



# PREPARING FOR THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

*The Federal Candidate  
Development Program*

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT



Kay Coles James, Director



## A MESSAGE *from the* DIRECTOR *of the* UNITED STATES OFFICE *of* PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

**O**n April 10, 2003, the Office of Personnel Management launched the Senior Executive Service Federal Candidate Development Program (Fed CDP), a governmentwide endeavor to train outstanding leaders of the future for the Federal Government who will guide us through the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century.

Our team has worked extensively with agencies and associations to develop this program. The Fed CDP will help Federal agencies meet their succession planning goals and contribute to the Government's efforts to create a high-quality Senior Executive Service leadership corps that draws upon the strength of America's diversity. We are confident the Fed CDP will attract the best and the brightest from both inside and outside the Federal Government.

Our recruitment starts **now** and will be consistent with our Merit System Principles and veterans' preference – which is the foundation upon which we have built a strong civil service. President Bush and I are committed to expanding leadership opportunities to build a diverse civil service that draws from the richness, strength, and diversity of our society and our way of life. The Fed CDP will help all qualified individuals bring their talents into leadership positions in the Federal Government.

The information contained in this brochure describes the educational model for this program which underscores a feedback-intensive experience through positive mentoring. The Fed CDP will expose the candidates to the best senior level executives in the Federal Government. Graduates of the Fed CDP will be submitted for certification by an SES Qualifications Review Board and, if they are so certified, may be selected for an SES position anywhere in the Federal Government without further competition.

Please join us in our journey to ensure we continue to have great leaders for great Government.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kay Coles James". The signature is fluid and cursive.

*Kay Coles James*  
*Director, United States Office of Personnel Management*



## THE FEDERAL CANDIDATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

**A**s you consider moving into a leadership position within the Federal Government, your first step is to get the training you need to achieve your goals. OPM, working in partnership with Federal agencies and key stakeholder groups, has developed this governmentwide Federal Candidate Development Program (Fed CDP) to help you achieve these goals.

If you are accepted into the program, you will undergo 14 months of feedback-intensive training to prepare you for the Senior Executive Service (SES). The program revolves around helping you to achieve the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) required for entry to the Senior Executive Service. ECQs define the competencies and characteristics needed to build a Federal culture – one that is results-driven, serves customers, and builds successful teams and coalitions inside and outside the organization.

You will develop, and therefore be able to offer, a broader perspective as you learn with and from other agency candidates. The curriculum is comprehensive and includes classroom work, interagency experience, on-the-job learning, mentoring, coaching, field work and Web-based learning.

A core benefit of the program is the access you will have to senior White House and Cabinet-level officials who will be serving as speakers and workshop leaders. In addition, you will work on team projects performed at the agency level.

*“I support the goals of the Candidate Development Program to identify and develop individuals with great potential for the senior leadership cadre which reflects the rich diversity of America.”*

– REP. DANNY K. DAVIS



## Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs)

ECQ 1	ECQ 2	ECQ 3	ECQ 4	ECQ 5
<i>Leading Change</i>	<i>Leading People</i>	<i>Results Driven</i>	<i>Business Acumen</i>	<i>Building Coalitions/ Communications</i>
Continual Learning Creativity/Innovation External Awareness Flexibility Resilience Service Motivation Strategic Thinking Vision	Conflict Management Leveraging Diversity Integrity/Honesty Team Building	Accountability Customer Service Decisiveness Entrepreneurship Problem Solving Technical Credibility	Financial Management Human Resources Management Technology Management	Influencing/Negotiating Interpersonal Skills Oral Communication Partnering Political Savvy Written Communication

### APPLYING FOR THE PROGRAM

OPM is aggressively recruiting candidates from both inside and outside Government and working closely with agencies to identify and meet their specific needs with regard to succession planning and hard-to-fill positions. Merit will be the driving principle in the process. Nationwide recruitment will include efforts focused on groups traditionally underrepresented in the SES.

### APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

- OPM will announce the Fed CDP on [www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov).
- Eligible candidates – individuals must be able to show one year or more of leadership experience at the GS-14 level or above in the Federal service, or comparable experience, to be considered.

