

# Executive Order Guidance – Strengthening the Senior Executive Service: Implementing the Executive Onboarding Requirement

---

On December 15, 2015, the White House issued an Executive Order (EO) on *Strengthening the Senior Executive Service (SES)* – outlining a plan to enhance the recruitment, hiring, and development of the Federal Government’s senior executives (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/15/executive-order-strengthening-senior-executive-service>). The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is now providing this guidance in accordance with OPM’s authority pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3396 to “establish programs . . . for the continuing development of senior executives” and section 3(b)(iv) of the EO which calls for agencies to “establish a formal Executive Onboarding Program for all career and non-career SES, senior-level (SL) and technical- and professional-level (ST) employees, and SES-equivalent positions,” on a phased implementation basis. This guidance is informed by OPM’s “Enhanced Executive Onboarding Model and Government-Wide Executive Onboarding Framework” which can be found at: ([http://www.opm.gov/wiki/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/SES%20Onboarding%20Pilot/SES%20Onboarding%20Enhanced%20Framework\\_webv1.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/wiki/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/SES%20Onboarding%20Pilot/SES%20Onboarding%20Enhanced%20Framework_webv1.pdf)).

Specifically, this guidance provides a Government-wide framework and information, enabling each Federal agency to operate an executive onboarding program adhering to the requirements of the EO, and to effectively assimilate and support the success of senior executives throughout the executives’ first year of service in new SES positions. This guidance also preserves agency flexibility to customize executive onboarding programs in a manner most appropriate for each agency’s mission, resources, and determination of individual executive developmental needs.

## INTRODUCTION

The Senior Executive Service (SES) is comprised of the top career Federal managers responsible for ensuring the continuity and success of our Government. As the keystone of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, the SES was established to “...ensure that the executive management of the Government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality” (5 U.S.C. § 3131). Research and experience demonstrate the value of effective executive onboarding – organizations with strong onboarding programs achieve far greater results in helping newly-placed executives quickly assimilate into new organizations, accelerate learning curves, and achieve sustained success. Successful organizations accomplish a significant return on investment by proactively positioning their senior executives to succeed and avoiding costs and time expenditures resulting from lost productivity and turnover. The value proposition for the deliberate and structured onboarding of executives is particularly powerful for senior leaders due to their greater level of responsibilities and expected performance, as well as the deeper and broader impact they have on the overall performance of the organization.

## EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING PROGRAMS

Executive onboarding is the acquiring, accommodating, assimilating, and accelerating of executives into the culture and business of an organization and into their role as an executive in that organization. Onboarding involves more than a short “orientation” event; rather, effective onboarding requires a strategic and sustained process over a substantive period of time, ideally one year, tailored specifically to the needs of the organization and its new executives. Executive onboarding is part of the process of developing the executives as leaders and should follow a planned approach, with specific learning and support milestones aligned to the goal of not only preventing executive derailment, but also optimizing new executive’s immediate and continued successful contribution to the mission of the organization. A comprehensive onboarding program should also give executives exposure to the broader enterprise, by ensuring executives have a chance to participate in Government-wide orientation and training.

Agency onboarding programs should be made available to the following types of executives:

- Individuals newly appointed to the SES from within the agency;
- Individual newly appointed to the SES from outside the agency, but still within the Federal Government;
- Individuals who have not served in an executive position and are newly appointed to the SES from outside the Federal Government;
- Individuals who are or have been executives from outside the Federal Government, but are newly appointed to the SES in the Federal Government;
- Individuals who have previously served in the SES but are newly appointed to an SES position in a different agency (either transferred, reinstated, or selected competitively); and
- Executives coming from within the agency, but from a different component or geographic location (e.g., from a sub-agency or transitioning from the field to headquarters).

