



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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## WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING GUIDEBOOK

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2001, the County of Los Angeles became one of the first public sector agencies to develop and successfully implement a workforce planning program. The program focused on proactive planning to fill vacancies due to retirement for classes that are essential to meeting public service mandates. Driven by the Strategic Plan, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) designed the program to be efficient, user-friendly, flexible, and meaningful for each of the County's diverse operating departments. The program, which was revised for its second roll-out in 2006, has attracted interest and won awards from numerous outside organizations, including being cited in the 2009 International Public Management – Human Resources Association's Workforce Planning Benchmark Study.

As planning for the future is an on-going, evolving process, DHR has updated the program in order to assess and respond to changed needs. In addition to providing a mechanism for evaluating non-retirement turnover, DHR has enhanced the program to include a new succession planning component that is designed to help the County maintain its leadership capacity as retirements in executive and management-level positions occur. To reflect the importance of this new component, DHR has changed the name of the program from *Strategic Workforce Planning* to *Strategic Workforce and Succession Planning (SWSP)*.

### Purpose of This Guidebook

This Guidebook serves as the initial information resource for department personnel to use to familiarize themselves with the *SWSP* program and develop workforce and succession plans. Specifically, this Guidebook will

- define workforce and succession planning.
- provide a context for planning using a departmental needs assessment as the foundation.
- present case studies of successful workforce and succession planning in other organizations.
- outline the phases for carrying out the distinct workforce and succession planning activities.
- describe potential strategies (see appendix) to include in workforce and/or succession plans.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### Definitions

The *SWSP* program is a dynamic, proactive, ongoing process of systematically attracting, identifying, developing, mentoring, and retaining employees to support current and future organizational goals. Although all classifications will be assessed through the *SWSP* program, the separate components of the program focus on two organizational levels: Management Appraisal and Performance Plan (MAPP) classifications and key non-MAPP classifications (managerial, supervisory, and professional). The *SWSP* program defines workforce and succession planning as follows:

- **Workforce Planning:** Proactive planning to ensure that strategies are implemented to mitigate the effect of high levels of anticipated retirement in key non-MAPP classifications
- **Succession Planning:** Proactive planning to mitigate the effect of high levels of anticipated retirement in MAPP positions.

## **County's Strategic Plan**

The County's Strategic Plan to improve the services and efficiency with which it serves the public consists of numerous goals and defined strategies to achieve them. As described below, the *SWSP* program has been developed to address the Workforce Excellence strategy of the Operational Effectiveness goal.

### *Goal 1: Operational Effectiveness*

Maximize the effectiveness of the County's processes, structure, and operations to support timely delivery of customer-oriented and efficient public services.

#### *Strategy 4: Workforce Excellence*

Implement human capital management best practices (e.g., succession planning, professional development, employee surveys) to enhance the recruitment, development, and retention and well-being of qualified County employees.

## **Benefits**

Strong workforce and succession planning provide the following benefits:

- Engages senior management in a disciplined review of organizational talent.
- Guides development activities of executive, managerial, and professional employees.
- Assures continuity of leadership and management support.
- Avoids transition problems by having candidates who are fully prepared to assume positions of greater responsibility.
- Prevents premature promotion.
- Audits the current workforce and thereby influences resources and development strategies.
- Identifies the competencies needed by the current and future workforce.
- Fosters a culture of viewing employees as valuable resources who are worth developing.
- Supports the overall mission of the department to provide superior service and improve efficiency by maximizing the human capital potential.

## **Requirements for Optimal Outcomes**

In order to reap the benefits outlined above, workforce and succession planning must

- be viewed as an on-going process, not a single act.
- have support of senior management.
- have line management ownership and involvement with support from human resources personnel.
- be aligned with the department culture, services, and vision.
- include creative thinking that may challenge and change the status quo.
- be tailored to each department's needs and structure.
- involve the employee taking ownership of his/her individual development with strong management support.

Now that the foundation has been established for understanding workforce and succession planning, two case studies are provided on the next pages to illustrate actual examples of workforce planning in organizations.

## WORKFORCE PLANNING CASE STUDY

**Organization:** New York State Office of General Services (OGS)

### **Organization Profile**

An agency of the State of New York employing a workforce of 1,900 employees

### **Situation**

OGS had faced several challenges that affected the quality and depth of its talent pool, including

- 1) Retirements. 24 percent of the agency's existing workforce was *eligible* to retire between 2004 and 2008. Forecasts for some job titles indicated that at least 35 percent of incumbents would leave.
- 2) Hiring freeze. In place since 2001, the hiring freeze had limited entry-level hires and increased internal competition for talent, which resulted in tremendous movement of current employees within and across departments.
- 3) Gaps in technical and supervisory/management skills. Business units continuously reported that the existing promotional pool was not adequately prepared.

These facts were compounded by the fact that in late 2002, the state announced an early retirement incentive plan. As a result, OGS was likely to lose up to 19 percent of its workforce by March 2003.

### **Initiative**

Other state agencies began scrambling to create realignment and restructuring plans, but the Succession Management Program OGS had implemented in 2000 had already been underway to mitigate the effect of such an event. The Program had identified areas where the agency was most vulnerable to retirement and outlined replacement strategies for filling gaps in concert with the agency's strategic plan. One of the key strategies utilized was the Individual Development Plan (IDP), which had become mandatory for any promotions, new hires, or internal transfers and included specific development goals and commitments for achieving them.