- Participating agencies will review, interview, and select candidates using OPM-approved guidelines.
- Candidates selected from within the Government who meet the applicable qualifications requirements, will serve in General Schedule grade GS-15 positions (temporary or permanent depending on their existing positions), for the duration of their participation in the program. Candidates from within the Government who do not meet the applicable qualifications for GS-15 will serve in GS-14 positions (temporary or permanent depending on their existing positions), for the duration of their participation in the program. Candidates from within the Government who are not serving under career appointments or under career-type appointments will be given a temporary Schedule B appointment. Candidates selected from outside the Government will be appointed

to temporary GS-15 positions (or temporary GS-14 where the applicable qualifications are not met), through Schedule B appointments, for the duration of their participation in the program. A Schedule B appointment is used for developmental purposes connected with an SES candidate development program.

- Agencies will certify their candidate selections to OPM.

### BALANCING WORK & TRAINING

The 14-month program allows you time to complete your training and development. You will receive three nonconsecutive weeks of residential training, and you will attend several one-day workshops and sessions held locally, as well as sessions with mentors, other team members and instructors. Your sponsoring agency will pay your program fees and expenses, including travel and per diem.

### COMPREHENSIVE LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The Fed CDP draws from the latest research on learning and leadership development. The program offers an ongoing cycle of assessment, feedback-intensive training, challenging work and



*"...[N]ever take the honor of public service for granted....[A]ll of us should dedicate ourselves to great goals. We are not here to mark time, but to make progress, to achieve results, and to leave a record of excellence."*

– PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH  
OCTOBER 15, 2001



learning opportunities, coupled with support from mentors and coaches. Through a combination of classroom, hands-on projects, and inter-agency experience, you will experience a powerful mix of learning methodologies that will prepare you for the variety of challenges you will face as an executive within the Federal Government.

## *Fed CDP Program Milestones*

### PROGRAM CURRICULUM DETAILS

#### *Classroom Learning*

##### PROGRAM ORIENTATION

You and your supervisor will be invited to a program orientation. This two-hour session will include a welcome from OPM, a briefing on the program, Q&A, and an informal networking social.

##### EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE

Prior to attending the first week of residential classroom training, you will complete skills assessments and targeted readings on values-based leadership. The focus for this initial week will be five-fold:

1. Engaging participants in an active and supportive learning community, including a participant-led and managed Leadership Forums Committee (a Committee formed during the first week of training);
2. Preparing a personalized Executive Development Plan;
3. Establishing Executive Learning Teams (5-7 candidates plus a faculty executive coach);
4. Providing individual feedback on leadership skills through skills assessment instruments completed prior to and during the week;
5. Building skills in the areas of values-based leadership, emotional intelligence, and team development.

##### MENTOR SELECTION AND TRAINING

You will select an SES mentor from a pool established for the program. You will initially meet with your mentor to establish a mutual set of expectations and to receive assistance in finalizing your Executive Development Plan and its activities. Your mentor will continue to meet with you throughout the program.

- Complete a **personal assessment battery**, including skills assessment instruments and exercises to highlight strengths and areas for development
- Craft and implement a personalized **Executive Development Plan**
- Join an **Executive Learning Team** that will serve as a learning and support vehicle throughout the program and beyond graduation
- Complete a high level **Team Leadership Project** pertaining to a significant leadership issue that affects all Government agencies
- Work with a team and **executive coach** to establish and reach individual learning and performance goals
- Gain organizational savvy, support, and wisdom from a **Senior Executive Service mentor**
- Participate in three weeks of interagency, residential **executive training**
- Attend seminars with **Cabinet-level and White House speakers** and policy leaders in executive leadership
- Access additional training **resources to meet individual needs**
- Undertake four months or more of **developmental assignments** in one or more executive positions with operational responsibilities
- Participate in **Issues Forums** and **Leadership Visits** that will uncover key issues facing the nation and exceptional leaders
- Engage in **Field Experiences** to explore leadership from unusual vantage points, such as "Leadership at Gettysburg"
- Read and discuss cutting edge **leadership literature**
- Participate in **Web-based learning** that will provide readings, links to other sources, and chat rooms for participant-led discussions

## Federal Executive Institute

OPM's Federal Executive Institute (FEI) will manage and deliver the curriculum. For over 30 years the Federal Executive Institute (FEI) has served as the Federal Government's development center for senior executives. FEI brings SES members and high-performance GS-15s together for courses that help executives develop broad viewpoints, understand their constitutional roles, and enhance essential leadership skills.



