



SES CDP ACTION LEARNING PROJECT

Leveraging the Best Practices of Successful SES CDPs to Improve Placement Rates

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Our Discussion

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Background

Why this project? Maximize CDP effectiveness to develop SES corps.

What is the return on investment for CDPs?

- Cost of running CDPs can be considerable in terms of time and money

How successful are CDPs in actually developing an SES corps?

- Placement rates vary dramatically among agencies
- Time to placement from graduation/certification varies diametrically

Project Premise:

- Distinguish CDPs with high versus low placement rates
 - Thomas Klein report provided recommendations for improvement
 - Partnership for Public Service is conducting a study on SES mobility

Background

SES CDP Placement Rate Segments

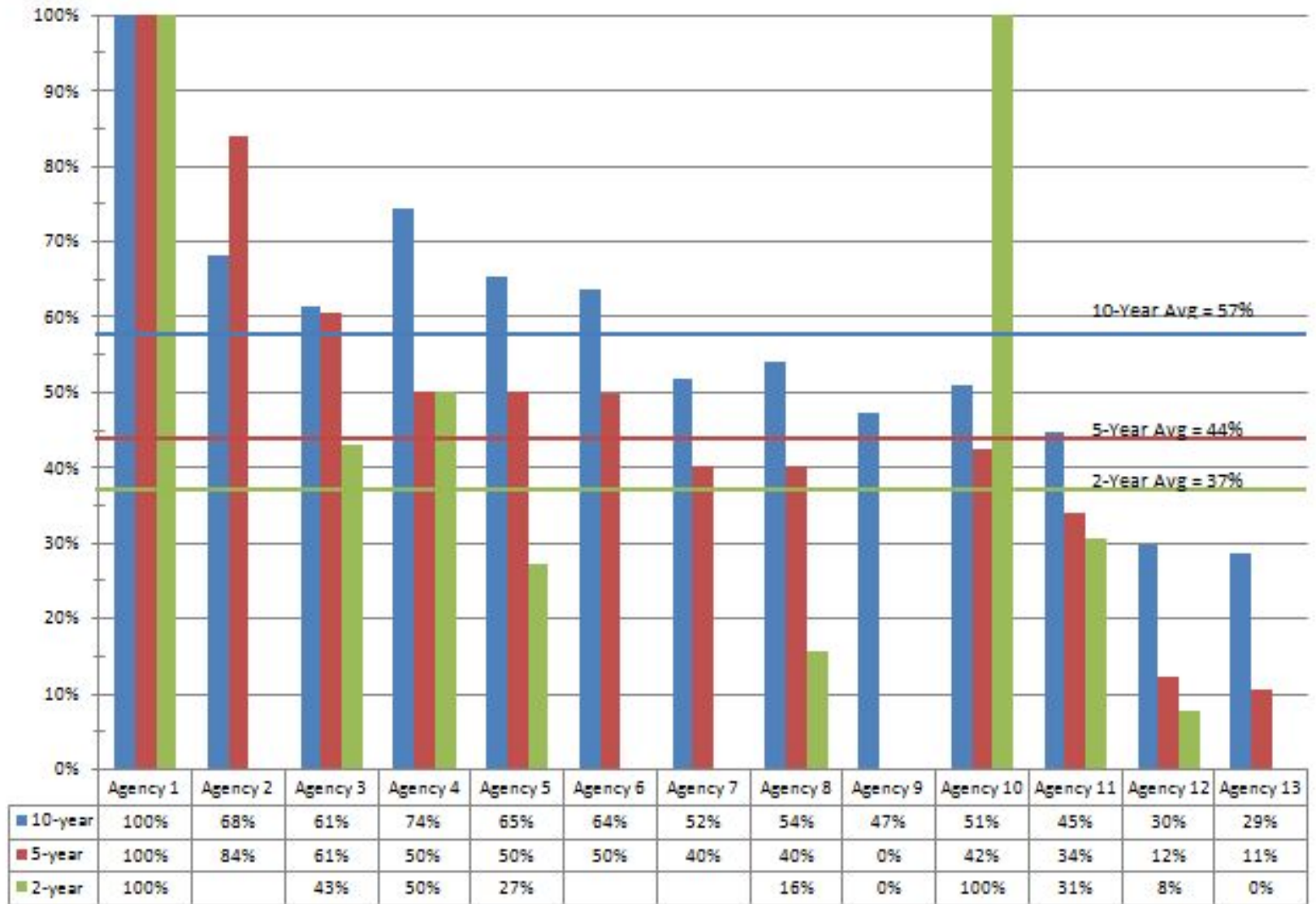
| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| High (71-100%) | 7 agencies |
| Medium (31-70%) | 3 agencies |
| Low (0-30%) | 3 agencies |

Source: Self-reported CDP placement rates from 13 of 14 agency SES CDP coordinators interviewed for this project.

