

Workforce Planning Guide - Step I - Define the Future

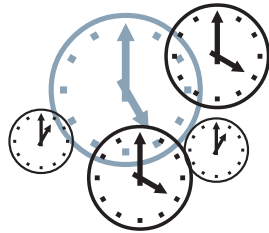


Right People,



Right Place,

Right Time,



for
State of Alaska
Agencies

State of Alaska,
Department of Administration,
Division of Personnel & Labor
Relations

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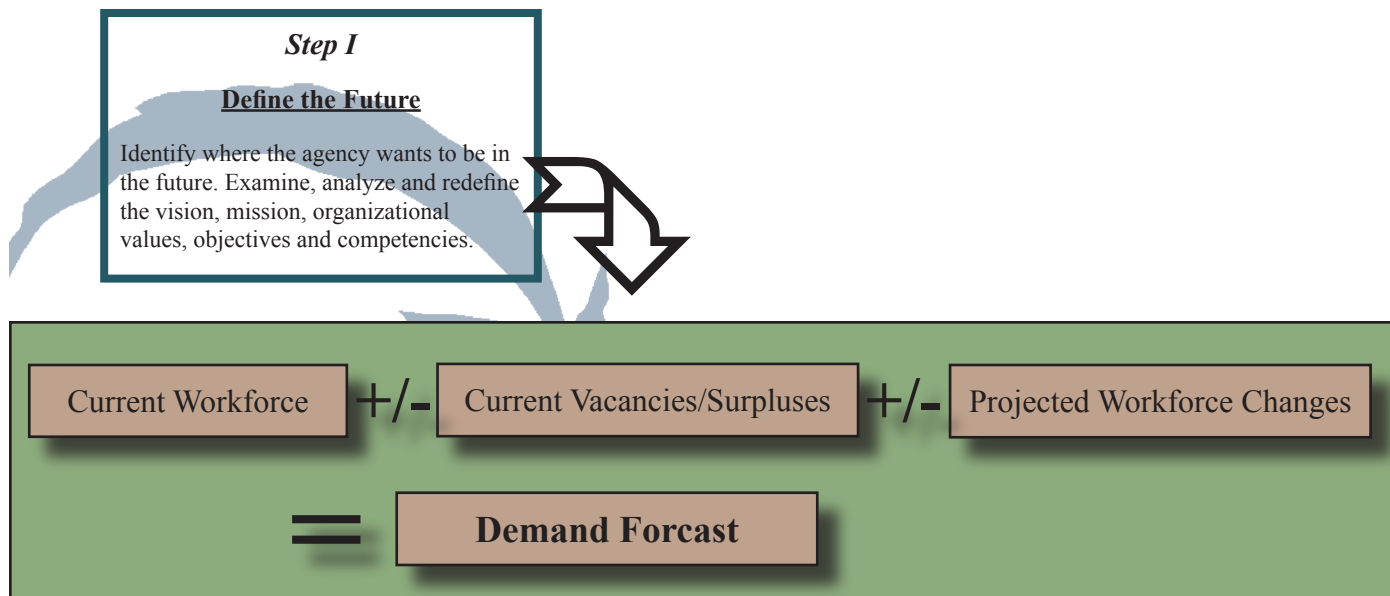
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Step One - Define the Future



Preparing the Demand Forecast

In the [Workforce Desk Reference and Guide](#), the concept of creating a Demand Forecast as part of Step One of an agency's Workforce Development Model is introduced. This guide is one more tool for users to put in their workforce planning toolkit—its purpose is to provide the user with step by step instructions in developing and implementing a Demand Forecast. There are a couple of assumptions that are implicit in this guide. One is that any agency who is using this guide has already appointed a person within the agency to be the internal “workforce champion.” It is also assumed that the agency has made a decision about how far out the plan will reach. If the agency is working with a five year or longer plan, it is recommended that outcomes and/or milestones be measured annually and revised as necessary. *Remember—workforce planning is not a one time event. It is an ongoing process.*

After an agency has completed its environmental scan and SWOT analysis, it is ready to prepare its demand forecast. In this critical activity, the agency looks at the people and competencies it will need for the future. The demand forecast generates

- Quantitative data on the anticipated workload and workforce changes during the planning period; and
- Quantitative data and qualitative data on future competency requirements.

As with the environmental scan and SWOT analysis, the team approach tends to work well in public agencies. Having a work group or a team keeps the process transparent and helps ensure that functional areas across the agency are not forgotten or overlooked.

The team membership should consist of representative employees, line supervisors, and mid-level managers, since these are the groups most likely to be familiar with those job classes that will be the focus of the agency's workforce plan. The same team that performed the environmental scan would be a good group for this purpose, too.