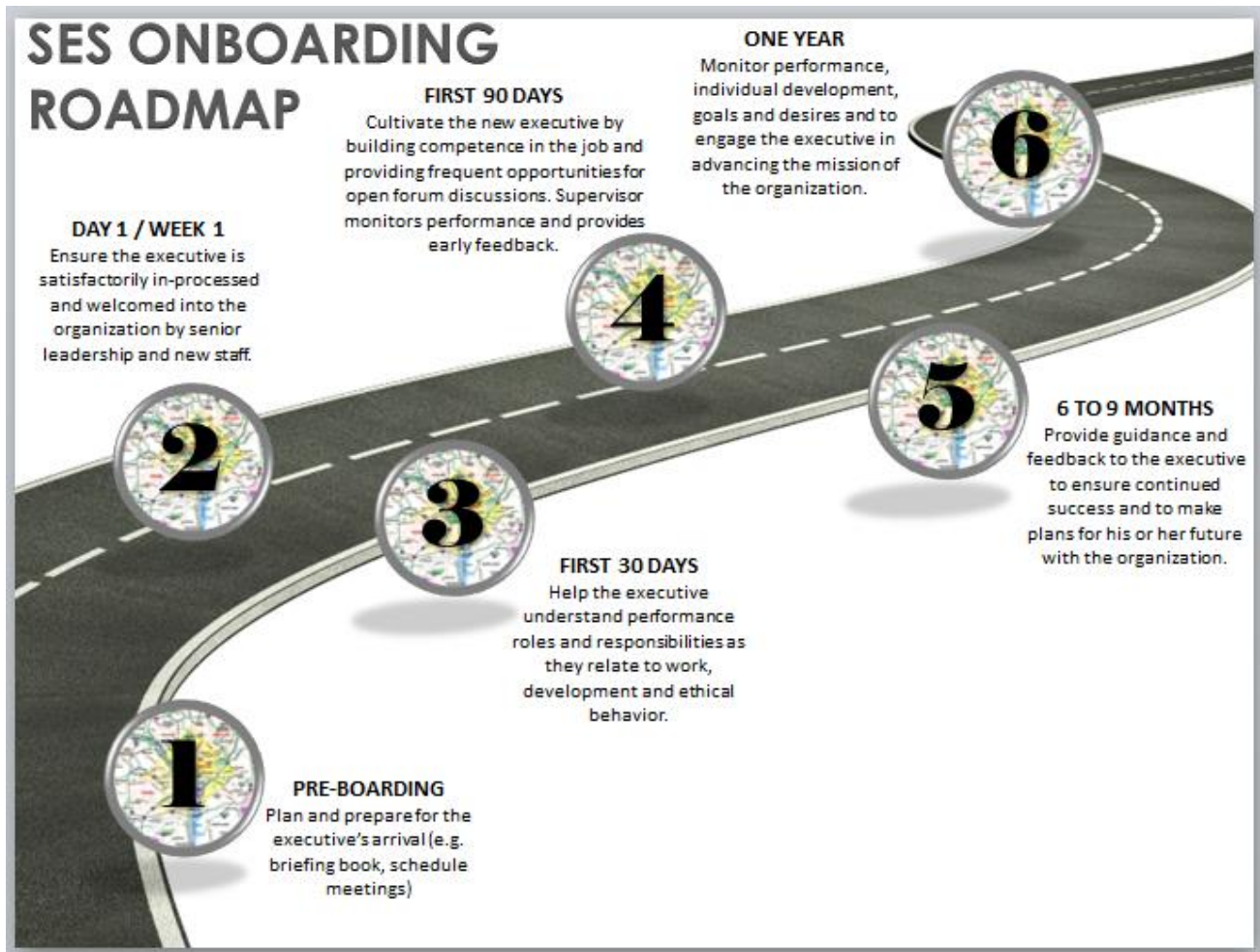
As with other programs, agencies should follow four phases of an ongoing cycle to achieve a successful executive onboarding program: *planning, implementation, evaluation, and revision/enhancement*. During the planning phase, agencies should establish the business case; request and obtain necessary resources (i.e., funding, staff, technology, contract support); obtain support from senior leaders (and, in particular, the supervisors of the new senior executives) and other stakeholders; design the program (incorporating key program requirements); communicate the purpose and elements of the program to the workforce; and develop a project plan including timeline(s), milestones, and metrics. Some planning steps are linear where one cannot occur until another has been accomplished, and other steps can be accomplished in parallel. **We recommend agencies use good project management processes and techniques to coordinate resources and achieve program goals.** Once agencies complete the planning phase, agencies should focus on successful program execution, including sustained leadership commitment at all levels, resource management, initial launch and full execution. The third phase of evaluation is critical, especially in the early roll-out time period. During the evaluation phase, agencies should prioritize the critical need to gather data from multiple sources that will assist with determining the efficiency and effectiveness of your program. Early detection of program barriers and “derailers” will allow for

prompt contingency planning and re-direction, as needed. The enhance/revise phase of program management is extremely helpful in ensuring that your program is meeting its intended goals and outcomes. During this phase, agencies are encouraged to gather data from participants, managers of participants, instructors, coaches, program leaders, customers, and other stakeholders. Agencies should also regularly review the resource assumptions for your program. For example, the agencies should consider the following questions: can an agency support the number of executives as planned; do agencies need staff/contractor support; does any part of the program not meet projected timelines/milestones; is technology working as intended; and does the agency see any barriers to success? Based on your analyses in the evaluation phase, you will implement revisions, from minor “tweaks” to major changes, which address issues required to keep your program on the road to success. Agencies are encouraged to have their program managers continuously use the project management cycle described here to ensure the continued currency, relevance, and effectiveness of the programs.

## **PHASE 1: PLANNING AN EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING PROGRAM**

The Executive Onboarding Road Map in figure 1 (on the following page) is intended to be general enough to meet the majority of the needs of all new and newly-assigned executives from pre-boarding through the first year; however, agencies should modify the framework and assign responsibility according to unique agency processes and practices and according to each new executive’s individual needs. Agencies should assign responsibility for the tasks to specific offices and individuals to ensure accountability. The following are the phases in the roadmap:

- **Pre-boarding:** Plan and prepare for the executive’s arrival (e.g., briefing book, schedule meetings).
- **Day 1/Week 1:** Ensure the executive is satisfactorily in-processed and welcomed into the organization by senior leadership and new staff.
- **First 30 Days:** Help the executive understand performance roles and responsibilities as they relate to work, development, and ethical behavior.
- **First 90 Days:** Cultivate the new executive by building competence in the job and providing frequent opportunities for open forum discussions. Supervisor monitors performance and provides early feedback.
- **6 to 9 Months:** Provide guidance and feedback to the executive to ensure continued success and to make plans for his or her future with the organization.
- **One Year:** Monitor performance, individual development, goals and desires and to engage the executive in advancing the mission of the organization.