OPM Certified Candidate Development Programs

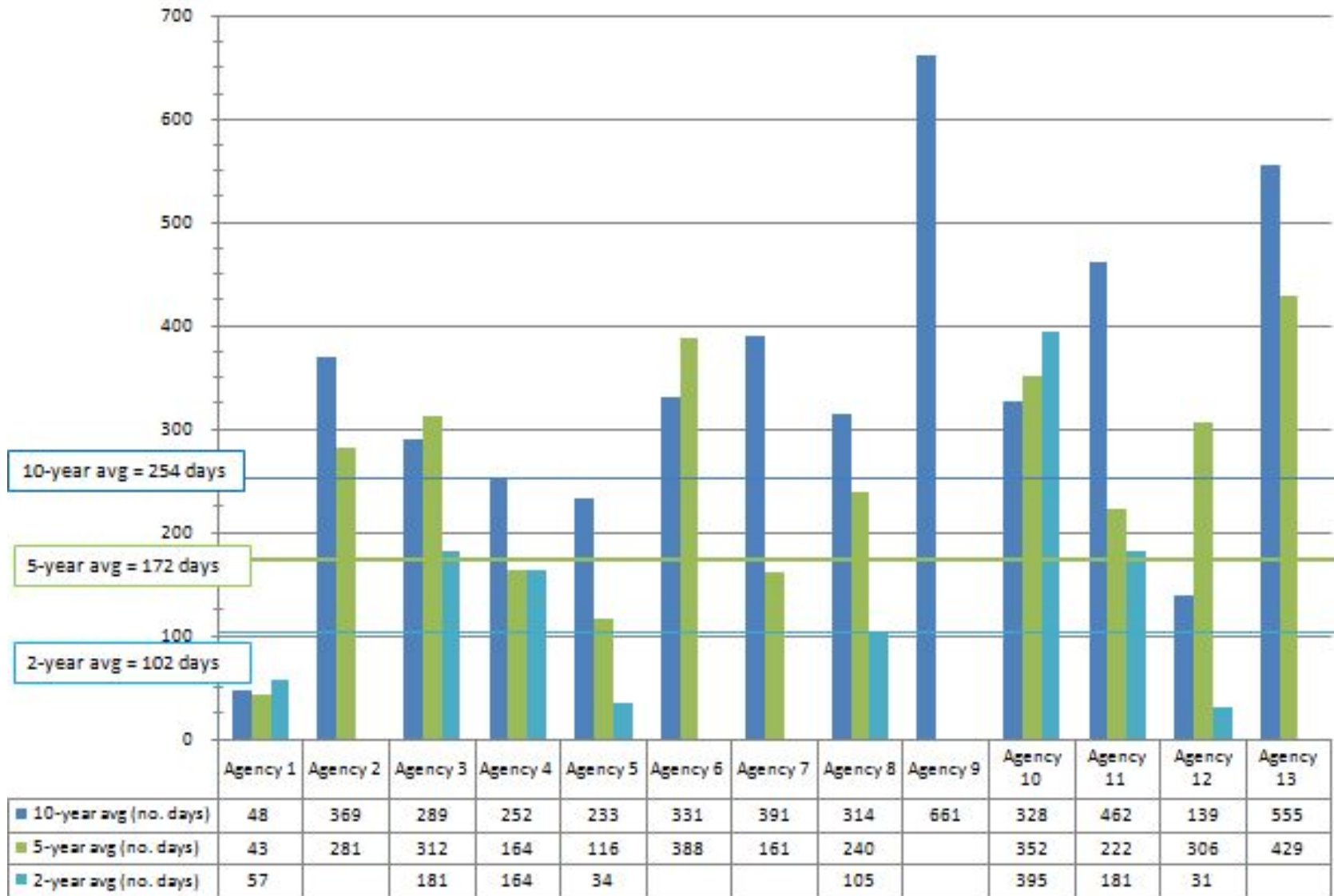
| Agency | Date Submitted for Approval | Date Approved | Comments |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------|---|
| Department of Commerce | April 2010 | October 2010 | |
| Department of Homeland Security | August 2010 | November 2010 | |
| U.S. Agency for International Development | March 2010 | August 2010 | |
| Department of Labor | April 2010 | June 2010 | |
| Department of Agriculture | October 2010 | February 2011 | |
| Treasury - Department of Treasury Corporate Plan | August 2010 | February 2011 | |
| Internal Revenue Service Implementation Plan | January 2011 | February 2011 | |
| Nuclear Regulatory Commission | September 2010 | December 2010 | |
| Department of State | August 2010 | November 2010 | |
| Social Security Administration | May 1 2011 | July 2011 | |
| Department of Veteran's Affairs | December 2010 | | Submitted to VA for changes in January 2011 |
| Department of Interior | Jun 2011 | | Submitted to DOI for changes in July 2011 |

