



**Alliance of
Latino Leadership
& Policy**

***SES 100:
Wanted – Exceptional Leaders
For Our Nation***

Bill Valdez

CEO

Alliance of Latino Leadership & Policy

Integrity - Service - Excellence



1978 CSRA

5 USC 3132(a)(2):

"Senior Executive Service position" means any position in an agency which is classified above GS-15 pursuant to section 5108 or in level IV or V of the Executive Schedule, or an equivalent position, which is not required to be filled by an appointment by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and in which an employee-

- (A) directs the work of an organizational unit;**
- (B) is held accountable for the success of one or more specific programs or projects;**
- (C) monitors progress toward organizational goals and periodically evaluates and makes appropriate adjustments to such goals;**
- (D) supervises the work of employees other than personal assistants;**
or
- (E) otherwise exercises important policy-making, policy-determining, or other executive functions.**



SES Basics

- Established by 1978 Civil Service Reform Act
- Charged to produce results for the American people
 - Serve just below Presidential appointees
 - Major link between appointees and Fed workforce
- A strong commitment to highest ideals of public service
- Well-honed executive skills with integrity
- Ability to motivate employees, build partnerships, communicate with customers
- Solid management expertise to produce optimum results with limited resources

Notice Anything Missing??!!



Managers & Leaders

Managers work to get their employees to do what they did yesterday, but a little faster and a little cheaper.

Leaders, on the other hand, know where they'd like to go, but understand that they can't get there without their tribe, without giving those they lead the tools to make something happen.

Managers want authority. Leaders take responsibility.

We need both. But we have to be careful not to confuse them. And it helps to remember that leaders are scarce and thus more valuable.

~ Seth Godin

<https://seths.blog/2011/10/the-difference-between-management-and-leadership/>

The Current Vision For SES/Career Leaders

Government needs strategic leaders with:

- **An enterprise view** of public policy that transcends a commitment to a specific agency mission, political party, profession, or technical track.
- A world view that embraces the belief that **American democracy dynamics** provide a positive and continuing vehicle for change
- An understanding the importance of the **Merit System Principles (MSPs)** and **Prohibited Personnel Practices (PPPs)**. [The Merit System Principles: Keys to Managing the Federal Workforce \(mspb.gov\)](#)





Can I Become a Leader Without Taking Risks?

The short answer is a resounding NO!!!

You must create experiential learning opportunities, but the system resists.

- Young leaders need opportunities to exercise their leadership muscles by leading teams or participating on task forces to gain leadership experience.
- Community leadership is also relevant and important.

Don't be afraid to ask to go on rotations or details.

- If your boss says you are too important to spare, run, don't walk because that boss doesn't have your best interests in mind.
- Government is full of intra- and inter-agency working groups. Get off your butt and find one to join.

Join a professional society & dare to excel outside the office.

- You can exercise your leadership muscle.
- You network & publish & get awards/recognition.



SES Risks

- **Mandatory removal from SES if:**
 - a) **2 minimally successful ratings w/in 3 years, OR**
 - b) **2 unsatisfactory ratings w/in 5 years**

If 1 unsatisfactory, must be moved to another SES position or removed from SES.

- **Appeal essentially limited to prohibited personnel practices, which can be referred to the Office of Special Counsel. (MSPB appeal results in recommendation to agency, not action.)**
- **Fallback rights if from civil service to GS-15 (w/ saved SES pay) if removed for performance. Note: *Saved pay is normally prior SES pay, after which former SES receives 50% of GS yearly increase (but not locality pay) until maximum GS pay exceeds saved pay, at which time former SES gets maximum GS rate***



Directed Reassignments

- **15-days written notice for non-geographic directed reassignment. 60-days for relocation. Before the notice for reassignment is given, the agency must consult with the executive.**
- **If you refuse, and are eligible for discontinued service retirement, you may retire. Otherwise, you are subject to removal from Federal service.**
- **Directed reassignments can involve geographic relocation. SES employment in itself does not automatically establish a mobility agreement. However, if, at the time of appointment, your position description, or other written agreement or understanding, provided for geographic mobility then you are eligible for mobility benefits.**



Do the Risks Outweigh the Rewards?