**Figure 1**  
**Enhanced SES Onboarding Roadmap**

[http://www.opm.gov/wiki/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/SES%20Onboarding%20Pilot/Onboarding%20Roadmap\\_8-19.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/wiki/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/SES%20Onboarding%20Pilot/Onboarding%20Roadmap_8-19.pdf)

See Appendix A for actions associated with the six phases of the Executive Onboarding Roadmap.

**STEP 1. Create a Business Case** – The December 15, 2015, EO on Strengthening the SES ensured that all agencies have robust SES onboarding programs. Agencies should ensure this program directly supports their mission and agency priority goals. This is best accomplished by articulating a business case for the program in your agency and securing top leadership support. Be sure to reference the 2011 Executive Onboarding Guide *Hit the Ground Running: Establishing a Model Executive Onboarding Program*

(<http://www.opm.gov/WIKI/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/Hit the Ground Running Establishing a Model Executive Onboarding Framework 2011.pdf>) as you create your business case.

Effective onboarding of executives leads to positive results, including higher retention, increased engagement and improved performance. High-performing organizations use deliberate and sustained onboarding programs to strategically assimilate their leaders; they do not apply a "sink or swim" mentality to new executives. Instead, these organizations understand they must provide support systems for new executives. Agencies should tailor their executive onboarding program to serve the needs of their executives. It may be advantageous to develop the program in "modules" or

“tracks” so that executives spend the time in the areas that are most helpful, but not in those that are not. For example, an executive promoted from a GS-15 to an SES in the same Agency will probably not need to spend much time understanding the mission, operations, and governance as a new SES from another agency or the private sector.

**STEP 2. Plan Your Program** – The onboarding program is a learning and development program and, therefore, is likely to combine elements of training, experiential learning, mentoring, coaching, 360° feedback, and performance feedback. Onboarding strategies should focus on three levels: individual, agency and Federal Government. For example at an individual level, executives should learn the expectations for their performance and strengthen competencies, such as building an effective network, political savvy, working with political appointees, supporting diversity, and fostering engagement among staff and peers. At the agency level, executives should understand their role in the agency mission, governance, operations, and culture. Finally, at the Federal Government level, executives should learn how to navigate the Federal landscape, including the budget and legislative processes, and participating in interagency initiatives.

Plan your program using the principles of program management:

- Program Goal(s) – general aim or purpose of the program aligned with the agency goal;
- Resources (e.g., budget, staff hours, facilities costs);
- Activities – set of actions produced as a result of the investments;
- Customers (e.g., participants, stakeholders);
- Outputs – direct products of the activities;
- Outcomes – conditions resulting from use of the outputs; and
- Organizational structure – clearly defined roles, responsibilities and processes directed toward achievement of the program goal.

OPM recently developed a logic model tool for agencies to use in planning and evaluating training programs that may be useful. This logic model provides a representation of a "theory of change" that clearly aligns the program inputs and activities to the outputs and long-term outcomes. See Appendix B for more information on this model.

In addition, agencies that have piloted and implemented executive onboarding programs for executives make the following recommendations:

- **Identify a Program Champion** – Executive onboarding programs should be led by a senior executive or other influential leader in the organization. Senior leadership support is critical to driving the critical change management required to establish and successfully execute new programs. The program champion will help elevate the visibility and priority of the program while mitigating risks and avoiding or solving organizational problems that may compromise the integrity of the program.
- **Create a Program Goal** – As a strategic business process, onboarding should be clearly tied to the organization’s mission. Senior leaders should clearly and regularly articulate the nexus between the program and the agency’s mission. Additionally, OPM has established four program objectives that must be incorporated into all executive onboarding programs, and to which activities and processes of the program should align. At the conclusion of the onboarding program, new executives should, at a minimum:



1. Understand the organizational culture;
  2. Understand their performance expectations;
  3. Have access to influential networks; and
  4. Feel valued and supported by leadership.
- **Create an Evaluation Plan** – Onboarding programs should benefit both individual and organizational performance; therefore, in the planning phase, organizations should identify and establish *meaningful* evaluation criteria to measure program success and goal accomplishment. See the OPM Training Evaluation Field Guide ([http://www.opm.gov/WIKI/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/Field%20Guide%20to%20Training%20Evaluation\\_6-8-2011-FINAL.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/WIKI/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/Field%20Guide%20to%20Training%20Evaluation_6-8-2011-FINAL.pdf)) for detailed instruction on evaluating the program.
  - **Create Standard Operating Procedures** – Standard operating procedures are the “how to” for the program. These are the procedures that describe the activities necessary to complete onboarding tasks and the individuals/offices/stakeholders integral to the process.
  - **Conduct Training** – Training of those involved in the process is critical to success of the onboarding program. Agency partners (e.g., security, IT, facilities) must know and understand their roles in the process. Their feedback should be used to inform the processes within the program.

