



# **STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PLANNING**

**"IF YOU ONLY LOOK AT WHAT IS,  
YOU MIGHT NEVER ATTAIN WHAT COULD BE."  
- ANONYMOUS**

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# INTRODUCTION

**"IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING,  
YOU WILL PROBABLY END UP SOMEWHERE ELSE."**

**- DR. LAURENCE J. PETER, CANADIAN EDUCATOR**

Since May, 2002, County departments have been participating with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Department of Management and Budget (DMB) in the semi-annual workforce planning process. This semi-annual review provides the forum in which departments address staffing-related issues. During the review, departments also introduce and prioritize position change requests, which are then considered for implementation.

This manual has been prepared for those who are tasked with developing a workforce plan. It defines fundamental steps to develop and implement a workforce plan, and provides information and processes that can be applied to ensure a systematic approach to workforce planning. The manual also identifies the tools available to help managers and leaders in the overall process.

The manual contains information on the purpose of workforce planning, how it is linked to strategic planning, and why it is important. It also provides information on what the workforce planning process "looks like" for Fairfax County Government.

The Department of Human Resources reviewed numerous publications, books, and plans from other organizations and governments in order to provide County departments with this workforce planning tool. Practical and informative materials and text have been incorporated to provide departments with a comprehensive manual that the Workforce Planning Team hopes you find interesting and useful.

## **WORKFORCE PLANNING...WHAT IS IT?**

**"IF YOU FAIL TO PLAN, YOU PLAN TO FAIL."**

- **NORMAN VINCENT PEALE**

Workforce planning is a process designed to anticipate and integrate the human resources response to an organization's strategic plan. Workforce planning enables one to:

- Have a strategy for the allocation of resources in a manner that will allow the organization to meet its goals.
- Prepare for contingencies that could prevent the organization from attaining its goals.
- Prepare a framework for the organization's orderly growth and progress.
- Have a strategic basis for making business decisions.
- Be proactive versus reactive in anticipating workforce needs.
- Maximize organizational effectiveness by integrating the organization's mission, strategic plan, budget, technology, and human resource needs.

Workforce planning is a systematic process for identifying, acquiring, developing, and retaining employees to meet the needs of the organization. It requires leadership; clearly articulated vision, mission, and strategic objectives; and cooperative, supportive efforts of staff in several functional areas. Workforce planning is an inclusive process, drawing together program management, strategic planning, budget, human resources, and program staff. It involves collaboration and information sharing. Strategic planning sets organizational direction and articulates measurable program goals and objectives. The budget operationalizes strategic plans for the budget period. Human resources provides tools for identifying competencies needed in the workforce and for recruiting, developing, and training employees to build the workforce of the future.

Workforce planning is an effort to focus on developing information that can help an organization make decisions for both the short and long term, yet allow for flexibility in a changing environment. The plan is intended to help solve staffing problems related to managed position movement into, around, and out of an organization.

Workforce planning is a management framework that ties human resource decisions to the organization's strategic plan. In this way, human resource decisions move away from piecemeal, individualized decisions and become part of the larger, more strategic goals of the organization. Workforce planning provides managers with a framework for making staffing decisions based on an organization's mission, strategic plan, budgetary resources, and a set of desired workforce competencies.

To be useful, a workforce plan must reflect the management environment of the organization for which it is developed. In addition, organization culture is an important factor in workforce planning. Organization culture consists of the patterns of shared values and beliefs that tie members to that organization and also provide rules for behavior.

Workforce planning enables managers to develop a better understanding of the areas of the workforce which need to be strengthened. This step is the key element in the workforce planning process. Questions organizations should consider include:

- Are there certain occupational groups with increasing turnover?
- Can factors influencing turnover be identified?
- Has turnover reduced the skill set of a certain occupational group?

Answering these questions helps organizations develop plans for stable staffing levels, succession planning, and skill development.

Workforce planning requires all parties to step away from preconceived notions and to seriously consider change. It requires a vision of what is to be accomplished. Participants must be able to discard personal considerations and perceive the shape of things to come.

Although different workforce planning models exist, all are very much alike. All rely on an identification of staffing levels and competencies needed in the future; an analysis of the present workforce; a comparison of the present workforce to future needs to identify gaps and surpluses; the development of strategies for building the workforce needed in the future; and an evaluation process to assure that the workforce plan remains valid and that objectives are being met.

It is important to note that there is no prescribed format for a workforce plan. The model selected by any given organization must meet its needs. The approach is flexible rather than a rigid process. There is no one "right" way to perform workforce planning.