A Snapshot of the Current Workforce

An agency can't get where it wants to be in the future if it doesn't know where it is right now. The team will need to look at the **number** of people the agency has now (*not* the number the agency thinks it will need in the future) and the **tasks** that they perform now (*not* tasks that will be needed to be done in the future). Vacancy reports and other reports are available through the Employee Planning and Information Center that will give the agency a snapshot of its current workforce.

Having a clear understanding of the workforce the agency currently has is the first step in determining what the needs will be for the future workforce. The team will use this and other information in greater detail in Step Two (Analyze the Current Workforce) of the Workforce Planning Model. Taking this step gives the agency the first part of the Demand Forecast model: **Current Workforce**.

Current Vacancies or Surpluses: Pinpoint the Jobs to Target

Next, the team will want to brainstorm to create lists of jobs and job classes with large numbers of vacancies, jobs which have recruitment difficulties, and jobs for which there are always an adequate number of qualified applicants. Thinking broadly ensures that no functional area is overlooked and all implications are considered before moving forward.

Once the initial broad thinking is accomplished, the Demand Forecast continues with determining which job classes have the most impact on the agency's success. The agency will need to refine the list of job classes on which the agency will focus its workforce planning efforts. In essence, the team should answer the following questions:

- What are the largest job classes used by the agency?
- Which job classes have the greatest impact on the clients the agency serves?
- What job classes have the largest gap between the agency's expectations and the employees' performance?
- Which job classes have the highest turnover rates?
- Which job classes have the largest number of employees closest to retirement?
- Which job classes are the most difficult to recruit?
- Which job classes are anticipated to see changes in delivery of services?
- Which job classes are most likely to be impacted by changes to federal, state, local guidelines, statutes, laws, rules, etc?
- Which job classes have the least recruitment difficulties?
- Which job classes have the fewest vacancies?

The Targeted Job Class Worksheet (see Resources at the end of this guide) is a tool to help the agency decide which job classes to include in its demand forecast. The worksheet asks these questions in an easy-to-use format.

The work done by the team on the worksheet will produce a list of job classes that should become the focus of the agency's workforce planning efforts. Concentrating initial workforce plans on those jobs with the most impact on the delivery of services to the state helps ensure support and buy-in from the entire employee population, from top to bottom and across all functional groups.

The agency will have its **Current Vacancies/Surpluses** after performing these tasks.

Projected Workload Changes: Assessing the Future

Once the team has determined which job classes will be the focal point of its workforce plan, it will need to conduct both a staffing assessment (which includes both workforce approach and workload approach as mentioned on page 8 of the [Workforce Planning Desk Reference and Guide](#)) and a competency assessment in order to get a full understanding of what will be needed. It is very tempting to only perform one assessment, but for more realistic data on which to base a workforce plan, both need to be considered. A useable Demand Forecast is *always* data-driven and data-based.

Competency Assessment

A key aspect of assessing the demand for human capital is looking at the competencies an agency will need to achieve its strategic goals. A competency is a set of behaviors that are critical to accomplishing successful work and achieving an agency's mission. In other words, competencies are the knowledge, skills, behaviors, abilities, personal attributes, and other characteristics that are associated with superior job performance.

During a competency assessment, the team will ask: What competencies will be required to do this job in the future? Two key elements in identifying competencies are a **workforce skill analysis** and a **job analysis**. A workforce skill analysis describes the skills needed to carryout a function. A job analysis collects information on successful job performance.

There are several strategies the team can use to identify the competencies for the targeted job classes.

One such approach, described on page 9-11 of the [Workforce Planning Desk Reference and Guide](#), is to create a competency model, which is a map of the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that drive superior performance in an agency. A sample of a competency model is included in the Resources section.

Another good method is a competency rating form. There is a [Competency Rating Worksheet](#) in the Resources section of this guide that can be adapted for use by agencies. This worksheet has a list of competencies that are desirable in many agencies, but it is not all inclusive. As with any tool offered, the agency will want to add or delete the competencies needed to get its work done now and in the future. Instructions in using the rating worksheet are also included. This technique helps to narrow down a list of competencies to the ten or so most important to successful job performance.

Whichever process is used, the agency will then have a list of the desired competencies for its future workforce.

Staffing Assessment

In addition to determining the necessary competencies for its future workforce, an agency also needs to think about the numbers of staff needed to fulfill the agency's mission and strategic plan. Combining the workload approach with the workforce approach (pages 8-9 of the Desk Reference and Guide) into a workload change assessment is one method of performing a staffing assessment.