### **Results**

In January 2003, OGS presented the state with a proposed plan for filling mission-critical positions through a combination of internal recruiting, position reclassifications, and temporary doubling-up in some positions. Because of the Succession Management Program, and the IDPs in particular, OGS had established a pipeline of employees that were ready to assume these positions that had already been identified as vulnerable to retirement. OGS's proposal was quickly approved and set the state's standard for reviewing other agencies' proposals. By the time the early retirement incentive plan went into effect, OGS had filled 60 percent of the positions that were being vacated.

Young, M.B. (2005). Building the Leadership Pipeline in Local, State, and Federal Government. Sponsored by CPS Human Services and the International Public Management Association-Human Resources (IPMA-HR).

## SUCCESSION PLANNING CASE STUDY

**Organization:** Roseville, CA

### **Organization Profile**

Located 18 miles from Sacramento and 100 miles from San Francisco, the City of Roseville serves a population of 100,000 residents with a workforce comprised of 1,000 employees.

### **Situation**

In 1997, Roseville city leaders realized that 11 of its 15 municipal department heads would be *eligible* for retirement by 2003. Further analysis showed that 50 retirements were projected in the following five years. Though this number was a small percentage of the municipal workforce, these retirements were concentrated at the most senior levels of the organization. Looking only at those levels, approximately 80 percent would be *eligible* for retirement by 2007.

Compounding these facts was the growth in the population being served, resulting in the need to add 300 new positions over a three to five year period. City manager Craig Robinson noted that as a consequence of this growth, “the complexity of being a department head in city government has grown exponentially...today, people who aspire to promotion need to be better prepared.”

### **Initiative**

Robinson characterized the hiring philosophy of Roseville by saying, “We want to promote from within, whenever possible...we want our employees to see ‘there’s a future for me here.’” Given this philosophy and the situation described above, the city focused on developing internal talent through a succession program for leadership development. The program had several components:

- 1) a competency model for senior managers
- 2) a tool to adapt that model to fit other position levels and specialty fields
- 3) a succession plan
- 4) strategies for leadership development including assessment centers; a catalog of training and development opportunities; a mentoring program; and individual development plans.

The city received recognition for its Management Development Assessment Center (MDAC), which was initially designed for middle managers who might be in the running to replace department heads as they retired. Robinson noted that, “We were very comfortable using assessment centers for recruitment and selection,” but when the city realized the need to prepare the next generation of leaders, “we converted the assessment center into a development process.” The MDAC included a background questionnaire; personal interview; in-basket activity; group interaction activity; team planning activity; and Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. The cost for the MDAC, including development, was \$40,000, or about \$850 per person. Costs for the specialty components that were modified ranged up to \$2,000 per person.

### **Results**

Overall, the process was viewed as a success. Analysis of 67 participants’ career progress after they completed the MDAC indicated that seven retired and six left city employment for reasons other than retirement. Of the remaining 54, 55% were promoted.

Young, M.B. (2005). Building the Leadership Pipeline in Local, State, and Federal Government. Sponsored by CPS Human Services and the International Public Management Association-Human Resources (IPMA-HR).

## DEPARTMENTAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The foundational element to both workforce and succession planning efforts is an understanding of the current and future requirements of your department. The following four-step departmental needs assessment facilitates this understanding. It starts from a global perspective (evaluating the department as a whole) and works down to more specific information (evaluating at the workforce level). Each layer of the assessment focuses on information that will be necessary to develop workforce and succession plans.

### A. Departmental Priorities

The first step is an assessment of departmental priorities, beginning with an examination of the department's mission and objectives to help identify whether they are being met and in what direction core services are being taken.

The questions to be asked at this level include:

- What are the department's mission, goals, objectives, and core services?
- What are we doing to meet the department's mission, goals, objectives, and core services?
- Do we anticipate a change in our strategic objectives or way of conducting business (i.e., internal and external pressures)?

### B. Departmental Structure

The second step will build upon the first by relating the priorities of the department to its actual structure. Programs, classifications, organizational charts, and budgets will be looked at in this step as they pertain to providing core services. Examining the structure of the organization will identify its current status and whether it is positioned for future demands.

The questions to be asked at this level include:

- What is the formal structure (organizational chart) of the department? Is it compatible with the department's functional structure (i.e., its division of labor)?
- What percentage of the total operating budget is spent on personnel, services and supplies, training, and recruitment?
- Budget trends: do projected funding levels support positions and objectives?
- Will budget practices change?
- What are the position allocation needs of each core program?
- What training and development programs are available and how many employees participate?

## C. Workload

In the third step, the department's workload (as defined by the volume of the services and products provided by the department) will be examined. Assessing the workload of the department as it relates to departmental priorities and structure will create a picture of future needs as the workload increases or decreases in the department.

The questions to be asked at this level include:

- What is the nature of the work to be done, in terms of services/products, volume, location, and duration?
- What are the present work products? Is the workload expected to increase or decrease?
- What is the effect of technology on workload and productivity?
- What factors would cause a change in workload (e.g., new programs, legislation, economy, etc.)? How will you compensate for such events?