## Workforce Planning Is...

### **Not Just**

Predicting the future

An inventory of all positions

Creating plans as a onetime "event"

Creating reports that describe "what was"

### **It Is**

Building a longer-term context for short-term decision making

Focusing on positions where you need to be proactive or need time to react

Creating plans in response to changing strategies, whenever change is discussed

Focusing on planning and looking ahead to "what will be"

## **WORKFORCE PLANNING...WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

**"UNLESS THE RIGHT NUMBER OF SUITABLY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE RIGHT TIME AND THE RIGHT PLACE, THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WILL SIMPLY NOT OCCUR."**

**- INTERNATIONAL PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**

An organization needs to ensure it has adequate human resources to accomplish its mission. Because all employers compete for employees from the same labor pool, workforce planning is critical for attracting and retaining the talent needed to serve the public.

Workforce planning has become increasingly important to organizations over the last several years, due in large part to increased retirements, as well as retention and restructuring initiatives. Global trends that illustrate the importance of workforce planning include:

- aging of the population;
- baby boomers redefining the idea of what retirement is;
- harnessing of technology to change the human resource function;
- proliferation of rules and regulations, with new legislation often competing and colliding with existing legislation; and
- the sheer number of people with advanced educational degrees is advancing human knowledge at an unprecedented rate.

Workforce planning is a proactive strategy to project workforce requirements for the future and plan how organizations will meet both global and unique business needs.

A key consideration of workforce planning is its benefit to management. It provides managers with a strategic basis for making human resource decisions. It allows managers to anticipate change rather than being surprised by events, and provides strategic methods for addressing present and anticipated workforce issues. In addition, workforce planning allows organizations to systematically address issues that are driving workforce change. It allows organizations to project retirement rates and make plans for replacing lost competencies and institutional knowledge.

The overall benefit of workforce planning, then, is its ability to make organizations more effective.

## **HOW DOES WORKFORCE PLANNING TIE IN WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING?**

**"THE BEST PREPARATION FOR GOOD WORK TOMORROW IS TO DO GOOD WORK TODAY."**

**- ELBERT HUBBARD**

Planning begins with the organization's strategic plan. At any given time, there may be long-term goals, which may include the opening of a new facility or reduced spending. At other times, the organization may be faced with sudden changes such as increased demand for services or receipt of grant funding. Given these varying situations, the organization's leadership develops goals and strategic objectives. In each instance, the manager envisions the various steps which must take place in order for the goals to become reality. Workforce planning offers a means of systematically aligning organizational and program priorities with the budgetary and human resources needed to accomplish them. By beginning the planning process with identified strategic objectives, managers can develop workforce plans that will help them accomplish those objectives. At the same time, these plans provide a sound basis for justifying budget and staffing requests, since there is a clear connection between objectives, the budget, and the human resources needed to accomplish them.

Workforce planning done in a vacuum cannot be successful. It must relate to other planning efforts of the organization. To conduct workforce planning, one must be aware of organizational direction. In turn, achieving organizational goals requires a competent workforce.

Workforce planning relates to the employees and employee skill sets needed to accomplish the organization's goals. Effective workforce planning is a necessary component of an organization's strategic plan. It provides for a flexible and proficient workforce able to adapt to the changing needs of the organization.

Because workforce planning addresses staffing implications of strategic and operational plans, it affects the full range of human resource activities, including recruitment, hiring, classification, compensation, and retention.

Workforce planning should also take into account other human resource processes such as succession planning, employee development, career ladders, and organization development. Each has a part to play in identifying critical skills, forecasting potential vacancies, and preparing employees and the organization to meet future needs.



As a process, workforce planning includes elements of strategic planning, workload projections, legislative forecasts, turnover analyses, and budget projections. Workforce planning forecasts the numbers of people and type of skills needed to achieve success by comparing the available workforce with future needs to determine needs that may be unmet (gaps).

As the value of people increases, so does the performance capacity of the organization, and therefore its value to clients and other stakeholders. As with any investment, the goal is to maximize value while managing risk. Furthermore, an organization's human resource policies must be aligned to support the mission, vision, core values, goals, and strategies by which the organization has defined its direction and its expectations for itself and its people. An organization's human resource policies and practices should be designed, implemented, and assessed by the standard of how well they help the organization pursue these intents. Government entities that expect to make the best use of their human resources will need to build a solid foundation in strategic planning and organizational alignment, leadership and succession planning, recruiting and training the best possible talent, and establishing a performance culture – including appropriate performance measures and rewards – that steers employees toward the accomplishment of their organizational mission.

