by_Step_Guide.pdf)