Consider the Other Rewards

- **Ability to contribute to the mission of the agency**
- **Greater opportunity for creativity and innovation**
- **The honor of serving at the highest level of Federal career service**
- **Increased responsibility and authority**
- **The ability to interact at higher levels**
- **Ability to serve the American taxpayer in ways no one else can.**

Most Importantly: You Can Save the World



Reality of SES **Deloitte.** Different than Theory



The challenges of senior leaders vary widely across agencies. For example, in the category of *Preparation for Future of Work* scores range from 52 percent to 8 percent. Therefore, providing targeted recommendations by agency will be a critical driver in improving the current state of career senior leadership.

Defining the Role of Career Senior Leaders			Fostering Leadership & Engagement as Requirements of Career Senior Leaders				Providing Developmental Experiences		Current /Future Challenges
Visionary Leadership	Fostering Collaboration	Leadership Development	Innovation & Risk Taking	Diversity & Inclusion	Engagement & Performance	Leadership Skills & Succession Planning	Infrastructure for Development	Access to Dev. Opportunities	Preparation for Future of Work
86%	95%	93%	60%	74%	74%	57%	43%	57%	38%
85%	97%	97%	53%	71%	62%	50%	18%	62%	41%
85%	94%	93%	54%	76%	63%	57%	33%	61%	35%
75%	98%	86%	57%	66%	59%	27%	27%	46%	25%
98%	98%	100%	70%	88%	84%	55%	27%	70%	32%
83%	94%	96%	64%	74%	81%	47%	28%	55%	38%
83%	100%	100%	50%	75%	83%	25%	25%	58%	8%
78%	100%	94%	56%	67%	67%	44%	28%	39%	33%
83%	94%	92%	50%	64%	67%	47%	31%	39%	44%
89%	95%	100%	63%	79%	74%	58%	21%	47%	26%
63%	93%	70%	44%	63%	63%	15%	15%	56%	15%
89%	97%	95%	41%	70%	70%	59%	38%	57%	38%
80%	96%	96%	60%	72%	64%	36%	28%	56%	52%
77%	95%	96%	48%	74%	68%	35%	12%	49%	23%
82%	97%	93%	59%	72%	74%	50%	28%	55%	41%

Anticipated Impact on the Federal Government

While some variation is to be expected, drastically different experiences of leaders across government indicate that federal leaders do not have a unified mission and vision, resulting in poor communication and execution of key initiatives.

Recommended Solution for Agencies

Create a consistent experience for leaders across government, including developmental opportunities focused on preparing for the workforce of the future.



Becoming an SES is Intentional & A Learned Behavior

Rotate Jobs & Build Networks

– most SES
have had at
least 5 different
jobs before
making it to the
top

Including 2-3 at the
GS-15 level

Be Flexible on Location

– being in
D.C. helps -
almost all SES
have taken a
Washington
tour

Opens options for
broadening & development

Pay Attention to ECQs

– map yourself
every year
against them –
take additional
assignments
to fill in gaps

Ask at least 2 current SES
to review your package

**FedSmith, 3 May 2014, author Steve Ressler (abridged)*



ECQ 1: Leading Change

https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/senior-executive-service/reference-materials/guidetosquals_2012.pdf

Ability to bring about strategic change, both within and outside the organization, to meet organizational goals; and ability to establish an organizational vision and to implement it in a continuously changing environment. Six ECQ 1 competencies are:

- **Creativity and Innovation** – Develops new insights into situations; questions conventional approaches; encourages new ideas and innovations; designs and implements new or cutting edge programs/processes.
- **External Awareness** – Understands and keeps up-to-date on local, national, and international policies and trends that affect the organization and shape stakeholders' views; is aware of the organization's impact on the external environment.
- **Flexibility** – Is open to change and new information; rapidly adapts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.
- **Resilience** – Deals effectively with pressure; remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks.
- **Strategic Thinking** – Formulates objectives and priorities, and implements plans consistent with long-term interests of the organization in a global environment. Capitalizes on opportunities and manages risks.
- **Vision** – Takes a long-term view and builds a shared vision with others; acts as a catalyst for organizational change. Influences others to translate vision into action.