In projecting future staffing needs, the team should consider

- Policy changes, mandated reforms, or new initiatives
- Federal, state, or local regulatory changes
- Planned growth or expansion

as well as any other issues that could create a demand for or a surplus of people in certain positions and job classes. Some examples are technology changes creating less or greater demand for certain technical staff, change in client demographics, or general labor market changes outside of state government.

A Workload Change Worksheet and instructions are included in the Resources section of this guide.

These two types of assessments will give the agency its **Projected Workload Changes**.

Future Staffing Needs

After the team has assembled all of the necessary data, it is time to put it all together into the Demand Analysis. The team will have quantitative and qualitative data on the current workforce, which job classes should be the focus of the workforce plan, and projections on anticipated work changes.

Using this model:



the Demand Forecast team will use the data collected to determine the focus of the agency's workforce plan. This step determines what the future need will be or is projected to be. The next steps will be to determine what the current workforce is and what gaps exist between what the agency currently has and what it projects that it will need.

The Demand Forecast will become part of the analysis, along with supply projections, that will be used to discover where the gaps in human capital are now and where the gaps will be in the future. Closing those gaps is the primary reason to create a workforce plan.

A sample demand forecast is included in the Resources section.

Resources

The following tools are available for use by any State of Alaska agency. Each tool can be adapted for use by the agency so that it meets the unique needs of the agency's workforce and strategic plans.

- Targeted Job Classes Worksheet
- Competency Assessment Worksheet
- Workload Change Worksheets
- Sample Demand Forecast

Targeted Job Class Worksheet

- Use this worksheet to determine which job classes to include in the agency's Demand Analysis and Workforce Plan.
- Include any job class identified in three or more of questions 1-8.
- Questions 9 and 10 help ensure that all job classes have been reviewed.
- Use data discovered during the SWOT analysis, as well as customized reports from the Division of Personnel, Alaska Department of Labor, and the US Department of Labor.
- Don't rely on anecdotal evidence; provide statistical backup as proof. This helps ensure support from affected job classes, leaders in the agency, and other stakeholders.

1. The greatest number of positions are in this job class	
2. The job classes having the greatest impact on the clients we serve are	
3. The job classes having the largest gap between expectations and performance are	
4. The job classes with the highest turnover are	
5. The job classes with the highest projected retirement rates are	
6. The job classes with the greatest recruitment difficulty are	
7. The job classes that are most likely to be impacted by upcoming regulatory changes or new initiatives are	
8. The job classes in which delivery changes are expected in the next few years are	
9. The job classes with the fewest vacancies are	
10. The job classes with the least recruiting difficulties are	
Adapted and used by permission from Cornerstone for Kids (2007)	

Competency Model for Customer Service

Competency: Customer Orientation—the ability to demonstrate concern for satisfying one’s external or internal customers

Supporting Skills with observable Behavioral Anchors:

Presents a cheerful, positive manner with customers

- Greets each customer within X minutes of the customer’s arrival in a pleasant manner
- Asks each customer if he/she needs assistance
- Provides assistance as requested; remains alert for other requests, but is not obtrusive
- Asks if there are any other transactions that the customer needs or wants
- Ends the interaction in a pleasant manner

Quickly and effectively solves customer problems

- Asks customers for specific information regarding the problem
- Paraphrases customer’s conversation to be sure problem is understood
- Determines the nature of the problem
- Takes care of the problem or refers customer to the appropriate division/department to handle the problem
- When referring to another department, contact that department for the customer to make any necessary appointments or other arrangements

Finds ways to measure customer satisfaction

- Monitors and tracks customer comments and/or complaints through various methods such as keeping a phone log
- Asks customers if service has been satisfactory
- Follow up with complaints or comments with phone calls, letters, or other personal contact

Competency Rating Worksheet Introduction and Instructions

This worksheet contains a list of competencies as a starting point. It is incumbent upon the agency to add any competencies to this worksheet which are needed to fulfill the mission of the agency now and in the future and to delete any competencies which are not mission critical.

In addition, this worksheet includes a rating scale for *currently possessed competencies*. The agency will consider these under the supply projection analysis in Step Two: Analyze the Current Workforce in its overall workforce plan. However, some agencies may find it more efficient to complete all three columns at one time. The guides for Supply Analysis and Closing the Gaps also refer to this worksheet.

A team of subject matter experts should be assembled by the workforce champion to rate the competencies. This may or may not be the same group of people who will create the Demand Analysis. At the very least, this team should be composed of high performing employees and outstanding front line supervisors who have a clear understanding of the work that is performed now and that will be needed in the future.

