

HR UPDATE

STATE OF ALASKA
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL
AND LABOR RELATIONS

FY 08 - ISSUE 07
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HR.....SOLUTIONS FOR SUCCESS.



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HR UPDATE

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

Please let us know what you think of our publication. If you have any suggestions about how to improve the HR Update or topics you think should be addressed, please contact franklin.hurt@alaska.gov.

Juneau DHSS Services Center Staff



Back Row, Left to Right: Julie Coffin, Adrienne Hosiner, Maritt Miller, Karen Smith, Miki Cole, Janelle Earls, Kimberly Gregg, Lura Noss, Front Row, Left to Right: Kaitlyn Roelle, Lory Subeldia, Chip Parr, Molly Zerbach, Not Pictured: Sandi Kelly, Katrina Laneville, Lora Mallinger and Robbin McDaniel

Spotlight on The DHSS Service Center By Chip Parr

The DHSS Service Center team of 27 (15 in Juneau and 12 in Anchorage) support directors, managers and supervisors of Health and Social Services, an agency with more than 3,000 employees delivering services budgeted annually at \$2 billion to residents in every city, town and village across Alaska.

In support of these efforts the DHSS Service Team processes more than \$ 240 million annually in payroll warrants; recruits and fills more than 600 positions per year and assists managers with a myriad of employee relations issues concerning the interpretation and application of the terms of collective bargaining

agreements, personnel rules, Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations, position classification changes, FMLA/AFLA eligibility determinations, job sharing agreements, USERRA issues and performance coaching and appraising matters.

The services provided by the Department of Health and Social Services protect the well being of all Alaskans, with a special focus on those most in need and disadvantaged economically, physically, and mentally. These programs touch every Alaskan at all phases of life:

Prenatal – Programs to reduce teen and out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Prevent fetal alcohol syndrome. Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System.

Now Available:

State of Alaska, Workforce Profile Fiscal Year 2007.

The Workforce Profile is located:

http://dop.state.ak.us/fileadmin/dop_home/pdf/dopannualreport.pdf

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Infancy/Childhood – Licensed day care facilities. Immunizations. Adoptions. Foster Care. Bring the Kids Home Initiative. Denali Kid Care. Children in Need of Aid. Infant Learning Program.

Adolescence – Operate 17 Juvenile Justice field offices and 8 secure youth facilities. Prevention of human papilloma virus (HPV) for all Alaska girls ages 9 -18.

Adulthood – Temporary public assistance. Food stamps. Heating assistance. Alaska Food Bank. Healthy Marriage Initiative. Vulnerable Adult Protective Services. Adult Dental Care Program.

Late Adulthood – Senior Benefits Program. 6 Pioneers Homes, Personal Care Assistance. Aging and Disability Resource Center. Alaska Commission on Aging. Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training.

In addition to these targeted programs/services, the agency operates a psychiatric hospital (API), a medical examiner's office, Public Health Laboratory, 26 Public Health Clinics, Alaska Public Health Alert Network, certification and licensing of health care facilities & assisted living homes, itinerate nurse services, illness/injury prevention programs, emergency medical services, suicide prevention, alcohol safety action program, tobacco youth education & enforcement program, traumatic brain injury program, substance abuse prevention, women, infant and children's nutrition programs, medical marijuana registry Mental Health Trust Authority and records/archives all births, marriages, divorces and deaths in Alaska.

Taken all together the agency is enabling every Alaskan to become as healthy and self sufficient as possible. The HSS Service Center is proud to serve the employees who work at the Department of Health and Social Services. For more

information about the HSS Service Center, go to <http://dop.state.ak.us/website/index.cfm?fuseaction=hss.main>.

After Action Reviews An Effective Way to Transfer and Manage Institutional Knowledge

Knowledge transfer can be defined as a toolbox of various tools that can be used to assist an agency preserve its organizational memories. For agencies, decisions about future and current plans are more effective if past actions, experiences, and knowledge are taken into account. The After Action Review is one tool that you may find useful in your Knowledge Transfer toolbox.

The concept of After Action Reviews is not a new one. This idea has been used successfully by the US Army for the past three decades as a vehicle to encourage thoughtful reflection of an event, which, in turn, helps the memory become a valuable lesson. The After Action Review is a process that helps cement experiences into lessons learned, with practical implications for the next experience.

