Workforce Development Planning & Assessment Tool Kit Student Assignments

Introduction

The **Workforce Development Planning & Assessment Tool Kit** (Tool Kit) is a companion resource to the Workforce Development Framework (WDF). The Workforce Development Framework (WDF) and its **accompanying brief** were developed by the **National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI)** in 2015 to provide critical workforce guidance to the field of child welfare.

The WDF is based upon a comprehensive review of the workforce development literature across multiple professions in the public and private sector. It is intended to help child welfare agencies and leaders understand best and promising practices in developing a workplace that is competent, committed, diverse, inclusive, and welcoming.

The Tool Kit applies the WDF to an agency setting and offers a comprehensive and integrated approach for creating a workforce development roadmap. First, it guides users through the **Planning Process**. Next, users **explore the Components & Strategies** and then **put it all together** by prioritizing and selecting one or more strategies to address the agency's workforce gaps; developing an Action Plan; and monitoring and evaluating its impact.

Educators may use the worksheets included in the tool kit as frameworks for small group and individual discussions, projects or presentations. Instructors may present these tools as assignments that allow students to apply the Workforce Development Framework to their unique child welfare contexts. Schools of social work might also use the tool kit to generate ideas for field education. Field instructors might find useful learning activities for field placement learning agreements/contracts to reinforce a range of social work competencies. Schools may also use the tool kit to develop agency-specific projects to support workforce development. As appropriate, ensure all projects are reviewed and approved by agency supervisors and management before development or implementation.

Examples

A few examples of assignments that can be developed from the tool kit are included below.

Planning Process

The workforce development planning process introduces tools to systematically gather information about an agency's current workforce strengths and gaps. It also guides users to look at the internal and external context of their agency, which influences its ability to hire and support a skilled workforce.

Assignment One

Students (individually or in a group) can be assigned to review the **quick guide to the planning process** and answer the following discussion questions:

1) Why is it important for an agency to complete this kind of assessment?
2) What are some of the organizational barriers to completing this workforce development planning and assessment process?
3) Which step in the planning process will be the most difficult to complete? Why?
4) Who at your agency has access to the types of information needed to complete each of the steps?
5) Who should be included in a team that would complete this workforce development planning and assessment process?

Assignment Two

For a multi-week assignment, students (individually or in a group) can be assigned to complete the individual worksheets for each of the four steps in the planning process. If completing in a group, the group can assign team members the responsibility of locating and gathering relevant information that will inform their responses to the questions. The information will be accessed from multiple sources that are described in each of the worksheets. Team members should be encouraged to individually reflect on the questions and then come together as a group to compare and contrast their responses. Reflecting upon the answers helps the students and their team members to think about the current and future direction of their agency and its workforce. Students should also be encouraged to talk with their field instructors about this assignment and how to access the information needed to complete it.

Links to the four worksheets:

1) **Step 1 Worksheet: Identify Need (Organizational Assessment)**
2) **Step 2 Worksheet: Gather Data (Environmental Assessment)**
3) **Step 3 Worksheet: Analyze Workforce Supply and Demand**
4) **Step 4 Worksheet: Identify Gaps**

Explore the Components & Strategies

This next step in the planning and assessment process is to explore the components and strategies. This examination is informed by the data generated in the planning and assessment process. Users explore 10 distinct yet interconnected Workforce Development Components and review examples of strategies that help to close the gap between an agency's current workforce and the workforce most needed to support their mission and vision.

Assignment Three

Ideally, this assignment will be provided to students as follow-up to Assignment Two. It can also be provided independently. If using this assignment in conjunction with Assignment Two, students should be asked to review the data and information gathered as they completed the four steps in the planning process and identify one or two components of workforce development that they would like to explore as a result of their exploration process. If the students have not completed Assignment Two, they can select any components that they believe would be helpful for their agency to address. Once the components are selected, students should answer the following questions about each of the selected components:

1) What information was most important in identifying this component as an area for your agency to explore?
2) Reflect on the "Desired Outcome or Condition". What would be the impact on your agency if this outcome or condition was realized?
3) Individually review and rate the "Indicators or Agency Level Performance" for this component. Discuss your individual ratings and explore the similarities and differences among group members. What is it about your varied perspectives that has led to different ratings?
4) As a group, explore the "Examples of Promising or Effective Strategies" provided in the worksheet. Assess whether or not your agency is already engaged in these strategies and how difficult it might be to implement them.
5) Are there other strategies related to this component that your agency is involved in that are not listed on the worksheet?
6) Explore the resources available on MyNCWWI and identify one additional strategy that could be implemented in your agency.