## D. Workforce

The fourth step involves using the information gathered in the previous steps to determine current and future workforce needs. Specifically, this step identifies classes that are critical to your operation and the competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities) required by current employees and those that will be needed by employees in the future.

The questions to be asked at this level include:

- Which of the classes in your department are considered the most critical to your operations? Take the following into consideration when identifying your critical classes:
  - (a) which positions are most critical to your departmental operations when considering such factors as Charter-mandated services, Board-mandated programs, core responsibilities of the department, or functions with major financial impact on departmental operations.
  - (b) whether or not there is a prolonged development period or learning curve before employees can develop the requisite skills and knowledge to perform the full scope of a complex and demanding position.
  - (c) positions where high turnover or a marked increase in turnover may be likely with a high attrition rate within a relatively short period.
  - (d) positions that are government specialties where there is no recourse to contractors, consultants or other service providers to meet interim service needs in the event of the unavailability of qualified County employees to perform these services.
- What are the core competencies required by employees within each job family of critical classes (e.g., Civil Engineering series, Eligibility Worker series, Human Resources Analyst series, etc.) in your department?
- What career paths are generally followed or available for those critical classes that lead to technical, supervisory, management, and executive-level positions (e.g., Administrative Assistant I → Administrative Assistant II → Administrative Assistant III → Supervising Administrative Assistant II → Supervising Administrative Assistant III)?
- How is the workforce going to change in size and demographics?

## PROGRAM PHASES

### Workforce Planning

DHR has designed a four-phase process to ensure that workforce planning is orchestrated in an efficient and user-friendly manner. The phases are as follows:

**Phase One: DHR conducts SWSP Information Sessions**

The purpose of phase one is to:

- provide an overview of the workforce planning process through review of the *Strategic Workforce & Succession Planning Guidebook*
- discuss the procedure for completing a departmental needs assessment using the *Needs Assessment Workbook*
- provide Countywide summaries of non-MAPP retirement trends and projections
- provide each department with their specific retirement data reports and current employee profiles by age and years of service
- provide training on interpreting reports
- convey instructions on how to complete the *Workforce Planning Assessment* and *Workforce Plans*
- present strategies, methods, and tools for workforce planning

**Phase Two: Each department completes the *Workforce Planning Assessment* and *Workforce Plans***

The purpose of phase two is to:

- complete the *Needs Assessment Workbook* and incorporate resulting information into the review of the retirement data provided by DHR
- assess planning needs for classifications with high levels of anticipated retirement and document results on the *Workforce Planning Assessment*
- identify appropriate classification-specific and department-wide strategies and document results in the *Workforce Plans*
- return the *Workforce Planning Assessment* and *Workforce Plans* to DHR for review

**Phase Three: DHR reviews the *Workforce Planning Assessments* and *Workforce Plans* submitted by departments**

The purpose of phase three is to:

- review all plans submitted by each department to ensure that they meet the outlined requirements and are completed on time

**Phase Four: Departments implement workforce plans, with an assessment of the implementation progress taking place after one year**

## **Succession Planning**

Though acquiring new talent for the County is an important endeavor, succession planning acknowledges that the County's executive and management classes may in some cases benefit from County-specific organizational experience. It also acknowledges that succession planning is a long-term strategy, as it can take years to develop employees for higher-level positions. Given this, DHR has developed the succession planning process to include the following core elements from which departments can tailor their specific approach:

- consistent, documented processes for assessing potential successors, who are defined as a manager's direct reports who occupy classes and/or possess qualifications that could directly lead to promotion.
- guidelines for discussions with potential successors about the succession planning effort and their career goals.
- methods for developing and executing succession plans, which are defined as the strategies executed to develop potential successors' knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for successful performance in the manager's position.

These core elements have been folded into a six-phase process to ensure that succession planning is orchestrated in an efficient and user-friendly manner. The phases are as follows:

### **Phase One: DHR conducts SWSP Information Sessions**

The purpose of phase one is to:

- provide an overview of the succession planning process through review of the *Strategic Workforce & Succession Planning Guidebook*
- provide Countywide summaries of MAPP retirement trends
- convey instructions on how to complete the *MAPP Employee Verification Form* and *Leadership Competencies Development Form*

### **Phase Two: Each department completes the MAPP Employee Verification Form and Leadership Competencies Development Form**

The purpose of phase two is to:

- document reporting relationships for MAPP employees along with vacant MAPP positions in the departmental organization chart
- identify development assignments that were useful to current executives and managers in acquiring leadership competencies
- return the *MAPP Employee Verification Form* and *Leadership Competencies Development Form* to DHR

**Phase Three: DHR provides *customized MAPP Organization Chart, Leadership Evaluation, and Leadership Development Guide* to each department**

The purpose of phase three is to:

- provide each department with their customized MAPP organization chart that profiles departmental MAPP employees by retirement risk
- provide considerations for determining whether/how to share *MAPP Organization Chart* with MAPP employees
- provide approaches for completing a departmental needs assessment using the *Needs Assessment Workbook*
- provide the *Leadership Evaluation* and *Leadership Development Guide*

**Phase Four: Departmental MAPP managers complete the *Leadership Evaluation* for their direct MAPP reports and forward summary information through the departmental HR office to DHR**

The purpose of phase four is to:

- review the *Needs Assessment Workbook* and incorporate resulting information the into the succession planning process
- assess succession readiness of direct MAPP reports by completing the *Leadership Evaluation*
- identify strategies to incorporate into succession plans
- report summary information on the readiness of direct reports to succeed in their manager's positions.