Strategic planning sets organizational direction and measurable program objectives. These goals and objectives not only provide the basis for determining necessary financial resources, but also provide the basis for workforce needs. If the *right people* with the *right competencies* are not in place, it is difficult to effectively achieve the organization's strategic goals and objectives. The workforce plan highlights the "people factor" in achieving results.

Workforce planning naturally complements and is a follow-up to strategic planning. Just as strategic planning helps an organization outline where it is, where it is going, and how it plans to get there, a workforce plan lays out the specific tasks and actions needed to ensure the organization has the necessary human resources to accomplish its mission.

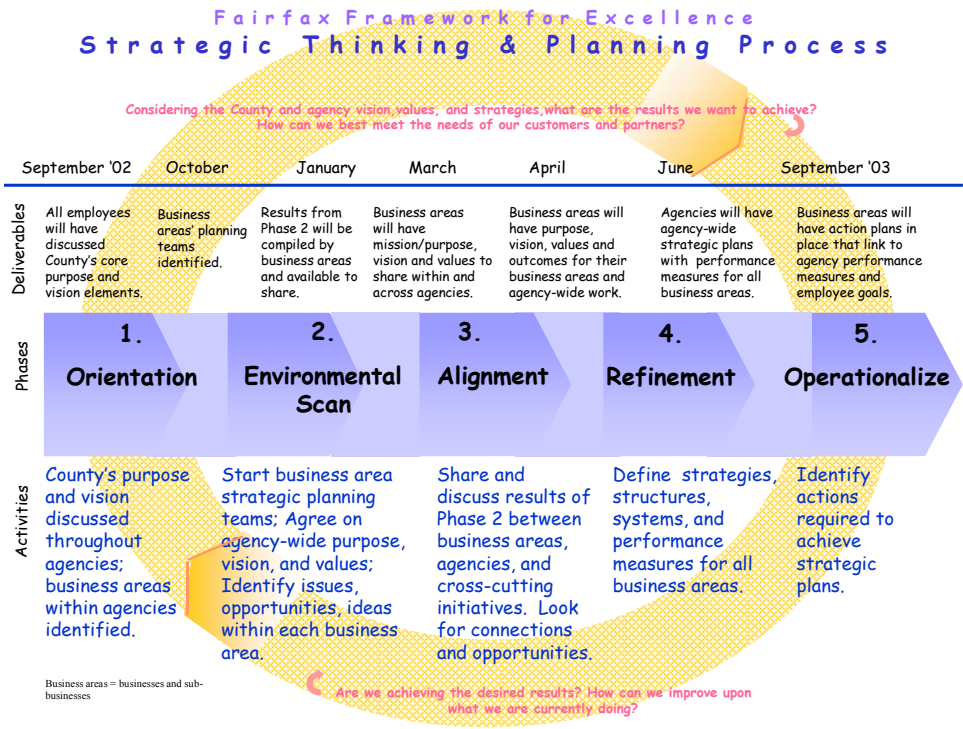
A strategic plan charts the future with broad mission-related targets and milestones. An organization's vision, mission, and measurable goals and objectives drive the identification of what type of work needs to be accomplished. A workforce plan translates strategic thinking into concrete actions in the area of workforce staffing and training needs.

When an organization successfully aligns human resource activities with organizational strategy, "activities fit strategically" and reinforce one another. This "strategic fit" produces several advantages. First, it produces consistency. Second, human resource activities will reinforce the organization's business strategy. Third, a good "fit" facilitates information exchange across activities. Last, strategic fit eliminates redundancy and minimizes wasted effort.

Each of these activities reflects a fundamental decision made by the organization to focus not just on living for today, but on preparing for tomorrow by investing in its people.

# WORKFORCE PLANNING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING...THE CONNECTION

**“IF ONE ADVANCES IN THE DIRECTION OF HIS DREAMS, ONE WILL MEET WITH SUCCESS UNEXPECTED IN COMMON HOURS.”**  
 - HENRY DAVID THOREAU



## A WORKFORCE PLANNING MODEL

**"IT'S NOT THE PLAN THAT IS IMPORTANT, IT'S THE PLANNING."  
- DR. GRAEME EDWARDS**

### SET STRATEGIC DIRECTION

This is the process of preparing a model for your organization's long-term success.

- **A strategic plan is a practical, action-oriented guide**, based on an examination of internal and external factors, which directs goal setting and resource allocation to achieve meaningful results over time.