Do you know what the ECQs are really asking for?

- Leading Change:
 - Is leading change an agency or enterprise requirement for SES?
 - What are your change management principles?
- Leading People:
 - What is your leadership philosophy?
 - How do you lead in a political environment?
- Results Driven:
 - What is the primary result that SES should drive towards?
 - Are you a risk taker or risk adverse?
- Business Acumen:
 - Do SES need to be expert in financial, HC and technology management?
 - Which leadership competencies are important for business acumen?
- Building Coalitions:
 - Why is it important for leaders to be skilled at building coalitions?
 - What is the primary reason building coalitions is important?



Building/Supplementing Your Leadership Competencies

Leverage Resources

– seek out
career
development
resources –
participate in
leader
development
programs

Find Mentors & Coaches

– have an
outside 3rd
party help
guide your
career

Become a Thought Leader

– be
consistently
great at your
job &
respected
over the
course of
your career



Becoming a Thought Leader is the Fastest Route to Becoming an SES

3 Simple Steps to Becoming a Thought Leader

- #1: Choose a Profession:** Whether it is HR, Procurement, Policy, Finance or whatever, make an intentional choice about the profession you will build your career upon.
- #2: Research, Publish & Present:** Every profession has a society with annual meetings & publications. Identify the “hot issues” in your profession and research/publish/present about them.
- #3: Volunteer & Outwork Your Competition:** Serve on inter- and intra-agency working groups; volunteer for the CFC; step up as a team leader; and never say no to a political.

What the world needs now...

RANGE

WHY GENERALISTS TRIUMPH
IN A SPECIALIZED WORLD



DAVID EPSTEIN

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
OF THE SPORTS GENE

"RANGE"

- Diversify experiences
- Create opportunities
- Take time to explore
- Think bigger picture

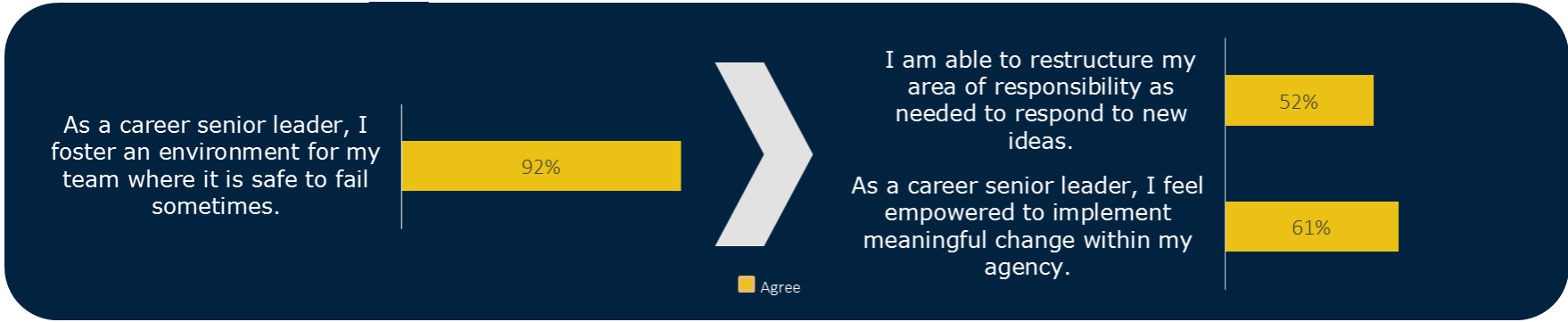


Key Insight 1

Agility is hampered by leaders' inability to responsively structure their areas of responsibility.



While most leaders feel they foster an environment where it's safe to fail, only half (52%) feel empowered to restructure their area of responsibility to explore new ideas. This result underscores the challenges in innovating and taking risks, as perceived by career senior leaders.



