

When identifying successors, COOP planners should consider the organizational and geographic proximity of the potential successor. A potential successor who is part of the same department or division (organizational proximity) is a good choice, because he/she will probably already understand the position. However, there should be at least one successor in the order who is not located in the same office or facility in case a vacancy is caused by a catastrophic event at a particular geographic location.

While the focus should be upon the skills, experience, knowledge, and training necessary for holding a specific key position, other traits, such as a particular individual's ability to work under pressure, should also be considered. An order of succession also requires sufficient depth. In other words, there may very well need to be more than one or two named successors.

#### **a. Prepare a Current Organization Chart**

Use Worksheet # 24 to complete this task.

The first step in devising an order of succession is assessing the current organizational structure. If an organizational chart does not already exist it is necessary to prepare a current organization chart by position and function. The chart may include the names of individuals in these positions, but it should focus on the positions, not the incumbents. Under each function, the chart should list the key positions.

When creating an organization chart ask these two questions:

- (1) How does this function uniquely contribute to the organization's mission?
- (2) Could this function operate effectively if this position were vacant?

The first question should be answered in terms of the inputs and outputs of the function relative to the organization's mission. The answer to the second question yields information on key positions.

If the answer to this second question is "no", then ask, "*Why is that position so important?*" Is it because the incumbent possesses specialized knowledge or carries out specialized duties? If so, it is a key position.

Tying key positions to essential functions in this manner makes evident any gaps between functions and people performing those functions.