- **A strategic plan develops a clear statement of the organization's mission and vision**, identifies a set of goals and objectives, and formulates key strategies that address factors that are essential to the organization's success. Key strategies also indicate the major undertakings that will reposition the organization for the future.
- **Strategic planning is an essential tool.** As organizations are challenged to manage complex and changing problems with limited resources, planning determines the things that an organization can use to address customers' expectations.
- **Strategic planning is adaptable.** It takes a long-range approach; however, regular reviews and updates to check progress and reassess validity of the plan can be employed.
- **Strategic planning is proactive.** It stimulates change rather than simply reacting to it.
- **Strategic planning employs common sense.** It is visionary, yet realistic. It anticipates a future that is both desirable and achievable.
- **Strategic planning is part of quality management.** It helps management to manage the future, rather than be managed by it.

## CONDUCT WORKFORCE ANALYSIS



## DEMAND FORECAST

This step begins with an analysis of the type of workforce that will be needed in order to accomplish future functional requirements and carry out the mission of the organization. An important part of the analysis process is examining not only what work the organization will do in the future, but how that work will be performed. How will jobs change as a result of technological advancements, or economic, social, and political conditions? What will be the reporting relationships? How will work flow into each part of the organization? Questions that will impact the analysis include:

1. What changes are anticipated over the next "X" years regarding:
  - Mission, functions, strategic and operational goals and objectives?
  - Budget, trends, and patterns?
  - Impacts of internal and external environment?
  - Labor force trends?
  - Shifting skills/competencies?
  - Innovations in technology?
  - Changes in organizational structure, including delayering, reorganizing, restructuring?
  - Outsourcing?
  - Partnering?
  - Use of volunteers?
  - Duration of projects and programs?
  
2. How will these changes affect:
  - Volume, type, and location of work?
  - Organizational structure and design?
  - Mix of skills?
  - Supervisor-employee ratios?

3. What is the planned organizational outlook for the future in terms of:

- Number of FTE's needed in the organization and skills and competencies of positions?
- Number and kinds of skills needed at each level of expertise?
- Number of supervisors and non-supervisors?
- Number and types of teams?
- Diversity objectives?
- Developmental needs?
- Certifications?

After one determines the "what" and "how" of future work, move on to determine the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to carry out that work. This future workforce profile will reveal positions that will be needed in the future, providing management and staff with a common understanding of the skills and behaviors that are important to the organization. Research has shown that beginning at the demand side better focuses the issue because it highlights the future human resource requirements needed up front, and assists in providing more targeted analysis when determining the current and future supply within the organization.

In defining the future requirements needed by the organization, consider the following:

1. Determine the five to ten most critical competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities) essential to address the issue.
2. Determine the skills that differentiate one level of job class from another.
3. Define future staffing *levels* and *competencies* needed to address the critical issue.

<b>Data Sources:</b>	<b>Budget, projected labor outlook, projected retirements</b>
<b>Status Checks:</b>	<b>New programs, changes in technology, changes in strategic plan, pending legislation, changes in business processes</b>



**SUPPLY PROJECTION**

The result of this step should, at a minimum, show the projected workforce supply in terms of staff numbers. There are a host of factors that can be included in the present workforce profile, including:

- Number of employees
- Competencies
- Job classification
- Salary level
- Age, gender, race
- Location
- Educational level
- Appointment status (permanent, temporary, etc.)

Once the present workforce profile has been prepared, project it out into the future as if no special management action was taken to replace attrition or develop existing staff. Retirement eligibility and other turnover statistics will prove valuable in this exercise.

Workforce analysis frequently stops with the consideration of demographic information (occupation, grade level, skills and experience, age, retirement profile, diversity, turnover rates, etc.). Although this information is necessary and pertinent to the process, there is much more that should go into the analysis besides this "snapshot" information. For instance, trend data is extremely important to the workforce analysis. Is the turnover rate changing over time? Are there specific factors influencing turnover? What types of positions have been filled recently?

To define current supply, assess the number of people the organization currently has with the competencies needed to address the critical issue. Forecasting or projecting the future supply projection requires identifying variables and applying assumptions about how these variables will influence the type and level of workforce the organization will have in the future.

<b>Data sources:</b>	<b>Organization charts, budget</b>
<b>Status Checks:</b>	<b>Strategic objectives, technology, current skill sets, current job classifications</b>





## GAP ANALYSIS

This step involves comparing the workforce demand forecast to the workforce supply projection. Gap analysis identifies situations where demand exceeds supply, such as when critical work demand, number of personnel, or competencies will not meet future needs. It also identifies situations when future supply exceeds demand, such as when critical work demands, number of personnel, or competencies exceed needs. In either event, the organization must identify these differences and make plans to address them. **It is important to note that calculating gaps and surpluses will simply provide the organization with data in terms of what needs to be done. It is the actions that the organization decides to take to address these gaps and surpluses that results in the workforce plan.**

Once gaps between the demand (future needs and projected workload) and the supply (workforce and competencies) have been identified, one needs to consult with management to set priorities to fill the gaps that will have a critical impact on the organization's goals.

