

# Workforce Planning Guide

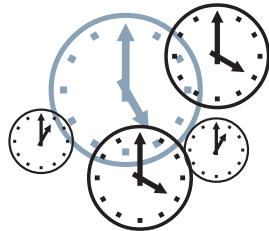
## - Step Three - Close the Gap



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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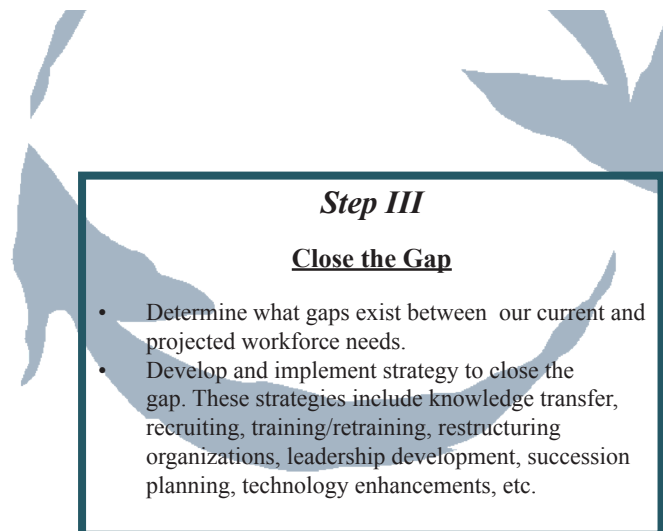
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## Step Three: Close the Gap



The third step in the State of Alaska's workforce planning model is to close the gap. Within this step, there are three main phases or components, all of which should be addressed in order to successfully manage the agency's human capital now and for the future. These three phases are:

- Gap Analysis
- Action Plan
- Implementation Plan

Each phase builds upon the one previous to it, and the gap analysis itself is created using the data obtained through the agency's demand analysis and supply projections. Therefore, there are several assumptions implicit in this guide:

- The agency using this guide has appointed an internal agency workforce champion.
- The agency has completed a SWOT analysis.
- The agency has completed Step One: Define the Future and has created a Demand Analysis.
- The agency has completed Step Two: Analyze the Current Workforce and has projected its internal supply of employees out to the number of years for which this workforce plan will be written.
- The agency is taking a team/working group approach to workforce planning and has a team of highly performing representative employees, front line supervisors, managers, and others leaders who are working through these processes.

### Gap Analysis

The first component is the simplest one: Performing the Gap Analysis. This part of Step Three involves taking the information gained during *Step One: Define the Future* and *Step Two: Analyze the Current Workforce*. The Gap Analysis is intended to identify situations where future demand will exceed future supply of internal candidates, and situations where the future supply of internal candidates will exceed future demand. The agency's workforce plan must address both kinds of situations. The agency should remember that it is not looking just at numbers of employees, but also at competencies needed to address future needs.

A template entitled Gap Analysis Assessment, combining the Demand Forecast form and the Projected Internal Supply Form, is included in the Resources section of this guide, but in essence what the agency is doing is making this calculation:



This calculation will show either a gap of the internal supply of candidates, which indicates a future shortage of needed workers and/or skills, or a surplus, which indicates a potential excess of workers with skills that may not be needed in the future or which will not be needed to the same extent as currently needed. Both situations should be addressed in the workforce action plan.

### Workforce Action Plan

The agency's workforce plan will be unique to the needs of that specific agency, but all agencies will want their plan to focus on the most mission critical gaps. An initial part of this plan may include such action items as:

- Redesigning positions and rewriting PDs.
- Defining recruiting needs and opportunities.
- Identifying training and development opportunities.
- Restructuring divisions, offices, agencies.

The workforce plan should also include a **timeline** for implementing the action items and a way to **measure** the effectiveness of the action items. It will be helpful, too, if the agency describes why the gap is expected to occur. This will be useful in making decisions about how to close the gap. For example, if the reason for the gap is because the agency anticipates a record number of retirements in five years, then the agency may find that one of the action steps to take will include knowledge transfer strategies from those who will be leaving to those who are not eligible to retire, whereas if the gap is occurring due to expansion of a facility, other methods of gaining employees with the needed skills may be more appropriate. A template and a sample gap closure action plan are included in the Resources section of this guide.

The agency workforce team and workforce champion will write the plan for review by management and executives. This part of the process begins the next phase of Step Three, which is the Implementation Plan.

## Implementation Plan

There are three parts to the Implementation Plan. They are:

- Obtain management leadership and support.
- Develop change management strategy.
- Communicate the plan.