Various agencies have piloted executive onboarding programs and have shared information, planning documents, and other useful materials. These documents, as well as templates and examples of these requirements, are available on OPM’s Executive Onboarding Wiki page (<http://www.opm.gov/WIKI/training/New-Employee-Orientation.ashx>).

**STEP 3: Identify Onboarding Steps** – At this step, agencies should identify key actions to be accomplished at each phase of the onboarding program. An onboarding checklist may be used to help ensure consistency and completeness in carrying out onboarding tasks. OPM has developed a number of checklist models, available for agency use, including:

(1) Onboarding Program Framework and Checklist: OPM’s *Executive Onboarding Guide Hit the Ground Running: Establishing a Model Executive Onboarding Program* (Appendix B) ([http://www.opm.gov/WIKI/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/Hit the Ground Running Establishing a Model Executive Onboarding Framework 2011.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/WIKI/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/Hit%20the%20Ground%20Running%20Establishing%20a%20Model%20Executive%20Onboarding%20Framework%202011.pdf));

(2) OPM’s Enhanced Executive Onboarding Framework/Model: ([http://www.opm.gov/wiki/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/SES%20Onboarding%20Pilot/SES%20Onboarding%20Enhanced%20Framework\\_webv1.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/wiki/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/SES%20Onboarding%20Pilot/SES%20Onboarding%20Enhanced%20Framework_webv1.pdf)); and

(3) Agency examples on OPM’s Executive Onboarding Wiki page: (<http://www.opm.gov/wiki/training/New-Employee-Orientation.ashx>).

**Keep in mind, onboarding checklists should align with the program goal, activities and results for the specific agency program and culture. Simply adopting another agency's processes will not necessarily enable the effectiveness of your program.**

## **PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTING AN EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING PROGRAM**

Agencies are ready to move to the implementation phase once decisions and outputs of the planning phase have been formally approved, staffed, and funded (where applicable). The implementation phase occurs in these various stages:

**STEP 1: *Initial Implementation*** – During initial implementation, individuals begin to put into practice all that has been planned for during the planning stage. Keep in mind that practicing and implementing new skills with fidelity will take time. Demonstrated leadership support is critical to guide and manage the change process and help mitigate fear, feelings of loss, and resistance. The program champion and agency leadership should be heavily involved in this stage.

**STEP 2: *Full Implementation*** – Full implementation occurs when the program is integrated into the organization's processes and culture. It now becomes especially important to maintain and improve the program through excellent monitoring, evaluation and purposeful improvement. Evaluations should determine if the program is being delivered as intended and if the program objectives are met.

## **PHASE 3: EVALUATION**

**STEP 1:** Using the measures and metrics identified during the planning phase, gather information from multiple sources to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of your program. Early detection of program barriers and “derailers” will allow for prompt contingency planning and re-direction as needed.

In addition, each executive's onboarding process may conclude one year after the incoming executive's arrival, with a final 360° assessment or other leadership review. This assessment, along with program evaluation data, provides the executive and stakeholders with additional feedback and an opportunity to determine the extent to which onboarding efforts have contributed to the executive's acculturation, assimilation, and acceleration, as intended.

**STEP 2:** Conduct an analysis of your findings including determining whether the program is resourced appropriately. For example: Are intended returns on investments being met? Are assumptions made during the planning phase being confirmed?

## **PHASE 4: REVISION/ENHANCEMENT**

Based on your findings during the evaluation phase, determine what program enhancement will be made. These may range from minor “tweaks” to major changes, which address issues required to keep your program on the road to success. It is recommended that your program manager continue to use this project management cycle to ensure your program continues to maintain its currency / relevance, results in your desired outcomes, and has relevant senior support.

## **EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING AND THE SES PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

Agencies should use the executive onboarding process to help ensure timely fulfillment of developmental requirements, continuous monitoring of performance and conduct, and meaningful engagement of the executive and his/her supervisor. An individual's initial SES career appointment becomes final only upon successful completion of a probationary period beginning on the date of appointment and ending one calendar year later. Probation is considered complete when the last tour of duty within the probationary period ends. The supervisor provides a full and fair opportunity for the appointee to demonstrate executive excellence during probation by observing performance and conduct, holding progress discussions, giving feedback on strengths and weaknesses, and fulfilling any developmental requirements.

## **SMALL AGENCY IMPLEMENTATION OF EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING**

The direction, strategies, and solutions presented in this guidance are applicable both to small and large agencies. Although we recognize small agencies generally have a lower level of resources and staffing, our research and experience with recent agency onboarding pilots has confirmed the universal applicability of the key requirements and best practices contained in this guidance. Of course, proportional resources and staffing are essential to the successful implementation of any program; however, we have concluded the size of an agency is not a critical factor that would drive or change the approach and activities an agency should take in operating a successful onboarding program.