Trends in CDP Placement Rates for Agencies Interviewed for This Project



Source: OPM's Executive and Schedule C System (ESCS) for QRB cases submitted since January 1, 2001. Placement rate is defined as number of defined for this project as the percent rate of selection into the SES following successful completion of a CDP and obtaining QRB certification. Blanks indicate no QRB approvals under Criterion B (CDP graduates) during that time period.

Average Days to Place in First SES Position



Source: OPM’s Executive and Schedule C System (ESCS) for QRB cases submitted since January 1, 2001. Days to place is the number of days between first effective SES date and QRB approval date of CDP ECQ package for career SES appointments only. Blanks indicate no QRB approvals under Criterion B (CDP graduates) during that time period.

Objectives

- Analyze CDP placement rates
- Determine what attributes or characteristics are associated with high placement rates
- Provide OPM and SES CDP coordinators with actionable recommendations on best practices to increase placement rates

Methodology

- Collected quantitative OPM data
- Interviewed 14 CDP coordinators
 - Agency's OPM CDP certification package
 - Relevant program statistics
 - Cost for administrative, selection, and development components
- Analyzed OPM data and CDP coordinator interviews
 - Trends in data and insights
 - Key CDP attributes that emerged from the interviews
 - Correlation between placement rates and program attributes
 - Data Gaps
- Distilled findings and recommendations for OPM

Executive Summary of Findings

The success of a CDP is primarily determined by two factors:

1. Agency has an executive leadership culture that supports and believes in the CDP as a mechanism for developing future SES
 - ✓ Senior leadership creates a clear nexus between top executives, hiring officials, and its CDP
 - ✓ Agency ERB and SES are actively involved in creating mission-critical developmental assignments
 - ✓ CDP participants are involved in leadership activities with current SES corps
2. Agency selection and hiring practices are oriented toward providing visibility and access to vacancies for graduates of the CDP
 - ✓ Agency places CDP participants in existing SES vacancies or equivalent during the CDP
 - ✓ Policies and processes actively promote CDP graduates to selecting officials for SES vacancies

We also found that:

3. There are some practices integral to effective functioning of all CDPs
4. Measures and data on CDPs is lacking

1. Top Leadership Support and Commitment is Critical for Program Success

Agencies with highest placement rates have top leaders who create a strong nexus between corporate culture and their CDP.

- Agency SES leaders should help identify specific skills sets needed to succeed
- Expectations for visibility & placement of CDP candidates should regularly be communicated
- Elevate importance of selection process as shared responsibility among current SES
- Charter special ERB to manage CDP

BEST PRACTICE: CUSTOMIZE TO IMPROVE BENCH STRENGTH

Top leaders consider projected agency-wide SES vacancy rates & organization-specific attrition to determine leadership needs.

1. Top Leadership Support and Commitment is Critical for Program Success

4 out of 7 agencies with high placement rates actively engage top leadership in creating developmental assignments.

- ERB-identified DAs may be more likely to be in an existing executive leadership role
- ERB support can increase candidate visibility
- DAs oriented around agency priorities are likely to provide greater opportunity for development

BEST PRACTICE: ACTION LEARNING TO IDENTIFY KEY AGENCY ISSUES

Several agencies use group projects that challenge candidates to address significant agency issues. Candidates provide their report to and brief the top agency leadership on project results.

1. Top Leadership Support and Commitment is Critical for Program Success

4 out of 7 agencies with the high placement rates offer longer and/or multiple development assignments.

- Extended DAs provide more time and context to develop executive core competencies
- Multiple DAs can broaden executive experience & provide greater interaction with existing SES

BEST PRACTICE: MULTIPLE DAs, LONGER DAs

At one agency with a high placement rate, two 6-9 month DAs outside of a candidate's work unit and in a new occupational field must be completed. One of the DAs must also be outside the agency, unless the candidate is external.

1. Top Leadership Support and Commitment is Critical for Program Success

50 percent of the agencies with high placement rates incorporate CDP participants into leadership activities with the current SES corps.