Anticipated Impact on the Federal Government

Without the ability to restructure to explore new ideas, innovation and risk-taking will suffer—leaving the government further behind commercial competitors.

Recommended Solution for Agencies

Develop a culture of increased fluidity, allowing shifting talent, resources, and operating models to move with ease from one situation to the next and beyond.



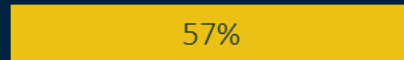
Key Insight 2

People management skills are important, but are not prioritized in selecting and developing leaders.

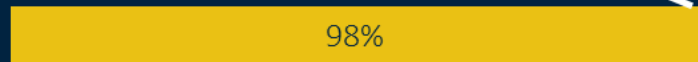


While 98% of respondents agree that people management skills are as important as functional expertise, less respondents feel leaders are selected based on leadership capabilities, and only a quarter feel their agency identifies critical skills gaps amongst the career senior leadership cadre.

Career senior leaders are selected based on leadership capability in addition to functional expertise.



As a career senior leader, people management skills are as important as functional expertise.



Agree

Anticipated Impact on the Federal Government

Career senior leaders who are unprepared to manage, lead, and inspire their people will result in lower engagement, performance management, collaboration, and performance across government diminishing an agency's ability to attract and retain key talent.

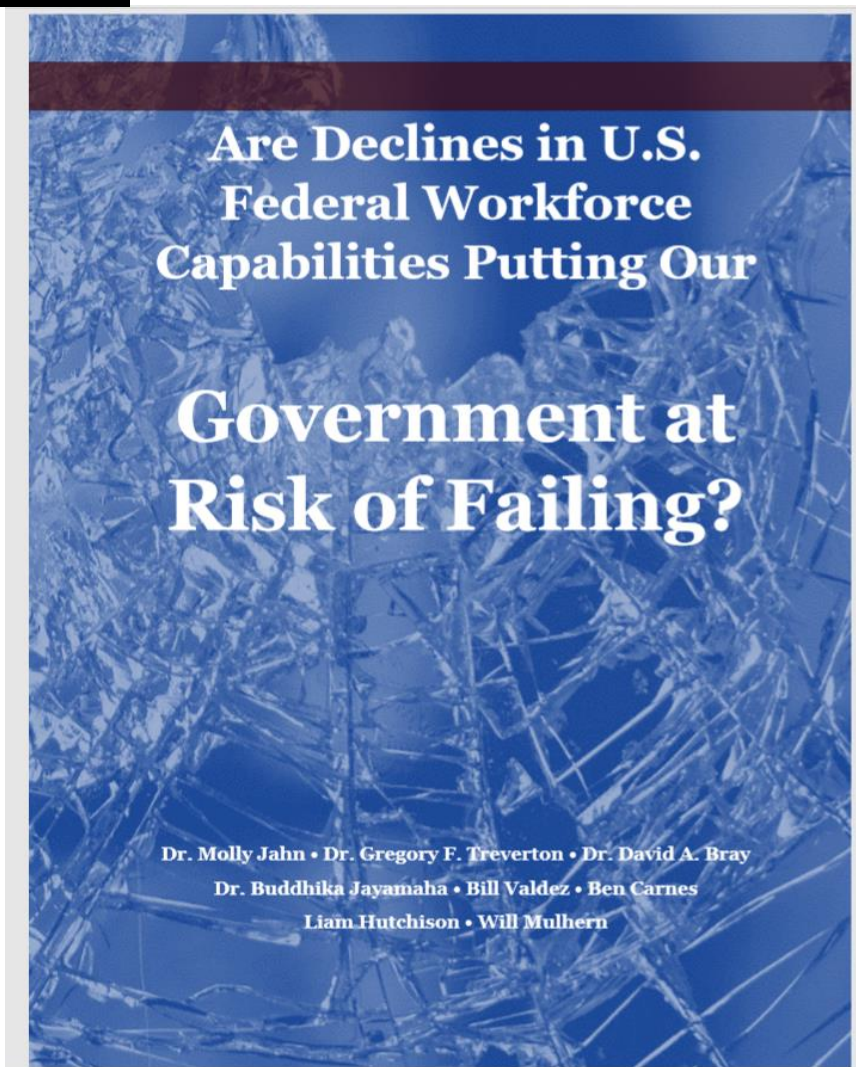
Recommended Solution for Agencies

Codify the people management skills required for career senior leaders and incorporate these skills in training and development, selection, and succession planning processes.