As is the case for large agencies, small agencies should focus on conducting a thorough needs assessment, building a business case, and obtaining senior leadership agreement on the current and future state of executive onboarding. Small agencies may want to ensure involvement by their Performance Improvement Officers to evaluate internal onboarding processes and technology. In addition, smaller agencies may find it valuable to partner with one or more other agencies to share resources and best practices.

## **ONBOARDING NON-CAREER EXECUTIVES**

Agencies may apply the steps of the Executive Onboarding Framework and Enhanced Model referenced in this guidance to assist all types of executives in their transition into new organizations; and agencies should bear in mind special considerations for non-career executives. In September 2008, the National Academy of Public Administration, the Partnership for Public Service, and the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute published the results of a study entitled, "*Speeding up the Learning Curve: Observations from a Survey of Seasoned Political Appointees.*" This study surveyed a group of Senate-confirmed appointees of former President George W. Bush, some of whom had performed substantial public service prior to their political appointments. The appointees shared their onboarding observations and experiences, including the need for them to:

- Quickly form positive relationships;
- Fully understanding the Federal budget process; and
- Master the process for policy development.



Read more about onboarding non-career executives in the 2011 Executive Onboarding Guide *Hit the Ground Running: Establishing a Model Executive Onboarding Program* ([http://www.opm.gov/WIKI/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/Hit\\_the\\_Ground\\_Running\\_Establishing\\_a\\_Model\\_Executive\\_Onboarding\\_Framework\\_2011.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/WIKI/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/Hit_the_Ground_Running_Establishing_a_Model_Executive_Onboarding_Framework_2011.pdf)).

## A COMMITMENT TO EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING

OPM pilot data and other research indicate the critical importance of continuity and strategic change management in ensuring success of the planning and successful implementation of executive onboarding. For example, continued senior leadership commitment for onboarding programs may be significantly compromised by the departure of leaders responsible for supporting and championing the programs, particularly in the absence of any succession leadership management. Agencies with successful long-term onboarding programs ensure the continuity of senior leadership engagement and prioritization of the programs across leadership and other organizational change. For questions and/or assistance in executive onboarding planning and implementation please email [SESDevelopment@opm.gov](mailto:SESDevelopment@opm.gov).

## ADDITIONAL EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING RESOURCES

The following resources are available for agencies to include in executive onboarding programs to the extent applicable.

**Free, Online Executive Training on the HR University “Manager’s Corner”** (a virtual learning portal maintained by OPM ([https://hru.gov/Studio\\_Managers/Studio\\_Managers\\_Corner.aspx](https://hru.gov/Studio_Managers/Studio_Managers_Corner.aspx)))  
(Please create an account and/or sign in to access the courses)

- ***Linking and Developing Measurable SES Results-Focused Performance Requirements*** – The purpose of this course is to assist SES members with developing performance requirement(s) for the Results Driven critical element in their SES Performance Plans. Performance requirements must be linked to organizational goals and focus on achieving measurable results. Duration: 1 hour.
- ***Executive Excellence and Wellness through Strategic Leadership*** – This course will help executives gain valuable knowledge, strategies and resources on how to use strategic leadership skills in their work and personal life to achieve executive excellence and wellness. The strategies in this training – even if obvious or intuitive – are designed to provide a helpful reminder of the value of strategic approaches to both work and personal life. Duration: 30 minutes.
- ***Emotionally Intelligent Leadership*** – This web-based course is designed to help educate and provide Federal leaders with knowledge and strategies to successfully apply the principles of emotional intelligence, defined as the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, and for managing emotions effectively in others and ourselves. Research presented in the course shows a strong link between emotional intelligence and positive workplace outcomes, such as performance, productivity, and employee engagement. The course is highly-interactive, offering self-checks and realistic scenarios to increase and enhance learning. Duration: 45 minutes.

### **Effective Learning Interventions for Developing Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs)**

This report is based on the most up-to-date empirical and conceptual research in leadership and executive development. The research is specific to all competencies within the ECQs. There is a very detailed summary for each competency along with recommendations (based on the research) for development; a quick-reference matrix of recommendations by ECQ competency; and users of the study can visit the references for a more detailed/thorough review of the research behind the recommendations. This matrix can be used to inform targeted executive onboarding training interventions and each executive's Executive Development Plan (EDP) (<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/leadership-development/effective-learning-interventions-for-developing-ecqs.pdf>).

### **Executive Best Practices Guide**

This guide is a compilation of best practices in executive development within the Federal Government. This guide will help agencies update their mandatory EDPs (5 CFR 412.401(a)), as well as shape and develop their leadership development programs. The guide contains a compilation of best practices used by the public and private sector to support the continued learning of executives. The information was gathered through an extensive literature review, as well as through interviews with a number of Fortune 500 companies and Federal agencies. OPM developed this guide to help agencies meet the development needs of Federal executives (<http://chcoc.gov/Transmittals/Attachments/trans5241.pdf>).