**Phase Five: DHR reviews *Succession Readiness Form* submitted by departments**

The purpose of phase four is to:

- review all forms to ensure that they are completed properly and on time
- evaluate Countywide leadership readiness gaps

**Phase Six: Departments implement succession plans, with an assessment of the implementation progress taking place after one year**

## A FEW WORDS ABOUT SUCCESSION PLANNING

- The County’s succession planning is different from traditional succession planning.** Traditional succession planning programs emphasize notions of *pre-selection*, which conflict with the merit-based principles of civil service under which many MAPP positions are classified. In contrast, the succession planning component of the *SWSP* program emphasizes notions of *development opportunity*. Although the development opportunities offered to employees who participate in succession planning efforts *may* increase their likelihood of successful performance in an examination process, there is no guarantee that actual outcomes of the examination will mirror outcomes of the succession efforts or result in actual selection. The following table illustrates this and other modified perspectives on traditional succession planning taken in order to successfully apply the concept to our organization:

Traditional Succession Planning	Modified Succession Planning
Based on pre-selecting an employee to advance to a specific position	Based on preparing an employee to <i>compete</i> for a specific position
Development opportunities selectively offered only to high potential successors	Development opportunities offered to <b>all</b> potential successors
Mandatory/Top-Down/Confidential	Optional/Cooperative/Transparent

- Succession planning is intricately tied to career planning.** Managers and their direct reports must have open, up-front discussions about future goals. An important part of this conversation is the optional nature of participation in succession development assignments.
- Succession development is different from regular employee development.** Managers must *always* be engaged in developing their direct reports for success in their current positions. Development for higher-level positions is distinguished from this day-to-day development because it depends on the needs of the organization and the goals of the employee.
- Succession development should be carefully assessed from the context of the higher-level position and the employees’ ongoing performance in the current position.** Though the purpose of the succession development effort is to assess employees’ performance within the context of the needs of the higher-level position, managers must be cognizant to not put so much pressure on potential successors that the employees are unable to also successfully complete the responsibilities of their current positions.

- **Succession planning should incorporate considerations of talent pools.**  
This first introduction to succession planning is built upon development for *vertical* advancement (i.e., to the position directly above). However, development for *horizontal* advancement (i.e., to promotional opportunities in other functional units, divisions, or departments) is also important, particularly given the County practice of employees moving within the organization. Departments are encouraged to undertake this approach on their own by developing talent pools for MAPP positions in the department with similar competencies. That is, by assessing and developing groups of eligible employees – regardless of direct reporting relationships – for readiness to advance into one or more higher-level positions.

## **What is Next?**

Throughout the Strategic Workforce Planning process, additional strategies will be provided to assist in plan development. As stated earlier, this process is on-going, and it will evolve through the work we perform together.

In addition, Knowledge Management (KM) will be explored to determine if it should be added as a fourth pillar strategy along with recruitment, development, and retention. KM is essentially the management of an organization's knowledge. It usually focuses on an organization's core classifications to collect, store, and communicate knowledge about how to successfully perform the tasks of these classifications. KM could be an important addition to managing the valuable knowledge acquired by potential retirees which could subsequently be shared with new hires to help them get up to full performance faster.

## Authors

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Marc holds an MS in Industrial/Organizational Psychology and professional certificates in Human Resources Management, Project Management, Technical Writing, and Business Management. He has over 12 years of professional experience in public, private, and consulting organizations. His areas of practice include selection research and test development for entry-through management-level positions, workforce planning program development, survey development and analysis, recruitment, training program development, compensation administration, and other human resource activities. He has presented at regional and international conferences and has been published in professional journals.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES**

## **WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES**

Workforce and succession plans may involve several approaches for developing a quality workforce and potential successors. Your central program should be based on utilizing existing career paths (or modified career paths as the industry changes) and strengthening the ability for advancement of individuals within the department. Retention, development, and recruitment are three effective strategies that can be incorporated into your central workforce and succession planning program. The success of these strategies relies upon the commitment of the department's executives and their willingness to commit staff and financial resources.

For consideration, a multitude of long- and short-term strategies are listed below to support the workforce and succession planning process. These strategies are not meant to be all-inclusive; rather, they should be compatible with other innovative programs/strategies departments may already have in place to develop and support their workforce.

### **A. Retention**

Employee Retention Programs involve the practice of minimizing turnover in the department. They involve utilizing existing services and programs or putting new initiatives in place that will encourage employees, increase morale, help productivity, and create an overall favorable working environment.

#### **Ensure Fair and Valid Promotional Exams**

Pledge to have a fair, valid, and equitable promotional examination process. This can be accomplished through the systematic development of valid test materials (i.e., conducting formal job analysis and developing content valid tests) and standardized candidate processing procedures that are based on professional standards. DHR's Test Research Unit can assist in this process.

By ensuring that the desirable qualifications required to fill positions of greater responsibility are indeed the basis for appointments, a valuable message will be conveyed to employees – "We promote based on merit."