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We Studied the Impact This Is Having on Career Leadership





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ARE DECLINES IN U.S. FEDERAL WORKFORCE CAPABILITIES PUTTING OUR GOVERNMENT AT RISK OF FAILING?

By: Dr. Molly Jahn, Dr. Gregory F. Treverton, Dr. David A. Bray, Bill Valdez

Executive Brief

Has the U.S. Federal Government reached a point where critical operations might fail in stressful events that are likely to occur? This was this project's animating question. Based on the data collected in this study, it appears the answer to these critical questions is yes.

A weakening in the capacity of the government's workforce and its organizational structures is plainly evident, and so is a perceptible loss of collective resilience to detect and respond to adverse events. To test this conclusion, this study considered workforce trends given several dozen potential scenarios, ranging between those that are virtually certain to occur in the next year to other scenarios that are highly plausible in the near term....

<https://seniorexecs.org/newsroom/latest-news/1132-sea-federal-workforce-study>

In the study we identified the **challenges** and **opportunities** to improve the ability of the Federal government to address the disruptive and exponential challenges we know are coming.

Challenges



Archaic & burdensome policies & regulations



Uncertain budgets



Increasing political toxicity

Opportunities

Identify and **re-think policies and regulations** that can constrain progress

Foster **public-private partnerships** that more effectively and efficiently serve the public

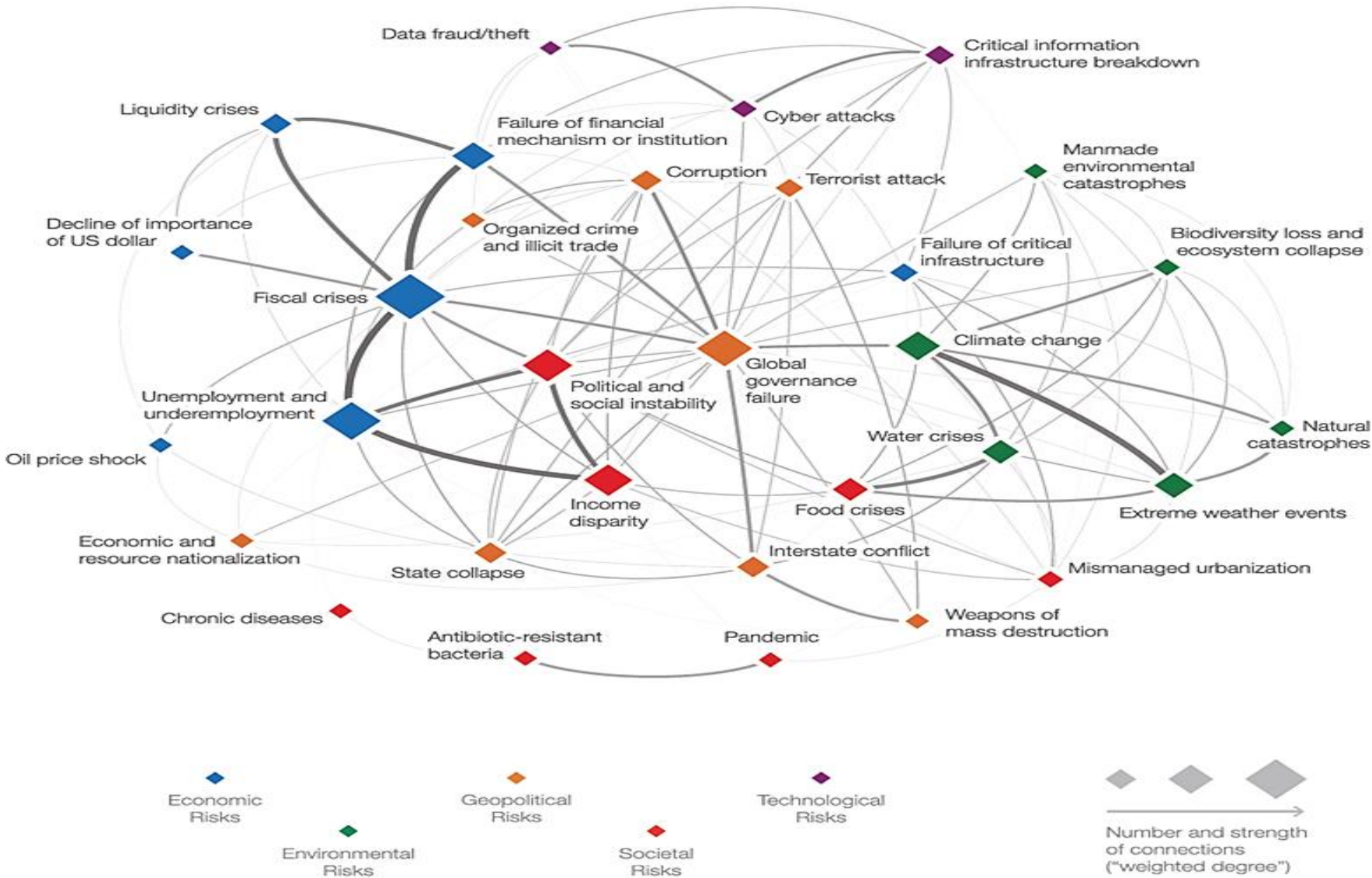
Improve the ability of career leaders to **manage their programs** and work with political leadership (Administrations and Congress)