### Obtaining Management Leadership and Support

The written workforce plan is only as valuable as management leadership makes it. If leadership does not support the actual workforce plan, it will fail in its infancy. Therefore, it is crucial that an important piece of Step Three includes obtaining management leadership and support. What this means is that the leadership of the agency supports the *plan*. It is assumed that leadership already supports the *concept* of workforce planning, since the agency has expended an enormous amount of effort to reach this point. However, when it comes to the nuts and bolts of the plan, without support of leadership for the plan itself, the effort will not succeed.

Ideally, workforce planning should be considered a significant piece of the overall agency strategic plan, and senior level management should lead the effort. If the agency's workforce team consists of high level management along side high performing employees and supervisors, any concerns have most likely already been addressed. However, if upper management has not participated in the project until this point, the workforce team may find it necessary to make presentations and hold question and answer sessions with them to address any issues that create concerns for them. Using the data gained from the SWOT analysis, Demand Analysis, and Supply Projections may aid in answering some of those issues.

Employees will commit to working with the workforce plan if they feel vested in the process. Likewise, employees will feel that the plan is viable and achievable when they see their supervisors, managers, and leaders support the plan and the goals associated with it.

### Developing Change Management Strategies

It is natural for the agency's employees to be concerned about how the plan will affect them and what changes they can expect to take place as a result of it. This is to be expected and agencies that prepare for employee reactions and resistance to change will find it easier to manage. The Division of Personnel and Labor Relations offers *Change Management for Supervisors* through Train Alaska; agencies will find this training useful and will learn ways to help employees make the journey through the changes that will happen as a result of the workforce plan.

While it is tempting to only include those employees in the targeted job classes in the change management strategies, as much as possible, all stakeholders should be included. This means including supervisors and employees in the targeted job classes, as well as those employees in divisions, offices, and other agencies that support these targeted job classes. The plan could, and probably will, affect them all.

Program managers and line level supervisors may find that they have much to benefit from the program, since they and their employees will likely be the most directly impacted. Additionally, this is an excellent time to offer career growth opportunities, as part of the overall change management strategies, to current employees, which will aid in other retention efforts.

## Communicate

Once the plan is written, reviewed, revised, and rewritten, it should be made available to all affected employees, and supervisors. The agency will find that its employees and supervisors will be much more likely to support the plan if it is written down, transparent, and people are held accountable for making it happen. A communication plan is essential to the success of the plan and can take many different forms.

Some commonly used methods of communicating information to a large population of people continue to work well as ways to communicate the plan to those employees who will be involved in its implementation. Broadcast emails introducing the concept, web pages with frequent updates, announcements at staff meetings, and articles in newsletters are some ways that the workforce champion, with support from leadership, can announce the plan and keep employees informed of its progress in the agency.

The workforce champion will want to first answer this question in the agency's communication plan:

- To whom do we need to communicate (consider all stakeholders, not just the targeted job class)?

After determining the appropriate groups to include in its communication plan, the agency will next need to ask:

- Why do we need to communicate this information? What purpose does it serve to give this information to this particular group?
- What information and how much information do we need to share with this group?
- How are we going to communicate to this group? What methods work best with this particular group?
- How often are we going to communicate to this group?

Maintaining transparency (as much as possible) through the process and keeping open lines of communication, top to bottom, bottom to top, and sideways across the agency, will help ensure that employees feel that the agency has considered “what’s in it for them” as well as “what’s in it for the agency” in developing and implementing the plan.

## 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.

- Gap Analysis Assessment
- Gap Analysis and Action Plan template
- Gap Analysis and Action Plan sample
- Communication plan

<b>Gap Analysis Assessment</b>		
From <u>Preparing the Demand Forecast</u>		
<b>Demand Forecast for _____ (Targeted Job Class)</b>		
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>A</i>
From <u>Analyze Current Workforce</u>		
<b>Projected Internal Supply for _____ (Targeted Job Class)</b>		
Current staffing level		
Projected Attrition (Turnover)		
Internal Supply		<i>B</i>
<b>Gap to Close</b>		
Demand (A) – Projected Internal Supply (B) =		

## Gap Analysis and Action Plan

Template	
Gap 1:	
Goal:	
Rationale:	
Action Steps:	
Measurement:	
Completion Date:	