### FOCUSED SKILLS SEMINAR

This one-week residential seminar will be custom-designed to address developmental needs based directly on your assessments and Executive Development Plan. This ensures that a core portion of the classroom component responds specifically to your development needs. For example, topics could include working with the Congress, media relations, e-Government, homeland security, and performance management.

### INDIVIDUAL LEARNING CLASSES

You will also receive a small budget to acquire specific skills training. Based on your approved Executive Development Plan, you may use these funds to take formal classes or to participate in online learning programs.

### ADMINISTRATION SPEAKERS AND POLICY LEADERS

You will interact and attend lectures with White House and Cabinet-level speakers. These top-level speakers, along with senior experts charged with implementation coordination, will provide you with critical executive perspectives and a broad view of high-level leadership and policy issues. The program will also bring you together with policy leaders in executive development to provide the most current thinking on high performance leadership.

### STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

This one-week residential seminar will focus on those competencies critical to strategic leadership: vision, external awareness, strategic thinking, political savvy, and partnering. You will participate in a mix of readings, lectures, discussions, and interactive projects, drawing upon experts in the field.

**Reasonable Accommodations:** OPM provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application, hiring and training processes, please notify OPM. The decision on granting reasonable accommodation will be on a case-by-case basis.

## *Work-based Learning*

Based on the initial assessments, the program will organize candidates to accomplish the following supplemental learning activities that take place outside of classroom learning.

### DEVELOPMENTAL ASSIGNMENTS

You will complete at least four months of developmental assignments involving challenging operational responsibilities outside your position. These assignments are designed to expand your understanding about the functions of Government, its operations, and the role of senior executives in public policy formulation and administration, as well as to build executive skills. You will select assignments to address specific goals outlined within your Executive Development Plan.

### TEAM LEADERSHIP PROJECT

Your participation in an Executive Learning Team will include a group project at the Department/Agency level. You will explore an important leadership issue, practice and receive feedback and coaching on individual and team skills, and provide a product useful to the broad community of Government leaders. Examples might include such activities as developing a guide of best practices in succession planning, creating a “lessons learned” database on knowledge management, or providing a workshop on change management and decision making.

### EXECUTIVE COACH

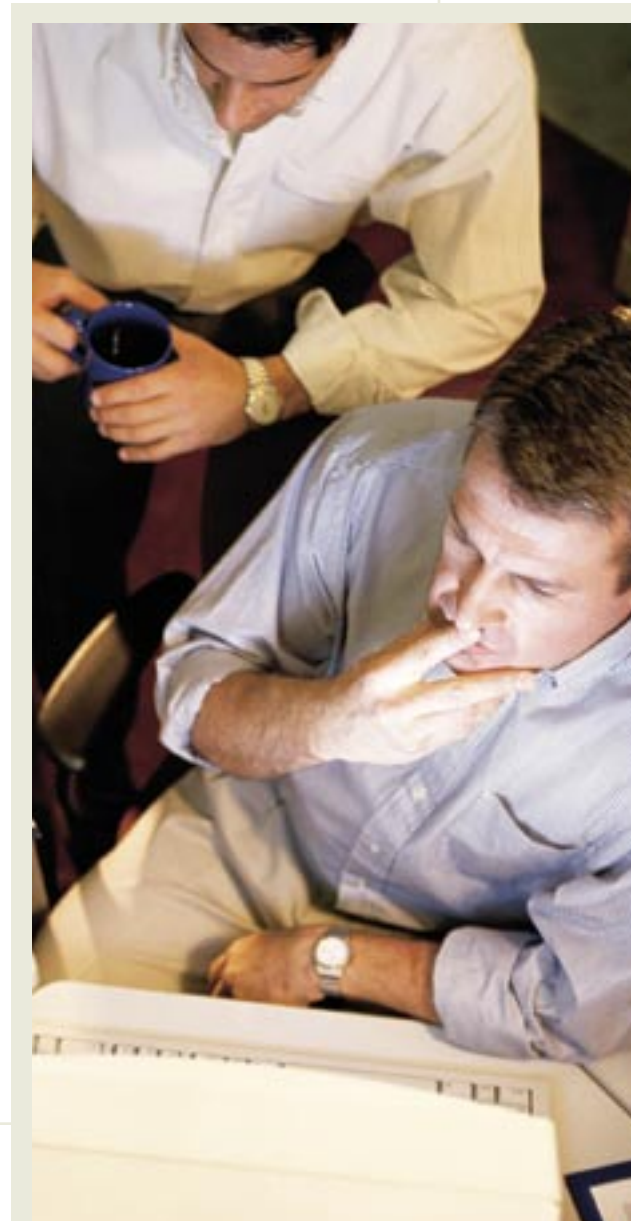
Your Executive Learning Team will have a faculty executive coach. The coach is responsible for helping form the team, enabling it to facilitate its own work, coaching the team during the program, and teaching the team members to coach each other. Also, the coach will meet privately with you, on at least a quarterly basis, to help you form and reshape developmental goals, formulate strategies for current challenges, identify personal strengths and barriers, and assess progress on an ongoing basis.