Either a consensus of the group for each competency should be reached or an average of the rankings should be used. The objective is to narrow the list down to 10 or so most important competencies needed to perform the job now and in the future.

Instructions: For each competency, indicate the degree to which the competency is

- Currently possessed by employees in this agency in this job class
- Currently required to accomplish the work of the agency
- Will be required in the future

Use this scale:

- 0 Not required
- 1 Basic level of competency
- 2 Intermediate level of competency
- 3 Advanced level of competency

Competency Rating Worksheet				
Competency	Definition	Currently Required (Steps One and Two)	Required in Future (Step One—Define the Future)	Currently possessed (Step Two—Analyze Current Workforce)
Adaptability	Adapts well to changes in assignments and priorities; changes behaviors or work methods in response to new information			
Applied Learning	Able to learn and properly apply new job-related information in a timely manner			
Building trust	Interacts with others in a way that gives them confidence in one's motives; is seen as direct and truthful; keeps commitments and promises			
Coaching	Provides timely, helpful guidance and feedback to others			
Collaboration	Builds constructive working relationships with clients, other work units, and other organizations to meet mutual goals and objectives			
Conflict management	Uses appropriate interpersonal styles and techniques to reduce tension and/or conflict between two or more people; facilitates resolution			
Client/ Customer focus	Makes clients and their needs a primary focus of one's actions; gains client trust and respect			
Decision making	Breaks down problems into components and recognizes interrelationships; makes sound, well-informed, and objective decisions			
Delegating responsibility	Comfortably delegates responsibility, tasks, and decisions; appropriately trusts others to perform			
Follow up	Monitors the work of direct reports to insure quality standards			

Adapted and used by permission from [Cornerstone for Kids \(2007\)](#)

Competency Rating Worksheet				
Competency	Definition	Currently Required (Steps One and Two)	Required in Future (Step One—Define the Future)	Currently possessed (Step Two—Analyze Current Workforce)
Formal presentation skills	Effectively presents ideas, information, and materials to individuals and groups; facilitates workshops or meetings			
Initiative	Takes actions without being asked or required; achieves goals beyond job requirements; is proactive			
Managing work	Shows ability to plan, schedule, direct work of self and others; balances task requirements; organizes materials			
Negotiation	Explores alternatives and positions to reach agreements and solutions that gain support of all parties			
Safety awareness	Aware of conditions and circumstances that affect one's own safety and the safety of others			
Strategic focus	Understands how an organization must change in light of external and internal trends and influences. Keeps the big picture in mind			
Stress tolerance	Maintains effective performance under pressure; handles stress in a manner that is acceptable to the agency			
Team leadership	Communicates a vision and inspires motivation; engages team in problem solving; helps team stay focused on major goals			
Technical/professional knowledge and skills	Possesses, acquires, and maintains the technical expertise to do the job effectively			
Work standards	Sets high standards and realistic goals for oneself; displays high level of effort and commitment toward completing assignments in a timely manner.			
Add others as needed by the agency				

Adapted and used by permission from [Cornerstone for Kids \(2007\)](#)

Workload Change

These worksheets are designed to provide a structured approach in collecting and analyzing data. The consistency of this kind of approach makes the results less likely to be challenged and more likely to be understood by all involved employees. As with all other aspects of the workforce planning effort, transparency helps build trust in the plan and in the people who create and implement it.

In projecting the agency's future workforce needs, the team will want to consider these factors:

- **Any policy changes, new reforms or initiatives.** Some examples are “No Child Left Behind,” moving one division to another department, or reorganization of the Division Personnel into the service center model. These kinds of changes often result in significant changes in duties and responsibilities.
- **Any federal, state, or local regulatory changes.** Some examples are the amendments to the federal Family Medical Leave Act, the crackdown on undocumented workers, some bargaining unit agreements which mandate workload limitations.
- **Planned growth.** Some examples are the opening of new facilities resulting in a need for more employees or adding an additional service to what an agency already offers.
- **Any other factors that could impact work.** Some examples are new time and attendance technology resulting in a need for fewer timekeepers, facility closing, or budget changes.

