



Succession Planning
Alaska Legislative Affairs Agency



Legislative Affairs Mission Statement

The Legislative Affairs Agency supports the Alaska Legislature by providing centralized services to members, their constituents, business and other government agencies. It is the mission of the Legislative Affairs Agency to provide those services in an effective, efficient and accountable way and to assure that services are accessible and user oriented.



Legislative Affairs Agency

- Main support staff to all 60 members and their staff
- 146 full time and seasonal positions, as well as, ~40 temporary positions
- Eleven different sections: Executive Director's Office, Accounting, Legal Services, Research Services, Supply, Security, Information Services, Information and Teleconference, Print Shop, Maintenance and Personnel
- Managers/Directors have combined total of 152 years of legislative service

Legislative Affairs Agency



Executive Director

37 years



Special Assistant

8 years



Accounting

14 years



Information Services

14 years



Supply

14 years



Print Shop

8 years



Maintenance

2 years



Personnel

16 years



Legal Services

5 years



Research Services

13 years



Information & Teleconference

27 years



Legislative Security

7 years



Executive Director: An Historical View

Executive Directors since Statehood:

- 1959-1967 (8 yrs) John C. Doyle
 - 1967-1978 (11 yrs) John Elliot
 - 1978-1984 (6 yrs) Myrton Charney
 - 1984-1993 (9 yrs) Warren Endicott
 - 1993-present (22 yrs) Pam Varni
- LAA middle manager position eliminated in 1993
 - Deputy Executive Director retired and position reclassified
 - No Deputy ED position currently
 - Managers rotate in acting role when ED out of town



Responsibility for Succession Planning for Executive Director

- Legislative Council (7 Senators, 7 Representatives) hires the Executive Director as set by Alaska statute
- Eight votes determine the outcome
- Advertise, interview and hire a new Executive Director
- Nonpartisan position
- Very political decision



Challenges to Succession Planning

- Political appointee in a time of hyper partisanship
- Alaska's dire budget situation means it's crucially important that any incoming Executive Director possesses the knowledge, skills and abilities to lead Agency with fewer staff and resources
- Several key managers are also nearing retirement – unlikely to draw a candidate from within the Agency



What We Are Doing

- Internal training and promotion where/when possible
- Some managers have identified possible staff from current workforce to move into position upon their retirement
- ED works to support organizational stability by providing or creating career paths from entry level to managerial positions; current Finance Manager is a great example of those efforts



Looking Ahead

- Balance needed between maintaining high level of service and providing opportunities for managers and key employees to take on additional responsibilities to maintain and grow the institutional knowledge necessary to carry out the Agency's mission.



Summary

- Succession planning is important and can be difficult in a politically charged environment, especially with regard to the Executive Director position
- Institutional knowledge is vital to fulfilling mission and performing the work of the Agency
- Current budget situation makes succession planning more difficult and more important than ever
- Continue to look for ways to grow qualified employees and provide career paths to ensure continuity and quality of service