### **SES Situational Mentoring Program**

One tool that OPM has created to assist agencies in the onboarding and development of executives is the SES Situational Mentoring Program. This program is open to, and created exclusively for, all Federal executives. Situational mentoring involves short-term discussions where executives have the benefit of obtaining valuable ideas and guidance on high-impact issues, problems, challenges or opportunities. The short-term discussion can be via email, telephone, over lunch, etc. This Government-wide program provides Federal executives with timely advice and support from experienced executive mentors across Government who can commit to providing short-term assistance. Through this program, executives are able to easily connect to mentors across agencies through the Situational Mentoring portal housed on OMB's MAX website. For more information, please view OPM's SES Situational Mentoring video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FM4WXZYWqw>). To enroll executive mentees and mentors into the program, please contact your agency executive resources office or email [SESDevelopment@opm.gov](mailto:SESDevelopment@opm.gov).

### **Onboarding for New Senior Executives**

The OPM Center for Leadership Development/Federal Executive Institute Government-wide SES Onboarding Program is offered for new members of the Career SES, SES-Equivalent, Senior Level (SL) and Scientific and Professional (ST), and is designed for Executives in their first or second year of service. It includes the Career SES Orientation Briefings and the SES Leadership Onboarding Seminars. Senior executives will usually find the most value from this Government-wide onboarding program when they attend the SES Orientation Briefing followed by the SES Leadership courses. For details go to: <https://cldcentral.usalearning.net/>.

**Career SES Orientation Briefings**

Several times a year, OPM, through its Federal Executive Institute and in conjunction with the White House Presidential Personnel Office, conducts briefings for new members of the career SES and SES-Equivalents as part of OPM's Government-wide executive onboarding framework.

For details, go to: <https://cldcentral.usalearning.net/mod/page/view.php?id=3897>.

**SES Leadership Onboarding Seminars**

SES Leadership Onboarding Seminars accelerate early success and interagency networking of executives in their first or second year in the SES or equivalent with access to public-private sector strategies. SES participants gain real-world perspectives and strengthen effectiveness as enterprise leaders applying the OPM ECQs to foster a more efficient, effective, performance-driven Federal Government. For details, go to: <https://cldcentral.usalearning.net/>.

## **APPENDIX A – EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING PROGRAM FRAMEWORK FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

Executive onboarding is a way of acquiring, accommodating, assimilating and accelerating new leaders into the organizational culture and business. Documented examples show that onboarding of leaders minimizes the chances of costly replacements and terminations by helping newly-placed executives navigate the areas that are most critical to success. The best approaches recognize that a successful onboarding process involves process owners, process champions and new executives. The following are typical responsibilities for each group:

### **Process Owners (e.g., Human Resources, Executive Resources)**

- Serve as a bridge between the recruiting phase and the onboarding phase;
- Ensure appropriate feedback mechanisms are in place for all involved in the process;
- Assess the need for additional organizational support/resources (e.g., IT, facilities);
- Are prepared to address issues of diversity (diversity is a broader concept than ethnicity, race, gender and age; it also includes disability, religion, nationality, and sexual orientation, as well as more general differences in perspective and approach that may derive from generational differences, geographical differences, and differences in types of experience and educational backgrounds, for example; diversity, in all its aspects, helps the Government benefit from a broad range of perspectives); and
- Partner with the manager and executive to focus the executive’s transition efforts in the most productive directions.

### **Process Champions (e.g., senior leaders, managers, supervisors, mentors, coaches)**

- Provide explicit encouragement for new executives to take time to learn, build relationships, and set the stage for performance;
- Are accountable for seeing that the strategy and process are accomplished;
- Ensure expectations are clear and provide regular and constructive feedback;
- Consider diversity in all aspects of onboarding;
- Assist the new executive with integration into his or her peer group; and
- Explain and set realistic milestones and cultural expectations (e.g., decisions that can be made without manager approval, communication styles).

### **New Executives**

- Actively learn about the organization’s history, values, vision and mission, strategic plans, leadership structure, metrics and performance, processes and practices;
- Take responsibility for ensuring integration is accomplished effectively by achieving the measurements for success that have been put in place, absorbing critical information, and building valuable relationships; and
- Regularly communicate expectations, objectives, and accomplishments.

The following framework is intended to be general enough to meet the majority of the needs of all new and newly-assigned executives from pre-boarding through the first year; however, agencies should modify the framework and assign responsibility according to unique agency processes and practices and according to each new executive’s individual needs. Agencies should assign responsibility for these tasks to specific offices and individuals to ensure accountability.

Tasks outlined in the framework may be accomplished in several ways, including handbooks, webinars, agency websites, face-to-face meetings, checklists, handouts, retreats, e-binders, transition meetings, etc. We also recommend agencies specify the amount of time it should typically take (in hours) for the executive to accomplish the tasks within each phase. Also, see in the framework where automation is recommended.

