Introduction to Workforce Planning

A Quick Reference for Managers and Supervisors

State of Alaska,
Department of Administration,
Division of Personnel & Labor Relations
What is workforce planning?

Simply stated, workforce planning is the process of ensuring that the right number of people with the right competencies in the right jobs at the right time are available to accomplish the agency’s mission. More specifically, workforce planning is a systematic process for identifying and addressing the gaps between the workforce of today and the human capital needs of tomorrow.

Why is workforce planning necessary?

**Workforce Statistics:**
- With nearly 60% of state employees at age 45 or older, the state is experiencing higher turnover due to retirement. The State of Alaska has identified strategic human capital management as vital to its continued ability to provide core services to Alaskans.

What are the benefits of workforce planning?

**Workforce planning allows us to:**
- determine the workforce needed for tomorrow’s success;
- compete in today’s market, providing a foundation to actively train, recruit or restructure resources;
- bridge knowledge gaps due to attrition;
- achieve maximum organizational effectiveness; and
- take all of the separate initiatives and put them in an integrated whole as part of an overall plan.

**Benefits to the organization:**
- Workforce planning is an organizational development activity that will help us get the right people at the right place at the right time.

**Benefits to managers:**
- Managers will have the human resource information they need to manage their programs more effectively.
What are the critical steps to workforce planning?

Define the Future:
- Clearly identify where the agency wants to be in the future. Examine, analyze and redefine the vision, mission, organizational values, objectives, and competencies.

Analyze Current Workforce:
- Develop a detailed picture of where the agency is now. Conduct an outward and inward analysis to identify potential advantages and drawbacks in the workforce such as qualified employees at the beginning of a career path or critical positions that may need special attention during recruitment.

Close the Gap:
- Determine what gaps will exist between our current and projected workforce needs.
- Develop and implement strategy to close the gap. These strategies include knowledge transfer, recruiting, training/retraining, restructuring organizations, leadership development, succession planning, technological enhancements, etc.

Monitor, Evaluate, Revise:
- Measure progress to assess what’s working and what’s not working.
- Make adjustments to plan as needed and address new workforce and organizational issues.

Implementation Strategies
- Implementation strategies include actions that are clear, concise, and measurable, including achievable milestones developed with stakeholder input.
- Communicate the Workforce Plan early and often.
- Ensure organization buy-in and support.
- Allocate necessary resources to carry out workforce strategies.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities by identifying who is involved in implementing what, and where coordination among different parts of the organization or with different agencies is needed.
- Establish timelines.
- Determine performance measures such as milestones and the expected end product.
- Implement in connection with the requirements of the agency’s strategic plan. If the strategic plan timetable changes, adjustments to the Workforce Plan may be needed.
Workforce Planning Checklist

Define the Future
___ Understand the need for workforce planning
___ Obtain executive management support
___ Have a defined strategic plan for agency/division/program
___ Schedule time specifically dedicated to workforce planning
___ Identify the workforce (number of employees, skill sets) needed for the future
___ Prepare Demand Forecast

Analyze Current Workforce
___ Meet with your agency’s workforce planning coordinator and Division of Personnel & Labor Relations Human Resources Service Center manager.
___ Review the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations’ Workforce Planning Agency Desk Reference and Guide
___ Understand the impact of legislation on your agency’s initiatives
___ Consider the impact of technology
___ Obtain current workforce data—assistance is available through the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations

Following are examples of information that may assist you in workforce planning:
• Filled and vacant positions
• Age and length of service
• Authorized salary and wage complement
• Workforce demographic information
• Available workforce trend information
___ Identify the current workforce (number of employees, skill sets)
___ Prepare Supply Projection

Close the Gap
___ Compare the Demand Forecast to the Supply Projection (Gap Analysis) and identify workforce gaps
___ Work with your Division of Personnel & Labor Relations Human Resource Service Center personnel to identify gap closure strategies
___ Develop Workforce Plan
___ Establish and communicate timeline and Workforce Plan
___ Implement Workforce Plan

Monitor, Evaluate, Revise
___ Establish measures — identify outcome and output measurements
___ Use measures to determine if workforce plan is meeting agency needs
___ Revise workforce plan as needed to meet agency needs
___ Work with your Service Center Management Consultant to measure progress and validate strategies
Additional Resources available through the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations

Workforce Planning Desk Reference and Guide
Knowledge Transfer Tools
Succession Planning for State of Alaska Agencies
Skill Gap Analysis Power Point
Various courses through Train AK