- CDP participants gain insight into the broad range of executive issues
- Helps CDP participants become fluent in communicating with current SES on the executive leadership approaches
- CDP participants are increasingly viewed as SES peers and partners by agency senior leadership

2. An Active Pipeline for CDP Participants to SES Vacancies is a Significant Program Success Factor

Agencies with placement rates near or above 90 percent place CDP participants in existing SES vacancies, or equivalent, during the CDP.

- Oriented around a set of specific, identified SES positions
- Coordinator engages senior leaders of internal organizations in assessment and selection before advertising CDP
- Candidate is selected into SES-level position and will be eligible for non-competitive placement after graduation and certification

BEST PRACTICE: "GROOMING"

Candidates participate in the program full-time, completing classroom training and a series of rotational assignments. Certified program graduates awaiting placement are considered SES in waiting and, if eligible, will receive an increase in salary as a result of their QRB certification.

2. An Active Pipeline for CDP Participants to SES Vacancies is a Significant Program Success Factor

5 out of 7 agencies with the highest placement rates actively advertise and promote CDP graduates to hiring officials who have SES vacancies.

- Senior leaders establish firm expectations that graduates will be included in the applicant pool
- CDP graduate profiles and resumes are kept on an active intranet site
- Senior leadership of large organizational units support and encourage placement of CDP graduates

BEST PRACTICE: "FIRST LOOK"

Certified CDP graduates receive first consideration for SES vacancies via an intranet site for SES hiring managers that includes certified graduates' profiles. Before filling an SES position, the hiring official must certify that he has looked at the repository and not found anyone suitable for the vacancy.

3. Practices Integral to Effective Functioning of All CDPs, Regardless of Placement Rate

CDP coordinators engage SES and ERBs to play an active role in the selection and development processes.

BEST PRACTICE: BUSINESS UNIT ERBs DRIVE SELECTION

Agency business units have internal selection processes based on standard criteria. Mini-ERBs review assessment results of application and interview. Nominees assessed at agency level.

BEST PRACTICE: FULLY ENGAGE CURRENT SES IN CDP

At one agency, over 100 SES have been involved in at least one program aspect, e.g., selection, development. They participate in training sessions, provide individualized ECQ coaching, serve as mentors and DA sponsors, and network with candidates at monthly SES events.

4. Measures and Data on CDPs is Lacking

There are no systematic OPM or OMB measures, assessments, or benchmarks of CDPs across agencies.

- There seem to be no OMB-driven performance metrics for CDPs, perhaps other than placement rates.

While OPM does have data on CDP graduates with Criterion B certification and SES placement from this pool, other relevant data are lacking or difficult to obtain.

- Comprehensive, one-stop-shopping database of CDP graduates does not exist
- There is enormous variation in the records that agencies keep on CDP participants and graduates.

Recommendations for Agencies Running CDPs

- Charter a special ERB to oversee the CDP
- Require hiring and selecting officials to certify that they have considered CDP graduates prior to advertising an SES position
- Structure CDPs to include assignment to SES-level or deputy-to-SES-level positions as their position-of-record
- Optimize developmental assignments by offering:
 - Extended developmental assignments that allow candidates to realize agency-relevant accomplishments (exceeding 120 days)
 - Multiple developmental assignments to broaden executive competencies and build executive portfolio
- Maximize exposure to senior leaders as an integral part of the CDP

Recommendations for OPM

- Require agencies to collect and report on key CDP performance data, for example:
 - Numbers of CDP applicants/selectees/graduates Criterion B certified
 - Placement rates for CDP graduates (define placement rate)
 - Recommend agencies initiate an SF-50 for candidates at the beginning and completion of a CDP
- Redesign existing OPM websites to further increase the visibility and viability of the CDP to key stakeholders (hiring officials, prospective applicants, CDP participants and graduates, and CDP coordinators):
 - USAJOBS: Redesign the SES section to add a central registry of SES CDP graduates government-wide. Include full, searchable profiles of all CDP graduates to:
 - increase visibility to federal hiring officials
 - promote the program to potential candidates (for example, a match-making/interview service available for prospective CDP applicants to talk to CDP graduates)

Recommendations for OPM (continued)

- Redesign existing OPM websites (continued)

OPM (opm.gov) website: Expand the SES CDP section to create a forum for sharing of CDP data and provide resources for prospective CDP applicants to benchmark and compare CDPs:

- CDPs statistics, by agency and year
- Names/contact information for all SES CDP coordinators
- Lists of current participants and graduates

- Improve sharing of government-wide CDP data with agencies

--Improve CDP data management and analysis capabilities (better integration of data from ESCS and EHRI)

--Annual meeting for CDP coordinators to review best practices and successes



Q&A /
Thank you