The "solution analysis" that will close the gaps must be strategic in nature. When doing solution analysis, the organization should be prepared to address ongoing as well as unplanned changes in the workforce. The trends identified in supply and demand analyses can help the organization anticipate these changes.



**STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

This step involves the collaborative work of the department and its strategic partners to develop strategies to address future gaps and surpluses. The forum for this strategic work is the workforce planning meeting, and other continuing, as-needed meetings and communication throughout the year. There is a wide range of strategies that organizations might employ to attract and develop staff with needed competencies. Likewise, there is a myriad of factors that will influence which strategy, or combination of strategies, should be used. Some of these factors include time, fiscal constraints, resources, internal depth, workplace and workforce dynamics, and job classifications. Strategies may include modifying positions, flexibility in hiring within the pay range, defining training and development needs, defining diversity initiatives, conducting specialized recruitment efforts, developing retention and productivity techniques, effecting reorganizations, and updating class specifications. The action plan should be developed first around the most critical gaps the organization faces so that *human resources can support strategy.*

Some general approaches to strategy development include the following:

- ACTION:** Define required employee movement by identifying internal sources of workers
- ASK YOURSELF:** Can movement be implemented through career development programs?
  
- ACTION:** Define and redesign jobs
- ASK YOURSELF:** How will job redesign impact the current classification and compensation system?
  
- ACTION:** Define recruiting needs and develop recruiting strategies by identifying recruitment sources for external sources of workers
- ASK YOURSELF:** Are there ways to maximize recruitment to minimize training needs of new employees?

- ACTION:** Define training and development needs to support planned movement or redeployment
- ASK YOURSELF:** Can we explore retraining or recruiting options for filling competency gaps?
- ACTION:** Define diversity initiatives
- ASK YOURSELF:** Is diversity balanced throughout all levels of the organization?
- ACTION:** Review quality of work life issues to ensure you are an “employer of choice”
- ASK YOURSELF:** Is your organization healthy enough to retain new talent?
- ACTION:** Track organizational and operational productivity for improvements, goal attainment, and accountability
- ASK YOURSELF:** Are gaps closing? If not, why not?
- ACTION:** Identify restructuring opportunities (organizational, functional, occupational)
- ASK YOURSELF:** Is the organizational structure appropriate for conducting the required work?
- ACTION:** Design a workforce plan to address skills gaps
- ASK YOURSELF:** What is the cost associated with the strategies to address competency or skills gaps?

## **IMPLEMENT THE WORKFORCE PLAN**

The implementation phase consists of translating the actions into a workable schedule that includes well-defined objectives, specific and measurable workforce goals, and timetables and milestones. It involves dedicating time, energy, and resources to address the critical gaps or surpluses that exist within the organization, as related to the critical business issues identified as part of the strategic planning process.

To be successful, workforce planning requires the commitment and leadership of top management. Senior-level managers should lead the planning process, assure that workforce plans are aligned with the strategic direction of the agency, and hold subordinate managers accountable for carrying out workforce planning.

Similarly, program managers should take responsibility for leading the workforce planning process in their program areas. Managers will gain immediate benefits from workforce planning because the competencies of their own staff will become better aligned with strategic goals and objectives.

## **MONITOR, EVALUATE, AND REVISE**

The implementation of the workforce plan should result in the desired workforce the organization needs in terms of the number of employees, with the appropriate skills, at the right locations, etc. The workforce plan should be continually measured for its success in meeting both efficiency and effectiveness parameters. While efficiency will measure the time, speed, cost, and volume regarding the plan, effectiveness will measure whether the plan is achieving the desired result of “having the right people with the right skills at the right time.”

In addition to collecting information from program users, the organization should measure the results of the workforce plan, looking for examples of efficiency and effectiveness such as:

- Do the workload and workforce gaps still exist?
- Are planning assumptions still valid?
- Is there an imbalance between workload, workforce, or competencies?
- Has the overall organization performance increased?
- Do adequate staffing levels still exist?

Successful workforce planning is an active, ongoing, and dynamic process that must be repeated and adjusted.