Career Federal Leaders are the only group that has the ability to address

all three challenges... *but it won't be easy.*



We Live In An Increasingly Interconnected World How Does This Impact Leaders?

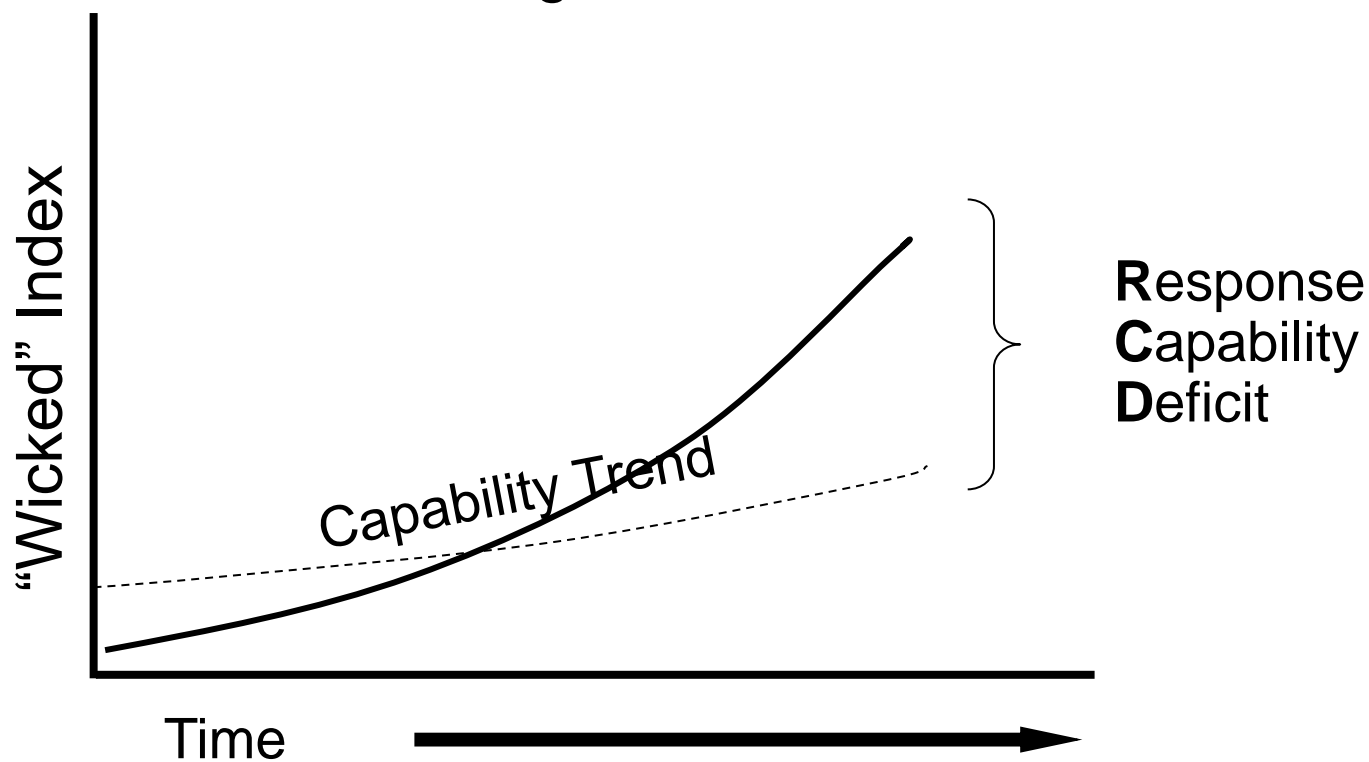




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“Wicked” Challenges Create a Response Capability Deficit (RCD)

Challenges We Face





Government's Achilles Heel— Effective Leadership & Talent Management

- Almost 70% of GAO's High Risk List underpinned by a human capital and/or leadership challenge
- Human capital management on the High Risk List since 2001
- \$1 trillion wasted annually





What the world needs now...

Gallup finds that great leaders have the following talents:

- They **motivate** every single employee to take action and engage employees with a compelling mission and vision.
- They have the **assertiveness** to drive outcomes and the ability to overcome adversity and resistance.
- They create a culture of **accountability**.
- They build **relationships** that create trust, open dialogue, and full transparency.
- They are viewed as **Thought Leaders** within their profession.



**Alliance of
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Our study revealed that other players are not up to the job...

Congress is too dysfunctional and can't pass a budget, it's most basic responsibility, much less set national priorities.

Political Appointees are mayflies, have different agendas from career leaders, and do not have long-term stewardship of agencies as a priority.

Corporate America has potential, but has not entered the game yet and does realize that they could be part of the solution.

State & Local Governments can make a difference, but their influence is limited.

The American Public senses something is wrong and votes accordingly, but their power of the ballot box is a blunt instrument.