#### **Timely Examination Process**

Ensure that the examination process is conducted in a timely manner. Candidates (promotional or open competitive exams) have an expectation that when they apply for a job that their knowledge, skills, and abilities will be evaluated, and they will be notified if they are eligible for promotion/appointment in a timely manner. Current employees who are looking for advancement in their careers may start looking outside the County if promotional exams are not opened on time or if they feel that the examination process is stagnating.

## **WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES**

### **Realistic Job Previews**

Employees often leave a position because it does not meet up with their expectations of what the job was going to be. Job previews can be used to ensure that the most accurate depictions of the job are provided so that candidates have a clear and full understanding of what the job actually entails. Research has shown that realistic job previews improve retention rates, on average, by nine percent. Methods of providing realistic previews include having potential employees observe others performing the job on the day of the selection interview or having them complete questionnaires that list both favorable and unfavorable aspects of the job. These measures may help them self-select out of consideration from the position before assuming the role, rather than taking it on and eventually leaving.

### **Hiring Based on Employee “Fit”**

The examination process helps to identify the candidates who have the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the tasks of a classification. The selection interview, however, is intended to identify which of the top candidates can perform the tasks in the specific work environment (e.g., department/work unit culture) where a vacancy exists. The selection interview gives hiring supervisors/managers the opportunity to explore the candidate’s motivations, career aspirations, philosophy on the discipline/field, preferred work style, etc. This allows the supervisor/manager to determine if there is a fit or match between the candidate and the specific vacancy. Training on conducting effective selection interviews can help to reduce the incidence of hiring an employee who does not “fit,” which can negatively affect the work group’s performance and cause unnecessary turnover of the new hire and other employees.

### **Departmental New Employee Orientation Program**

New Employee Orientation Programs help new employees understand the vision of the County and their role and responsibilities. Departments should establish their own New Employee Orientation Program and provide packets of departmental and County information to new employees immediately upon entering the department. Also, the Department of Human Resources periodically offers its own New Employee Orientation Program at various locations. Departments should encourage new employees to sign up when the orientation is offered by DHR. These steps assist new employees in their transition to being productive employees.

## **WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES**

### **Stay Interviews**

An important part of creating an environment that encourages employee retention is simply asking the employee what it will take to encourage them to stay. Whether formally or informally conducted, stay interviews provide supervisors the opportunity to gain insight about what is important to each employee. Ideally, these interviews occur shortly after a new hire passes probation, but they can also occur during the yearly performance review. The goal is to identify what work environment, activities, and approaches enable the employee to thrive in order for the supervisor to provide it whenever possible and appropriate. It is important that supervisors know what makes an employee appreciate his or her workplace and act to try to provide it.

Sample questions to include are:

- What elements of the job excite, challenge, and motivate you?
- What elements of the job frustrate you or inhibit your productivity?
- What management style do you prefer?

### **Organizational Surveys**

Consider conducting periodic organizational surveys to find out what types of training employees are interested in, concerns or suggestions they may have about the department, and to gauge morale. Involve both employees and managers in the creation of surveys. Before distributing surveys, decide how you are going to analyze the data you receive and how you will act on the results. Inform employees about survey planning, data collection, and implementation plans. Include the survey process in your normal business cycle on a regular basis. Consider conducting your surveys online.

### **Exit Interviews/Surveys**

Boost the ability to retain quality employees by taking the time to listen to those who decide to leave the organization. Work with the department's Human Resources Office to develop standardized exit interview questions or surveys and use answers, as well as any available data on turnover, to determine areas that need improvement in the organization.

### **Employee Assistance Program**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP), offered through DHR, is a free and confidential service, staffed with clinical psychologists and rehabilitation counselors to provide short-term counseling and referral services to County employees and their families to help with problems of a personal nature. EAP provides departments with consultations, mediation, grief/loss intervention, EAP orientations, stress management, and drug and alcohol awareness training. Departments should educate their employees on the availability of EAP services, and encourage employees to take advantage of these services when necessary.

## **WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES**

### **Flexible Work Schedules**

Keeping labor laws and County work policies in mind, work with employees to design, maintain, and adhere to a flexible working schedule. Types of flexible schedules include 4/40, 9/80, 56-hour shifts and staggered shifts, depending on the needs and workloads of individual departments. Where appropriate, departments may also consider providing employees the option of telecommuting, and taking extended leaves or sabbaticals.

### **Casual Dress Programs**

Perceived as an added benefit, a casual dress policy can improve employee morale and increase productivity. Allow employees to dress casually on certain days of the week, such as Friday. If employees rarely or never deal with the public, consider allowing business casual dress on a daily basis. Develop reasonable and fair guidelines for casual days that are well publicized to employees.

### **Child Care Program**

All County departments are encouraged to assist their employees in balancing work and family obligations. County employees with dependents may find it difficult to obtain high quality, affordable and accessible child care services. Workplace attendance, punctuality, productivity, loyalty, flexibility, and diversity have all been shown to improve when employers acknowledge the increasing demands of work and family. Such program offerings may include:

- providing employees with information on the range of child care services near work and/or home
- developing on- and/or near-site child care service
- assisting employees to receive quality child care services through discount arrangements

The Office of Child Care in the County's Chief Administrative Office provides information on child care resources for County employees, including the County-operated child care centers, child care centers for which discount arrangements have been negotiated, and the dependent care spending account.