When a person takes special notice of an experience and draws connections to other information already held in memory, the experience becomes a long term memory. In other words, when a person reflects upon the experience, he/she remembers it in greater detail and with greater clarity. To take this process one step further, when personal reflection includes attempts to identify the practical implications, change for the better occurs.

Reflection is just as useful to groups as it is to individuals. When groups or teams take the time to reflect upon an experience, they are able to draw lessons from the immediate experience that will

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enable them to more adequately handle the next similar experience. Reflection is the premise behind the After Action Review.

Usually the After Action Review involves a dialog group who meets immediately after a project or an event to answer these questions:

- What did we set out to do?
- What actually happened?
- Why did it happen?
- What are we going to do next time?

This is a formal process, though brainstorming and discussion are encouraged and allowed. However, this discussion is not intended to be an exploratory dialog. A facilitator helps ensure that the discussion stays tightly focused on the event; ground rules, including a schedule, should be established before the group begins discussion. These steps will help the group know when to move from one question to the next and will help prevent the group from circling around a topic endlessly.

The group spends a relatively short period of time on these questions, with most of the focus on the last one. The project or the event determines the length of time needed for the dialog group. If the group is discussing a regularly occurring event that changes only a little from time to time, the After Action Review should take less time than if the group is discussing a brand new project that had never been tried before. The greater the uncertainty or unknown, the greater the need for a more thorough reflection.

Because it focuses on the future, an After Action Review is often more practical than other kinds of post-mortems following a project. Still, as a knowledge transfer tool, there are some questions

that should be added to the dialog in order to ensure that the lessons learned are passed along. These questions should become a part of the review:

- **Who** else needs to know what we've learned?
- **What** do they need to know?
- **How** are we going to tell them?

This extra consideration expands the usefulness of the After Action Review beyond the current group. It encourages communication between and among teams in an agency and ensures that the After Action Review doesn't simply become another report to upper management with no useful implications for the future.

An additional step can be added to this process, which, in essence, becomes a *Before* Action Review. Asking these questions *prior* to the event or project, using the same group facilitation method above, can help the group anticipate emerging opportunities and threats and address them before the project or event occurs:

- What are our intended results and measures?
- What challenges can we anticipate?
- What have we or others in the agency learned from similar situations (refer to past After Action Reviews)?
- What will make us successful this time?

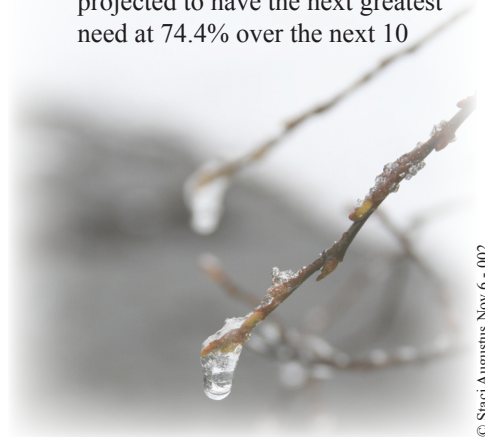
Thoughtful reflection is an excellent way to cement experiences into memories, and the After Action Review provides a reflection model for groups to use in making memories and transferring organizational knowledge.

Source: Canada School of Public Service, Roundtable on Organizational Memory,

(2007), Lost and Found.

Quick Facts US Department of Labor February 2008

- 85% of oil and energy companies expect to encounter difficulties in hiring and retaining employees this year.
- 43% of American workers plan to continue to work after retirement.
- 74% of employees who are offered wellness programs at work choose to participate.
- The national average hourly wage (all workers) is \$18.84, while the Alaska average hourly wage (all workers) is \$19.81. The Alaska average hourly wage for full time employees is \$20.94.
- Nationally, union membership for government employees has declined from 36.2% in 2006 to 35.9% in 2007.
- The US Dept of Labor projects a need for 10.4% more employees in all occupations due to growth and replacement needs over the next 10 years.
- The US Dept of Labor projects that the greatest increase in need for employees (78%) will be in the management, scientific, and technical consulting fields, with occupations in services for the elderly and persons with disabilities projected to have the next greatest need at 74.4% over the next 10



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