## Gap Analysis and Action Plan Sample

<b>Gap Analysis and Action Plan Sample</b>	
Sample - Gap 1	
Gap 1:	30% of current employees in job class DEF eligible to retire in 5 years
Goal:	Develop succession plan for current employees to ensure that Dept XYZ is able to continue providing necessary services to State of Alaska citizens
Rationale:	In order to ensure the safety and security of Alaskans, Dept XYZ must ensure that adequately trained employees are available to apply for positions that will be vacated due to impending retirements
Action Steps:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop plan to identify employees interested in pursuing future career opportunities</li> <li>▪ Provide leadership training to interested and eligible employees</li> <li>▪ Provide technical training on new software system to all users of current system</li> <li>▪ Require all employees in leadership, management, or supervisory positions revise current desk manual or write desk manuals where none currently exist</li> <li>▪ Explore grant options for training and education of current employees to prepare them for future openings</li> <li>▪ Work with classification to ensure that PDs of all employees are up to date with accurate descriptions of needed competencies</li> <li>▪ Implement a mentorship/coaching program for current employees</li> </ul>
Measurement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training plans for employees enrolled in the succession plan module to ensure that all training is taking place</li> <li>▪ Desk manuals completed timely and accurately</li> <li>▪ PDs revised and forwarded to classification</li> <li>▪ Number of leaders in mentor/coach roles</li> <li>▪ Employee questionnaires regarding succession plan steps and implementation</li> </ul>
Completion Date:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training plans within 2 months of employee enrollment into succession planning module</li> <li>▪ Desk manuals completed by July 1, 2009</li> <li>▪ 6 PDs completed every 60 days and forwarded to classification for finalization</li> <li>▪ Questionnaires answered by all employees within 2 weeks of plan module announcement</li> </ul>

## Gap Analysis and Action Plan

<b>Sample - Gap 2</b>	
Gap 2:	30% of current employees in job class DEF eligible to retire in 5 years
Goal:	Increase recruitment efforts for new employees
Rationale:	Promotion of current employees into vacancies left by retirees will create a “ripple” effect, with lower level vacancies which must be filled by new employees
Action Steps:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand the college and high school internship programs</li> <li>▪ Establish relationships with area colleges and universities</li> <li>▪ Attend 5 community and/or college job fairs annually</li> <li>▪ Establish and use flex positions</li> <li>▪ Expand work/life balance by offering flex schedules, telecommuting, and alternate workweeks</li> <li>▪ Increase alternate and aggressive recruiting activities, such as newspaper ads, radio, and TV</li> </ul>
Measurement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of interns in various agencies within the department</li> <li>▪ Number of job fairs attended</li> <li>▪ Number of flex positions established and filled</li> <li>▪ Speaking engagements or adjunct professorships with local college</li> </ul>
Completion Date:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Internship program by July 1, 2010</li> <li>▪ Job fair attendance to begin immediately</li> <li>▪ Recruiting activities by July 1, 2009 or as budget permits</li> <li>▪ 10 Flex positions established and in practice by July 1, 2010</li> </ul>

## Gap Analysis and Action Plan

<b>Gap Analysis and Action Plan</b>	
Sample - Gap 3	
Gap 3:	Turnover rate in targeted job class is 27%, with 23% due to resignations or transfers out of the department
Goal:	Evaluate current retention methods to determine which need strengthening or revising
Rationale:	Turnover data suggests that retention is a greater issue than recruitment for Dept XYZ. The data indicates a higher than statewide average of resignations related to dissatisfaction with the agency or for better opportunities
Action Steps:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Survey new employees after 6 months and 1 year to determine satisfaction with position</li> <li>▪ Survey/interview exiting employees to determine reasons for leaving position and agency</li> <li>▪ Provide cross-training opportunities for current employees</li> <li>▪ Increase employee development</li> <li>▪ Provide training for new supervisors</li> <li>▪ Provide increased opportunities for employee recognition and provide public recognition for work well done</li> <li>▪ Explore work/life issues</li> </ul>
Measurement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compare 2008 turnover data to 2006 and 2007 to determine if efforts are working</li> <li>▪ Evaluate survey results from new employees</li> <li>▪ Evaluate survey results from exiting employees</li> </ul>
Completion Date:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annual evaluation of employee surveys</li> <li>▪ Cross training identified and started by July 1, 2008</li> <li>▪ Employee recognition program in place by Sept. 2008</li> <li>▪ Best practices of work/life issues presented to commissioner's office by July 1, 2009</li> </ul>

## Communication Plan

In order to ensure that necessary information about the workforce plan is provided to all stakeholders, agencies may find it useful to create a separate component plan for each group, rather than try to create a single plan for everyone involved. For example, the agency may want to include employees, clients, supervisors, members of the governing board, and legislators in its overall communication plan, but not all groups will need the same level of communication. Some groups will need minimal communication, with a quarterly or annual report, while others will need bi-weekly status meetings with updates. Each component part of the overall plan should contain answers to the following questions:

To **whom** do we need to communicate (consider all stakeholders, not just the targeted job class)?

**Why** do we need to communicate this information? What purpose does it serve to give this information to this particular group?

**What** information and **how much** information do we need to share with this group?

**How** are we going to communicate to this group? What methods work best with this particular group?

**How often** are we going to communicate to this group?

## Additional Resources

### Websites:

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

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

<http://www.vadrs.org/downloads/DRSWPSectionIVGapAnalysisActionPlan.doc>

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

### 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 & Labor Relations Service Centers:

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.

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