



2008 FALL SYMPOSIUM

Navigating Transition, Leading Change

SESSION SUMMARY

Building a Career Road Map: Core Competencies for Budget Staff

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“Change is indeed in the air in the budget field,” said **Mark Wichlin**, Deputy Budget Director of the Department of Labor and the convenor of the session, *Building a Career Road Map: Core Competencies for Budget Staff*.

Mr. Wichlin referred to the change that technology has brought to the field of budget analysis. He explained that although technology has taken much of the drudgery out of the work for budget analysts, it has not made it an easier job.

“For a person to function in a budget system that does a lot of work for them, they need to understand how decisions are made in the organization, where the data comes from, and where it goes,” he said.

Mr. Wichlin said that good budget analysts are “generalists who are interested in the fiscal crises of the state.” He also said that contrary to popular belief, budget analysts do not need to be statisticians, although they still need to be good with numbers.

Navneeta Chandra, a member of the Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business (BFELoB) Human Capital workgroup, presented the six core competencies necessary for budget professionals to be effective in the federal government.

Ms. Chandra said that beginning in April 2007, the Human Capital workgroup started from a list of 210 core competencies, winnowed the number of competencies to eight, and then selected the six competencies that are most critical in today’s budget environment.

The core competencies are in the following areas:

- The Federal Budget Process,
- Federal Legislation, Regulations, and Guidance,
- Budget Development and Justification,
- Planning and Program Evaluation,
- Budgetary Accounting and Control, and
- Financial Analysis, Forecasting, and Modeling.

She explained that agencies must take these six core competencies and tailor them to their own specific needs. “For some agencies, all of these competencies will apply, but other agencies will only focus on a few,” she said.

She warned that core competencies are dynamic and need to be reevaluated regularly. “Ten years from now, even maybe a year from now, we’ll probably have to reevaluate the framework,” Ms. Chandra said.

David Bachrach of FYI Inc. explained how human resource professionals can use core competencies to successfully advertise jobs to attract the best candidates and to improve succession planning.

Bachrach said that core competencies should be clearly stated in the position description for a job opening, but he cautioned against using core competencies to “sell” a job. Bachrach gave an example of an open position that had received little attention from potential em-

employees until the wording was drastically changed to reflect the kind of person best suited for the job.

“The ad worked because it looked like something written by a human for a human being,” he said. “Put some humanity into job ads, not just core competencies.”

Bachrach also explained that managers should track which compe-

tencies are depleted as employees leave and then hire or retrain appropriately.

Jean Rayhle, a program analyst at NASA, spoke about NASA’s CFO University, which is open to all NASA civil servants and contractors. She explained that NASA’s financial core competencies align very closely to those of BFELoB.

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