<b>PRE-BOARD</b>	
<b>The goal of the pre-boarding phase is to plan and prepare for the executive's arrival and to ensure the executive's successful entrance into the organization.</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide the executive with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Biographies and/or resumes of direct reports</li> <li>○ Required applications and forms (e.g., benefits, ethics information, travel card application)</li> </ul> (Encourage the executive to review and complete necessary paperwork before the first employment day.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with the office that addresses suitability, credentialing, and any necessary national security adjudication to ensure timely processing.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with IT and Facilities to coordinate work space so the executive has an appropriate parking space, office, equipment, identification, smartphone, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pre-populate the executive's calendar with tasks in the framework as well as other essential activities and training. This will demonstrate leadership support for the strategic onboarding of the executive as well as help ensure the executive takes the necessary time to complete the specific tasks (e.g., meetings with mentor/sponsor/coach, lunch with senior leaders, formal feedback sessions).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a list of key stakeholders and agency leaders with name, title, phone number and email address. Provide to the executive on the first day.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign an executive sponsor. A sponsor accelerates the new executive's ability to quickly address and properly deal with early confusing issues. Questions about "normal protocol" in the organization, finding the right people to go to for information, correct procedures, and learning what is "right" and "wrong" should be easily answered by a sponsor. Be sure the sponsor knows his or her responsibilities. Provide a checklist if possible.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign a mentor to help immerse the executive into the culture of the organization.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assign a coach to help the executive progress in his or her current position, as well as with individual development and career goals.

- Develop a briefing book or website with:
  - Key information about the agency (e.g., structure and mission, background, financial information)
  - Organizational chart and telephone book
  - Photos and biographies of key executives
  - List of acronyms
  - Message from the Director/Head of Agency
  - Benefits, work-life programs, transit subsidy information
  - Required training information
  - List of recurring meetings
  - Maps and building information
  - Payroll calendar
  - Information of personal interest (e.g., information packet on local schools and realtors)

- Schedule mandatory training (e.g., IT security, ethics, No Fear Act, performance management, employee and labor relations, Hatch Act, EEO, diversity awareness).

- Executive should provide direct reports and staff with a biography, photo and a letter of introduction.

## **DAY 1/WEEK 1**

**The goal of the first day is to ensure the executive is welcomed into the organization by senior leadership and new staff and is satisfactorily in-processed. The remainder of the week should be dedicated to deliberate introduction and acclimation of the executive into the organization as well as training to help the executive understand pitfalls and critical issues.**

- Welcome the executive by conducting a swearing-in ceremony, including the executive's family, photo and a press release.

- Introduce the executive to direct reports, staff, senior leaders, etc.

- Produce an article for agency publication to note the arrival of the executive.

- Executive should complete any paperwork and security requirements that were not completed during the pre-boarding phase.

- Conduct an executive briefing, transition meeting or other forum to provide the executive with information about the work group. The briefing should include:
  - The 12-month calendar and a letter from the previous executive to gain a perspective on organizational history, culture, priorities and "lessons learned"
  - Fact sheets on the "hot issues" that will require the executive's attention within the first 90 days
  - A quick introduction to personnel policies and rules (financial "dos and don'ts", acquisitions, hiring, firing, contractor support)
  - A discussion of initial projects and roles and responsibilities, including past performance standards
  - Training and information designed to provide initial familiarity with



<p>crucial systems and procedures. These are crash courses, but will serve their purpose by making executives aware immediately of vital systems, laws, procedures, etc.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Introduce the executive to his or her assigned mentor and sponsor.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Executive should review the list of key contacts and stakeholders and begin to schedule introductory calls/meetings.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Meet with executive to ensure job roles and responsibilities are clearly communicated.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Take the executive to lunch.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Executive should meet with direct reports and staff.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Executive should attend any necessary training as described in the pre-boarding phase.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Executive should create an action plan. This can take the form of a set of strategic questions an executive should ask and get the answers to over time, in order to better understand the agency and his or her role in contributing to the organization. (See Appendix A of the OPM manual “Hit The Ground Running: Establishing a Model Executive Onboarding Program” for a list of sample strategic questions).</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Register for the OPM SES Briefing for New Executives <a href="https://cldcentral.usalearning.net/mod/page/view.php?id=3897">https://cldcentral.usalearning.net/mod/page/view.php?id=3897</a>.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Provide the executive with the resources, tools and time to successfully accomplish tasks in this phase.</p>

## FIRST 30 DAYS

**The goal within the first 30 days is to establish roles and responsibilities of the new executive as they relate to performance, development and ethical behavior. Executives should also begin to build relationships and business partnerships.**