## **WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES**

### **Elder Care Program**

A survey conducted for the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, funded by MetLife Foundation, estimates that there are 26.2 million caregivers in the United States who either work or have worked while providing unpaid care to an aging family member or friend. An estimated 62 percent have had to make some adjustments to their work life, from reporting late to work to giving up work entirely. As employee assistance vendor ComPsych indicates that eight percent of the employee population cares for *both* their children and their parents, employers concerned with employees' balance of work and family obligations should extend assistance beyond solely child care to include elder care. An elder care program may include:

- confidential counseling for employees
- providing employees with information and referrals to local resources, including care providers, caregiver support groups, workshops and lectures on caregiving, etc.
- training for supervisors regarding support for staff who are experiencing stress and/or performance problems due to caregiving responsibilities.

### **Transportation and Parking Programs**

Consider initiating a transit discount program for those who utilize public transportation to travel to and from work. If enough parking is available on site, provide designated carpool spaces. If there are not enough spaces for the entire staff, start a voluntary monthly lottery for parking.

### **Local Discounts**

Present opportunities for employees to purchase tickets and other items at a discount. Examples include the Annual Entertainment Book, movie tickets, amusement parks, free concerts, etc.

### **Department Newsletter**

Encourage employees to contribute to a staff-operated newsletter that facilitates communication within the department. The newsletter could include new policies, new employee profiles, division/section profiles, important dates and deadlines, and any news or announcements employees wish to add, including field trips.

### **Employee Involvement Group**

This group will be made up of volunteer employees who will meet weekly to address employee concerns at the grass-roots level. The group can develop improvements to the operations, facility beautification, or other concerns and present their suggestions to Senior Management for approval. With management support, group members can carry out their initiatives. This program should help to involve employees in their workplace and improve communication with management.

### **Respectful Treatment of Employees**

Initiate a department-wide program that values the respectful treatment of all employees by building it into the department's culture and tying it back to performance expectations.

## **WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES**

### **Good Physical Work Environments**

An indirect retention strategy is to provide a good physical work environment. Employers are consulting with specialists in workplace configuration and color schemes to promote more pleasant and productive work environments. Studies have shown that color schemes can exert specific physiological effects. In addition, providing a safe work environment is crucial to retaining employees. Ergonomically correct work stations or areas can prevent on-the-job injury over time.

### **Effective Supervisory Behavior Training**

Research shows that a major contributor to employee turnover is “Bad Boss Behaviors.” A retention tool would be to initiate continuous training on how to effectively supervise employees by promoting “Good Boss Behaviors” such as: sensitivity to work/life stress, communicating openly, educating/developing employees, and celebrating diversity. To inspire loyalty, managers should also act with fairness and integrity.

### **Employee Recognition Programs**

Start a program to recognize employees for their performance, contributions, and service to the organization. Ideas for this strategy include encouraging departmental staff to serve on an employee recognition committee, planning recognition meetings, events, and awards, and recognizing individuals for their years of service to the organization and the County. Start an Employee of the Month Program, including all staff and managers in nominating and voting. Reward the employee of the month with a special honor for the month, such as a free parking space, transit pass, or a gift certificate. Managers should recognize employee achievement on a daily basis and use positive reinforcement. Keeping cultural differences in mind, managers should praise good work on an individual level as well as in public.

### **Offer Individual Recognition**

Many studies have shown that praise and recognition motivates employees to put forth their best efforts and to perform at higher levels. There are many means by which managers can include recognition in an employee’s work experience: write a personal thank you note on the envelope of the employees pay check; distribute a “good work” email after a project is completed; have the director call the employee after performing well on an important assignment; etc. It is not always the monetary rewards that hold the most value; sincere, symbolic gestures are meaningful in conveying to an employee his or her importance to the organization.

### **Employee Suggestion Box**

Implement a suggestion box in the office that staff can use anonymously. Plan to address all suggestions in periodic staff meetings and newsletters to demonstrate that suggestions are valued and taken seriously.

# WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES

## **Job Sharing**

Consider initiating a job-sharing program, where appropriate, to respond to employees' interests. With job-sharing, two employees perform a position that would otherwise be held by one full-time employee. The system works by having employee #1 work three days the first week and two days the second week, while employee #2 works two days the first week and three days the second week. An alternate way of staggering the schedule involves having both employees work three days a week, creating an overlap day for the two employees to communicate and plan the work. Under the latter plan, the workload would need to be increased as the position would now be filled at 48 hours a week.

This program allows for many advantages such as:

- retaining top performers who, for legitimate reasons, want to switch to a part-time schedule
- allowing potential retirees who want to slowly phase into retirement to reduce or shorten their work week
- decreasing absenteeism, as employees who participate in the job sharing have more time off to accommodate personal needs
- attracting candidates who only want part-time work

## **B. Development**

Development is the act of providing employees with the types of training and work-related experiences they need to excel in their current jobs and advance along a career path into positions of increasing responsibility.