## **CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING THE WORKFORCE PLANNING EFFORT**

- ✓ The workforce plan is based on the organization's strategic plan, and considers the mission, vision, core values, and goals.
- ✓ Data analysis has been conducted to analyze impacts on the workforce plan.
- ✓ The organization has determined the number and type of employees that will be needed to address the challenges of the upcoming years. There are clear indications that the organization has identified the roles and core competencies needed to support its goals and service delivery strategies.
- ✓ Analysis has been performed to assess the gap between current positions and those needed for the future.
- ✓ Strategies have been developed to address gaps between projected supply and demand. The Action Plan has been clearly laid out, including responsible parties, due dates, and resources needed.
- ✓ The plan has been communicated to employees and stakeholders.
- ✓ The workforce plan and strategies are continually monitored and refined to ensure their ongoing effectiveness and continuous improvement, taking into account resource changes and other conditions impacting the organization.

## **THE WORKFORCE ACTION PLAN**

**"PLANNING WITHOUT ACTION IS FUTILE,  
ACTION WITHOUT PLANNING IS FATAL."  
- UNKNOWN**

The workforce action plan is a natural follow-up to strategic planning. The strategic plan helps you identify where you are, where you are going, and how you are going to get there. Similarly, the workforce action plan lays out specific tasks and actions one needs to take in order to achieve the organization's human resource goals and objectives. A shared responsibility between line supervisors, managers, and HR professionals is important in identifying the critical human resource issues in strategic and operational plans.

### **What is a Workforce Action Plan?**

- A process for defining and addressing the staffing implications of an organization's strategic and operational plans.
- A long-term context for short-term activities.
- A focus on critical issues.

### **The Workforce Action Plan answers the following questions:**

- What human resources do I need to have in order to meet the performance objectives of the organization?
- Once I have the employees on board, how do I develop them?
- What strategies should be used to retain them?

### **The key benefits of developing a Workforce Action Plan include the following:**

- Recruiting, developing, and retaining talent required to meet future demands.
- Adjusting overall staffing to meet changing business needs.

- Ensuring that the department has the resources to deliver promised services to its customers in a timely and quality manner.
- Facilitating the management of change and contributing to better people management.
- Allowing for smarter decisions and better long-term investments.
- Addressing critical human resource issues in an organized, integrated manner.
- Enhancing more efficient use of HR services (training, recruitment, compensation)

# DEVELOPING A WORKFORCE ACTION PLAN

## 1. Design a workforce plan to meet your organization's needs.

- What skills are currently vital to the accomplishment of the organization's goals and objectives?
- What changes are expected in the work of the organization (due to changes in mission/goals, technology, new/terminated programs or functions, and shifts to contracting out)? How will this affect the organization's human resources? What skills will no longer be required, and what new skills will the organization need in the next five years?
- How is the organization addressing expected skill imbalances due to attrition, including retirement, over the next five years?
- Where has the organization successfully delegated authority or restructured to reduce the number of layers that a programmatic action passes through before it reaches an authoritative decision point? Where can the organization improve its processes to reduce the number of layers?

## 2. Identify stakeholders and acknowledge their needs.

- Who should be included in plan development? Should a management team oversee development of the workforce plan?
- Who are the organization's strategic partners?

## 3. Develop ways to address skill gaps.

- What needs to be done to address skill gaps? What type of career development and retraining does the organization provide to its employees in order to have a highly skilled workforce? Can these programs be improved upon?
- What strategies and tools are other organizations using to recruit and retain people with the right skills?
- How would management respond if the organization were to downsize?

## 4. Develop a project plan to accomplish determined actions.

- What are the measurable goals and critical milestones for each action item?
- Who will translate the action strategies into a project plan?



## **5. Set specific goals.**

- What timelines and milestones should be established for completion of each item?
- Who should be assigned responsibility for each action item?
- Who will monitor completion of each action item?
- Who will report to senior management on the progress of each action item?

## **6. Communicate the plan to ensure everyone in the department is aware of it.**

- How will the plan be communicated to the workforce?
- How will the organization get buy-in?
- Does management know how the workforce plan is linked to the strategic goals of the organization?

## **7. Evaluate your progress and make needed changes to improve efficiency.**

- Did the action plan accomplish what was needed?
- Have conditions changed so that strategies need to be revised?
- Is another staffing assessment needed?
- Are assumptions about supply and demand still valid?

## **WORKFORCE PLANNING IN FAIRFAX COUNTY**

As implemented in May, 2002, the County is on a semi-annual cycle, with meetings in March and September of each year to allow departments, the Department of Human Resources (DHR), and the Department of Management and Budget (DMB) the opportunity to meet, discuss, and prepare workforce plans for the upcoming six months.