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize the executive’s performance objectives.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Executive should create an Executive Development Plan (EDP) with his or her manager and solicit input from coach/mentor.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Executive should schedule a formal feedback session with his or her manager and coach/mentor.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate networking opportunities and provide resources to make networking possible.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss with the executive his or her individual work styles and preferences.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Executive should meet with his or her coach.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Executive should seek out unwritten rules (e.g., how to get things done; who can help and who can’t or won’t; what to do and, more importantly, what not to do) with mentor, sponsor and peers—this could be included in the risk assessment initiated in week 1.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Executive should begin scheduling appointments with key stakeholders from other organizations (e.g., programs, policies, and budget). Executive should consult with his or her manager or mentor to identify stakeholders.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/> Provide the executive with the resources, tools and time to successfully accomplish tasks in this phase.
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact the executive to get feedback on his or her experience after 30 days.
<b>FIRST 90 DAYS</b>
<b>The goal within the first 90 days is to cultivate the new executive by building competence in the job and providing frequent opportunities for open forum discussions. Executives should begin to have a full workload while managers monitor performance and provide early feedback.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive should identify professional development opportunities.
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive should develop an action plan based on answers to the strategic questions provided in Week 1.
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive should review performance objectives with his or her manager.
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide the executive with the resources, tools and time to successfully accomplish tasks in this phase.
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact the executive to get feedback on his or her experience after 90 days.
<b>6 TO 9 MONTHS</b>
<b>The goal within the first 6 months is to provide guidance and feedback to the executive to ensure continued success and to make plans for his or her future with the organization.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive should engage in a leadership assessment process (e.g., 360°, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) for developmental purposes and to identify areas for improvement; follow up with coaching and/or an action plan if appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive should schedule a formal feedback session with his or her manager.
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive should reflect on his or her role with coach/mentor.
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive should revisit the EDP to assess professional development goals and track progress.
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide the executive with the resources, tools and time to successfully accomplish tasks in this phase.
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact the executive to get feedback on his or her experience after 6 months.
<input type="checkbox"/> Notify the Hiring Manager the probationary period is ending.
<b>1 YEAR</b>
<b>The goal within the first year is to monitor performance, individual development, goals and desires - and to engage the executive in advancing the mission of the organization.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive should complete a 360° assessment (or other leadership assessment process, if executive has not recently completed a 360°) in addition to the annual

performance appraisal.
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive should develop a roadmap for long-term success.
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide an anniversary pin and card from the Secretary/Director.
<input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up to ensure executive has attended the OPM SES Briefing.
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide the executive with the resources, tools and time to successfully accomplish tasks in this phase.
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact the executive to get feedback on his or her experience after 1 year.
<input type="checkbox"/> Close out and assess next steps.

## **APPENDIX B – EXECUTIVE ONBOARDING LOGIC MODEL**

The logic model enables agencies to design and communicate training program plans, and to provide a systematic method to evaluate results – helping to establish the business case and obtain support from senior leaders and other stakeholders. The logic model and an on-line tutorial for its use are available on OPM’s Training Evaluation Wiki page at <http://www.opm.gov/wiki/training/Training-Evaluation.ashx>.

Additionally, OPM has issued a Training Evaluation Field Guide that provides in-depth information and instructions for evaluating training programs, available at [http://www.opm.gov/WIKI/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/Field%20Guide%20to%20Training%20Evaluation\\_6-8-2011-FINAL.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/WIKI/uploads/docs/Wiki/OPM/training/Field%20Guide%20to%20Training%20Evaluation_6-8-2011-FINAL.pdf).

A sample executive onboarding logic model is presented on the page below. Click the link to download the word document from the Executive Onboarding Wiki webpage.

## Program Logic Model: Executive Onboarding

Inputs What we invest/ How will we collaborate	Outputs What we do and who we do it to/for		Outcomes – Impact The incremental events/changes that occur as a result of the outputs		
	Activities	Participation/Target	Short Term	Medium (Behaviors)	Long (Org. Impact)
Staff Funding Technology Time Facilities (space for meetings and training) Data collection tools External resources Other Collaboration External: OPM OMB GSA Other Federal agencies Other Federal executives External organizations Other Collaboration Internal: Human Resources Executive Resources Training office Hiring managers Peer mentors IT Facilities Security Contracting Other	<b>Plan</b> Align program with strategic goal Ask key performance questions to identify critical indicators (metrics) Collect baseline data Educate hiring manager/ key personnel on roles and responsibilities Create dashboard and evaluation plan  <b>Review training</b> Identify and prioritize onboarding activities  <b>Develop products</b> Training curriculum Checklists/Job aids Collaboration tool  <b>Meetings</b> Schedule key personnel meetings Status reports/Check-ins  <b>Marketing</b> Letter to CHCOs Press Release  <b>Implement</b> Administer onboarding program Collect and analyze data Make data driven decisions	New Executives	New executive demonstrates essential knowledge such as budget, payroll, and performance expectations, within 60 days of hire  New executive verbalizes knowledge of organizational structure & functions within first 30 days of employment  New executive emulates positive behaviors in preparation for assuming responsibility for all assigned executive duties within 60 days of hire	New executive independently identifies appropriate actions to take for budget, payroll, interpretation of policies & procedures, and other leadership functions after 90 days of hire  New executive appropriately fulfills duties as applicable to his/her position after 60 days of hire  New executive independently accesses appropriate level in organizational structure to resolve issues beyond his/her level of authority between 90 and 365 days of hire  New executive fosters effective relationships with key stakeholders and direct reports generating positive feedback between 90 and 365 days of hire	After 1 year new executive demonstrates management of current fiscal year budget without negative variances, and follows correct procedures for planning budgets for future fiscal years  New executive exerts positive influence on organizational policies & procedures, strategic plan, and other key initiatives after 1 year of hire  New executive consistently and fairly applies policies & procedures and corrective counseling for all direct reports  New executive consistently models ethical behavior  # of executives retained after 6 months/ 1 year  % of executives engaged after 6 months/1 year

Sample Executive Onboarding Logic Model (<http://www.opm.gov/wiki/training/New-Employee-Orientation.ashx>).