### **Stretch Assignments**

Stretch assignments will give employees challenging work that will develop one or more of their goal knowledge, skills, or abilities. Research has shown that upwards of 70 percent of leadership development occurs in stretch assignments with feedback<sup>1</sup>. Best practices have shown that a stretch assignment should include characteristics such as the following:

- Alignment with the organization's strategic goals
- A leadership role
- Working with new people
- Task variety
- Results will be presented to upper level managers or supervisors
- Managing politics and influencing others
- Taking risks and innovating
- Setting visionary strategy
- Understanding and navigating the organization
- Demonstrating ethics and integrity

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<sup>1</sup> DeRue, D. S. & Wellman, N. 2009. Developing Leaders via Experience: The Role of Developmental Challenge, Learning Orientation, and Feedback Availability. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94: 859-875.

## **WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES**

### **Mentoring**

Identify key professionals, supervisors, managers, and executives in the organization and utilize their expertise as mentors to assist employees in developing along their career paths. An alternate mentoring program could be developed called a ***Retiree Mentoring Program***. This program would utilize retired or soon-to- retire employees in a part-time capacity to assist newly-hired employees.

### **Job Rotation**

For individuals holding key classifications, consider initiating a system where employees systematically move from location to location, job to job, or project to project within the department. This will assist in the development of employees by providing them with training; increasing communication and understanding of the demands of their coworkers; and allowing for a more holistic perspective on the department's operations by exposing them to different environments and positions.

### **Tuition Reimbursement**

Recognize employees for their motivation and interest in furthering their education, which will update their skills and knowledge of current practices and trends in the industry. If funding is available, encourage employees to pursue their education by implementing a tuition reimbursement program for some or all work-related education expenses. Develop a list of approved classes and programs that will be helpful to the department and guidelines for reimbursement.

### **On-site Development Opportunities**

Allow internal and external professionals to come to the worksite and present personal development classes to employees. Examples include online computer classes, automated computer-based software training programs, brown bag training sessions, Toastmasters club, stress management, stretching, yoga, weight management, employee book groups, walking clubs, etc.

### **New Employee Networking**

Strategic Workforce Planning often focuses on employees who have been with the organization for a significant period of time. Departments can also get newer employees involved with the organization by developing a network for young professionals and entry-level employees.

### **Performance Evaluations**

Performance evaluations are a valuable source of information for both employees and supervisors. In the context of a formal evaluation, performance evaluations provide supervisors and employees an opportunity to discuss the employee's strengths and weaknesses. During this consultation, the supervisor can recommend developmental remedies to enhance an employee's skills for future performance improvements. With continuous support and feedback from the supervisor, employees will be encouraged to further their personal development.

## **WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES**

### **Individual Development Plans**

For individuals holding key classifications, initiate a system where employees, along with their supervisors, devise an individual development plan. This plan will assist each employee in outlining the steps they are going to take to obtain the required job experiences and competencies that will be required to assume positions of greater responsibility. It will also provide a necessary tool for supervisors to keep track of employees' job performance and professional development.

### **Career Planning Program**

Career planning programs help to enable employees to plan, prepare, and attain their career goals. These programs may involve senior-level employees who will provide assistance to other employees on such topics as: determining the best career path, how to improve test taking or interviewing skills, preparing an action plan on how to meet the minimum requirements to apply for promotions, and understanding the promotion process. By approving a career planning program, you will be sending a message to your employees that you care about their development and career progression at the County.

### **Employees Skills Database**

Consider initiating the development of an employees skills database. This database will house the skills of your current workforce, enabling searches for internal candidates who have desired skills to fill a vacancy, enabling departments to identify critical skills needed during emergencies, determining the focus of training classes to remedy deficiencies or new job requirements, and to check on the development of your workforce to take on positions of greater responsibility.

This database could be maintained by the department's Human Resources Office and can assist candidates in applying for promotional opportunities by linking the database to the new on-line County employment application.

### **Webinars**

Webinars ("web seminars") are training presentations delivered over the Internet. This effective and efficient delivery system allows employees to attend training while still at their work facility. The presenter's slides are shown on the screen with audio delivered either through computer speakers or over the phone. There are many professional organizations and associations that provide these trainings, and the presentations are often archived for later viewing. Many webinars are offered free of charge because of individual and group membership in the sponsoring organization or association. Webinars can be viewed individually by an employee sitting at his her desk, or conducted in group sessions with planned discussions afterward to reinforce the learning experience and address how the newly acquired knowledge can be applied to the workplace.

## WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES

### C. Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of searching and attracting qualified candidates to fill job vacancies. Recruiting employees has evolved from a time where simply opening up an examination would net hundreds of qualified candidates, to a concerted act of marketing the position to entice qualified applicants to apply. Recruitment now entails branding the name of the County as an “employer of choice” to attract top talent. This branding involves the development of recruiting and advertising schemes that target and attract top talent. Below is a list of potential methods that can be utilized in advertising open positions.

#### **Print Media Advertising**

While all County vacancies are distributed and posted on bulletin boards at County facilities, specific targeted print mediums can assist in announcing job openings.

- Trade and professional publications – vacancies are advertised to individuals experienced in the desired field.
- Local Newspapers – charge a line-by-line fee to expose vacancies to a broader pool of local candidates.
- Billboards and bus billboards – charge monthly fee based on size to target local candidates.
- Job Flyers – send attractive job flyers to be posted at local venues or events where desired candidates may visit.

#### **Professional Association Networks and Professional Conferences**

Trade and professional associations provide members the opportunity to meet and informally discuss opportunities within various organizations. They can be excellent sources to recruit both experienced and entry-level talent.