Integrity - Service - Excellence



Career SES Will Save the World

- **All major issues of our day (*i.e.*, cyber, pandemics, climate, AI, IoT, national security, resilience, health care, *etc.*) have some Federal dimension to them.**
 - **(ECQ 1: Leading Change)**
- **We are living in a never-before seen time of disruption and with every challenge, there exists a corresponding opportunity to develop new leadership practices that are responsive to those changes.**
 - **(ECQ 2: Leading People)**
- **Now is the time for passionate public service leaders to deliver results to the American taxpayer through sustained integrity, excellence, and accountability.**
 - **(ECQ 3: Results Driven)**
- **Anticipating how disruptive change impacts Federal business processes will be the key to leadership success.**
 - **(ECQ 4: Business Acumen)**
- **Building and leveraging networks is and will remain essential to addressing the complex, adaptive systems problems of this day and age.**
 - **(ECQ 5: Building Coalitions)**



What can you do?

- Embrace a growth mindset that balances risk with mission requirements.
- Create experiential learning opportunities that are challenging and force you to the brink of failure.
- Demand to go on rotations or details and don't fall for the "you're too important to the office to let go for six months" trap.
- Network, network, and network some more.
- Join a professional society that is aligned with your professional goals, such as ALLP, SACNAS, SHPE or LULAC.

Be the change that you wish to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi



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our community
alliancelatinx.org

FIND THE FULL REPORT AT : <https://alliancelatinx.org/allpreport-latinos-in-fed-workforce/>

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