In its simplest terms, workforce planning is getting the right number of people with the right set of competencies in the right jobs at the right time. Getting to this point is facilitated by "Vision to Performance" and "Values to Culture" work at all levels of the organization. This work helps identify key strategies, goals, processes, and behaviors that affect the kind of jobs and the level and breadth of competencies required to achieve the organization's vision and financial management targets.

Departments that have not yet started their vision and values work can begin workforce planning by identifying the "key drivers" of their business area. Key drivers include those internal and external forces that affect the organization's ability to achieve its goals and/or affect how work needs to be performed.

Most departments have some sort of workforce planning effort already taking place. These efforts include the development of plans for staffing and succession, assessments of training needs, strategies and plans for recruitment and retention, and projections for turnover and retirement. The capacity to perform effective workforce planning will take time to develop. Departments may find it helpful to begin planning for a subset of the workforce, and then extend workforce planning through the remainder of the organization.

It is important to note that workforce planning is not an activity or document required by DHR or DMB. Nor is it a static document that tries to predict the future or describe the past. Rather, it is an effort to focus on developing information that can help an organization make decisions for the short term and long term, yet allow for flexibility in a changing environment. The plan is intended to help solve staffing problems related to managed position movement into, around, and out of an organization.

## **Five steps to workforce planning in Fairfax County**

### **1. DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PLAN OR KEY DRIVERS Conducted prior to initial meeting with DHR and DMB**

- Where does the department see itself in 1 year, 3 years, etc?
- Develop list of objectives
- Relate strategic plan/key drivers to workforce and resources
- Develop/update organization chart and applicable position descriptions

### **2. DEPARTMENT COLLABORATES WITH DHR AND DMB IN DEVELOPMENT OF ITS WORKFORCE INITIATIVES**

- Department thinks through strategic initiatives
- Staff from DHR and DMB are available to provide assistance in succession planning, review of turnover statistics, review of trend data, diversity reports, etc.

### **3. DEPARTMENT PROPOSES A PRIORITIZED WORKFORCE PLAN**

- What are the priorities that will enable the department to move toward its organizational objectives and strategic plan?
- What are the objectives/goals/needs for the next six months?
- Opportunities for review might include new grants, reorganization, obsolete functions, career paths, etc.

### **4. REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION POSSIBILITIES**

- Departments should bring organizational charts and other business documents that tie requests to strategic direction of department
- Department, DHR, and DMB meet to review and discuss priorities of department
- Group reviews organizational structure for options and suggestions

- Group breaks to evaluate and analyze department's requests and determine method for accomplishment

During this phase, DHR and DMB will work with departments in order to ensure that all agreed-upon actions are implemented. In turn, the department will communicate within its organization regarding the accomplishment of action items.

Fiscal accountability is a component of successful workforce planning. Personnel Services make up a significant portion of the County's budget and, over time, the budget for Personnel Services is impacted by pay for performance/merits, regrades, reclassifications, hiring of staff above the mid point, etc., and continues to rise. Individual department budgets will continue to be adjusted to reflect the aggregate impact of pay for performance/merits and County mandated actions, while department workforce planning actions will need to be absorbed through holding positions vacant, etc..

## **5. IMPLEMENT WORKFORCE PLAN**

- DHR records and submits a document outlining actions requested by the Department
- DHR creates implementation schedule, outlining responsibilities of various parties in accomplishing Department's human resources initiatives
- On a bi-weekly basis, DHR and DMB submit updates on the status of the workforce plan to departments

**DEPARTMENT MANAGERS, DHR, AND DMB:  
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Department managers involve DHR and DMB early on in strategic and operational planning, while communicating staffing needs to employees so they can take responsibility to learn new skills whenever possible. DHR and DMB work with departments as strategic partners, assisting in the attainment of a highly competent and skilled workforce.

DHR consults with department management, while analyzing the impact of implementing potential strategies on the department's workforce, training programs, and human resource management policies. DHR is available to create and integrate programs and initiatives needed to implement human resources strategies.

DMB consults with department management, while analyzing fiscal impacts of potential strategies, providing technical support, and using strategic plans to guide development of annual budgets.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESS!**

- ✓ Recognize that workforce planning focuses on outcomes from the planning process, more so than the process itself.
- ✓ Integrate human resource planning into the department's strategic plan.
- ✓ Appreciate that workforce planning is an inclusive process, drawing together program management, budget, strategic planning, human resources, and program staffing.
- ✓ Departments, responsible for allocation of resources, should drive the workforce planning process. DHR and DMB are available to help to support department managers by acting as a consultant and resource. This assistance is facilitated when all partners understand the business and business context.
- ✓ The capacity to do effective workforce planning will only be developed over time.