### LEADERSHIP FORUMS COMMITTEE

You will learn a great deal from other candidates who will draw from their own networks and have access to a wide range of leadership learning possibilities. The Leadership Forums Committee, formed during the program’s initial residential session, will tap your resources to offer two types of learning events: (1) Issue Forums – one-to two-hour sessions facilitated by candidates to help your colleagues address a compelling leadership or public policy issue in their agency, and (2) Leadership Visits – half-to full-day visits to see and talk to high-level leaders in action at Government agencies.

### FIELD EXPERIENCES

A series of one-day offsite leadership programs will host you in settings normally unavailable to you. Such unique experiences might include leadership lessons that can be learned from: (1) a leadership tour of the Gettysburg battlefield; and (2) a tour of the Holocaust Museum and conversations with museum historians. Additional leadership experiences may include: (1) a day spent with the executive team of a non-profit organization; or (2) a day spent exploring succession planning at a major corporation.



## Program Timeline

### SELECTION PROCESS

Fed CDP Application Period Opens (remains open for 21 days)	Week 1
Fed CDP Application Period Closes	Week 3
Fed CDP Selection	Weeks 8-11

### FED CDP CONTENT

Fed CDP Orientation for Candidates and Supervisors	Program Start
■ Assessments Distributed	
■ Mentor Matching Process Described	
Mentor Pool and Developmental Assignments Identified	Month 2
Initial Assessment Week (residential)	Month 3
Mentor Training/First Meeting with Mentors	Month 4/5
Second Core Training Week (residential)	Month 7
Third Core Training Week (residential)	Month 11
Program Graduation	Month 14



### READING GROUPS

Successful leaders continually explore new ways of thinking. You will be expected to read relevant materials throughout the program and share your insights and applications with others through discussion groups. Information sharing may be through meetings or via Web-based chat rooms.

### WEB-BASED LEARNING

The Fed CDP will have its own Web site to support learning outside the classroom. The site will include: (1) all key program materials and guidelines, (2) profiles of all mentors and developmental assignment opportunities, (3) work rooms to support team projects and the Leadership Forums Committee, and (4) chat rooms for reading groups and other topical conversations. Program faculty and candidates will also be encouraged to post articles and other leadership learning resources.

### Program Completion

The program concludes when you have:

- Completed all of the program requirements;
- Accomplished the learning objectives set in your Executive Development Plan;
- Received certification from your mentor that you have completed the work. Your mentor will also submit a letter summarizing your learning in the program. This letter may be used to accompany your application when it is submitted to the OPM Qualifications Review Board upon graduation from the program.

A graduation ceremony will be the last formal event in the program.



Please contact us at:

[FEDCDP@OPM.GOV](mailto:FEDCDP@OPM.GOV)

[WWW.OPM.GOV/SES/FEDCDP](http://WWW.OPM.GOV/SES/FEDCDP)