Workload Change Worksheets

Policy or Initiative Change:	
Effective date:	<input type="checkbox"/> confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> projected
Description:	
Impact on Workload:	
Changes in personnel	
Increase:	positions
Decrease:	positions

Regulatory Change:	
Effective date:	<input type="checkbox"/> confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> projected
Description:	
Impact on Workload:	
Changes in personnel	
Increase:	positions
Decrease:	positions

Planned growth/expansion:	
Effective date:	<input type="checkbox"/> confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> projected
Description:	
Impact on Workload:	
Changes in personnel	
Increase:	positions
Decrease:	positions

Other changes:	
Effective date:	<input type="checkbox"/> confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> projected
Description:	
Impact on Workload:	
Changes in personnel	
Increase:	positions
Decrease:	positions

Summary of Workload Changes

Workload Factors	Personnel Increase (+)	Personnel Decrease (-)
Policy Change		
Regulatory Change		
Growth/Expansion		
Other		
Totals		
Net Change		
Adapted and used by permission from Cornerstone for Kids (2007)		

Demand Forecast for _____ (Targeted Job Class)

Current staffing level in targeted job class	
Current vacancies (+) or current surpluses (-)	
Increase or decrease from projected workload Changes (+ or -)	
Demand for targeted positions =	
<i>Forecast</i>	

Sample Demand Forecast

Agency X in Department Y

Current positions: 22

Current personnel: 17

Current vacancies: 5

Targeted job class: Inside construction workers (meets items 1,2,4,5 on Targeted Job Class worksheet)

Needed competencies:

- Technical skills
- Coaching
- Ability to learn
- Collaborative
- Safety awareness
- Stress tolerance

Workload Change Worksheets Examples

Policy or Initiative Change: Newly unionized workforce		
Effective date: July 1, 20XX	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/> projected
Description: Union will now have authority to limit or approve overtime		
Impact on Workload: Anticipated increase in overtime for current employees, decreasing the need for workers		
Changes in personnel		
Increase: 0	positions	
Decrease: 6	positions	

Regulatory Change: None Anticipated	
Effective date:	<input type="checkbox"/> confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> projected
Description:	
Impact on Workload:	
Changes in personnel	
Increase:	positions
Decrease:	positions

Planned growth/expansion: Completion of new construction on state-owned property	
Effective date: July 1, 20XX w/in 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> confirmed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> projected
Description: With completion of building, will need inside workers to finish the building	
Impact on Workload: Anticipate need for 12 additional workers to complete inside work on new building	
Changes in personnel	
Increase: 12	positions
Decrease:	positions

Other changes: None Anticipated	
Effective date:	<input type="checkbox"/> confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> projected
Description:	
Impact on Workload:	
Changes in personnel	
Increase:	positions
Decrease:	positions

Summary of Workload Changes		
Workload Factors	Personnel Increase (+)	Personnel Decrease (-)
Policy Change	0	-6
Regulatory Change	0	0
Growth/Expansion	+12	0
Other	0	0
Totals	+12	-6
Net Change	+6	

Adapted and used by permission from Cornerstone for Kids (2007)

Demand Forecast for <u>Inside construction workers</u> (Targeted Job Class)	
Current staffing level in targeted job class	17
Current vacancies (+) or current surpluses (-)	+5
Increase or decrease from projected workload Changes (+ or -)	+6
Demand for targeted positions =	28
We anticipate a need for 28 Inside construction workers over the next 3 years.	

Additional Resources

Websites:

<http://hr.dop.wa.gov/workforceplanning/wfpguide.htm>

<http://www.hr.state.tx.us/workforce/guide.html>

<http://www.hhs.gov/ohr/workforce/wfpguide.html>

<http://www.naspe.net/>

<http://www.ipma-hr.org/>

Publications:

Cornerstones for Kids: Workforce Planning Toolkit (2007). CPS Human Resources Services

Workforce Planning Desk Reference and Guide (2008). Employee Planning and Information Center, Division of Personnel and Labor Relations

Workforce Planning Resource Guide for Public Sector Human Resource Professionals (2002). International Personnel Management Association

Division of Personnel and Labor Relations, State of Alaska publications:

Workforce Planning—Quick Reference for Managers and Supervisors

Knowledge Transfer Tools

Skill Gap Analysis Power Point

Succession Planning For State Agencies

HR Update (published monthly)

State of Alaska Workforce Profile (published annually)

Division of Personnel and Labor Relations management services consultants are ready to assist you with workforce planning efforts. Contact information for the HR Service Centers is below:

Resource Group Service Center, serving the Departments of Fish and Game, Natural Resources, and Environmental Conservation can be reached at 465-2463.

Public Protection Service Center, serving the Departments of Corrections, Public Safety, and Military and Veterans' Affairs can be reached at 334-2606.

General Agencies Service Center, serving the Departments of Law, Administration, Commerce Community and Economic Development, Education and Early Development, Revenue and Labor and Workforce Development can be reached at 465-2498.

Transportation and Public Facilities Service Center can be reached at 465-6956.

Health and Social Services Service Center can be reached at 465-2308.

State of Alaska
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