#### **Employee Referral Programs**

Employee referral programs are one of the most successful methods to recruit qualified candidates. These programs benefit employers by enabling them to reach a much larger audience of qualified individuals, many of whom are passive candidates. Employers usually reward employees who make referrals that result in hires. Departments can devise an incentive system that can operate inside the public sector by offering rewards such as: premium parking space, movie theater passes, transit pass, drawings for a larger prize, etc.

#### **Job Fairs**

Community groups, associations, universities, and private sector firms often sponsor or organize job fairs, giving both the employer and potential employee an opportunity to meet informally and gather information prior to applications being submitted.

## **WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES**

### **Local Radio and Public Access Television**

Targeted local radio and television advertisements during programs that your desired applicant pool would be listening to are excellent and innovative methods to attract qualified candidates.

### **Executive Recruitment Firms**

Executive recruitment firms are primarily used for hard-to-fill, high-level executive or urgent positions, and handle all recruitment efforts for those positions. Firms actively search and screen for executives based on the qualifications set by the employer using a wide range of resources and networks. Executive recruitment firms are considered highly effective, but charge substantial fees and are usually reserved as a last option.

### **Campus Recruitment and University Outreach**

Colleges and universities develop a large pool of highly qualified candidates for entry-level positions. Recent graduates are trained with the latest methods and theories in their field of study, making them valuable assets to any organization.

### **Database of Past Applicants**

Develop and maintain a database of all qualified former applicants and invite them to apply when the classification reopens. These applicants may have honed their knowledge, skills, and abilities through enriched work experiences and may now be a top candidate.

### **Internet Recruitment**

The County of Los Angeles posts all open competitive job bulletins on the County website. There are also numerous “job boards” on the Internet that publicize vacancies and attract potential candidates from throughout the country. Some sites offer employers a resume database to search for candidates with specific knowledge, skills, abilities, and work experience. Many of these sites charge a nominal fee to post a vacancy but there are also many free, high-traffic Internet sites, such as America’s Job Bank.

### **Website**

Your departmental website is a key tool to use in attracting qualified job candidates. It should provide information on the department such as mission, goals, culture, employee profiles, etc. These are important considerations for individuals who may be seeking to distinguish between potential employers. Your departmental website must make a mark to ensure a positive impression and encourage qualified candidates to apply.

### **Focus on Retirees**

Employers are increasingly seeking to use the abilities and knowledge of retired professional. At the same time, good health, longer lives, and, in some cases, financial concerns prompt these highly skilled professionals to return to the workforce. Beyond the County’s formalized retiree program for County retirees, it may be useful to reach out to retirees of other organizations through websites and job boards such as AlumniInTouch, SelectMinds, and RetiredBrains.

## WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES

### Reach out to Former Employees

Moving from seeking lifetime employment to lifetime affiliation, many employers establish social networks of “alumni,” former employees who left employment favorably and for reasons other than retirement. These networks provide an opportunity to cultivate ongoing relationships with them, the benefits of which include:

- **Pool of potential candidates.** Many alumni would welcome the opportunity to “boomerang” or rejoin employment on a permanent, temporary, or contract basis. Their documented work history eases the selection process, and their direct experience with your operations will generally get them “up to speed” more quickly than an outside hire. Additionally, any interim employment will give them a fresh perspective, enhancing their creative and problem-solving abilities.
- **Employee referrals.** Because they understand the culture and requirements of your department, individuals recommended for employment by former staff members will, in all likelihood, be relatively “good fits.” Alumni could be offered the same or similar incentives as internal staff if there is an Employee Referral Awards Program in place.
- **Enhanced morale.** The fact that you stay in touch with former employees sends a very positive message to your current workforce. It demonstrates that you value their contributions and support them even if their career pursuits lead them elsewhere. While this might seem counter-intuitive, it sets the tone for a relationship based on mutual respect and partnership - one that strengthens employee commitment.

Social networks are modeled on university alumni programs and may consist of a Web site with frequently updated alumni contact directories; a jobs portal where alumni can create personal profiles and post resumes; invitations to participate in panel discussions and networking events; newsletters that chronicle developments at the department and highlight professional achievements and personal milestones of other alumni; and news and announcements such as continuing education programs.

### Resume Mining

Similar to resume databases offered by major job boards such as Monster and CareerBuilder, some websites offer employers the opportunity to search through professional profiles of individuals who have been “mined” from other websites. The websites, such as ZoomInfo, extract information about the individuals from millions of published resources online (such as professional journals, conference programs, and corporate websites), analyze it for relevance, and compile the information into searchable databases of corporate executives and upper level managers. This technology provides access to recruit the reported 86% of passive or “hidden” job seekers as well as reach out to individuals with particular specialties in niche fields for which you are recruiting.

## **WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING STRATEGIES**

### **Attaching Recruitment to Published Documents**

Contributing articles to trade publications and creating blogs (online journals that are frequently updated and intended for general public consumption) can provide a means to connect with an audience of readers who already have an interest in a particular industry for which you are recruiting. For example, a recruiter has a position in the behavioral sciences, and a knowledgeable employee already on staff is about to publish an article in a behavioral sciences journal about research being performed in the department. A brief statement about the job opportunity is included at the end of the article, in hopes that the reader will consider applying.