**Sample documents, including real-life case studies, implementation schedules, and a workforce planning calendar have been attached for reference.**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Do I have to meet with DHR and DMB twice per year? What if I don't have any specific requests in mind?**

The workforce planning system, endorsed by the County Executive, is designed to encourage proactive thinking and planning on behalf of County departments. It also fosters increased collaboration between department managers, DHR, and DMB. As noted within this document, **it is not the workforce plan that is as valuable as the planning process itself.**

The workforce planning meeting is intended as a dialogue, during which time departments share industry trends, external and internal factors which are affecting their business, workforce projections, and other factors that have the potential to influence human resource decisions. The meeting is the forum in which department managers, DHR, and DMB brainstorm solutions to human resource decisions to be made by department management. To that end, there is significant value in the meetings, even absent any specific position change requests.

### **Every so often, I get an implementation schedule update. What is this document, and how should it be used?**

On a bi-weekly basis, your Compensation and Workforce Analysis representative will send an updated workforce planning implementation schedule for your review. This schedule is maintained by DHR and DMB, and is provided to keep you updated on the progress of items discussed and agreed to as part of the semi-annual review process. Feel free to use this tool within your department in order to keep interested parties apprised of outstanding items or accomplishments to date.

### **What do I need to bring with me to the workforce planning meeting?**

The most important thing to bring with you to the meeting is the willingness to share information about your department. Remember, the advice and consultation given to you by DHR and DMB is only as good as the insight we have into your department's operations.

If you are requesting a reorganization, current and proposed organization charts are always helpful. If available, updated position descriptions may be shared with the DHR representative as part of the meeting. Retirement projections, when available, are also a helpful tool. In summary, any documentation which you believe helps to frame your request, and justify the need for proceeding with a review of it, is helpful and welcome at the meeting.

**My department managers are extremely busy. Is there any help you can give us in putting together our workforce plan?**

Ideally, departments do not have a formal workforce plan in hand when they meet with the Workforce Planning Team from DHR and DMB. Rather, the meeting is the forum in which to brainstorm and share ideas. As a result of that interaction, a formal workforce plan is developed. At any point in the planning process, whether in advance of the meeting, or during the implementation phase, feel free to call upon the Workforce Planning Team representatives for assistance.

**What tools are made available as part of this process?**

Currently, DHR works with the Retirement Administration in order to provide departments with retirement projections 1, 2, and 3 years out. In addition, a variety of PRISM reports can be made available to assist department managers with the planning process. Types of reports include staffing posture, diversity assessments, and positions broken down by grade level, job class, or a host of other criteria. Feel free to contact your Workforce Planning Team representatives for further information on reports which may be made available to you.

**Is there a tie between workforce planning and strategic planning? It seems like there are a lot of initiatives going on, but I'm not really seeing the connection between them.**

Yes, there is clearly a tie between these two planning efforts. As part of the County Executive's initiative, County departments are in the process of developing strategic plans. Inherent to this effort is the need to consider the human resource implications of your strategic thinking and planning. With any strategic plan or objective, there is typically a human resource component that merits consideration. Departments are likely to achieve the most meaningful results from their planning efforts when there is alignment between their strategic and workforce plans.



**Do I have to wait for a vacancy in order to share a change I'm thinking about making to a position in my department?**

No, you do not have to have a vacancy, or have a certain position identified, in order to request a change to a position at the workforce planning meeting. At the meeting, you are only hypothesizing or assuming "what if", and then designing your organization's human resource decisions around that assumption. When the vacancy or opportunity presents itself, then you submit the necessary paperwork to formalize the action.

**It seems like this is a workload management system for DHR and DMB. What is the value for departments?**

There is clearly value in the workforce planning process for County departments. Having several members at the table willing to listen to your concerns and strategize about meaningful ways in which to solve them can only benefit your organization. Second, by engaging in up-front thinking, your organization is best prepared when that golden opportunity ultimately presents itself. While the semi-annual process may appear to be a workload management system, it is more about engaging in a formalized, proactive planning dialogue.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Although there are many reports on workforce planning, listed here are some self-service web sites where you can see a variety of workforce planning activities ranging from analyses of demographics, to strategic plans, to workforce planning manuals:

State: Georgia  
Topic: Strategic Planning and Workforce Planning  
Web address: <http://www.gms.state.ga.us/agencyervices/wfplanning/index.asp>

State: Kansas  
Topic: Workforce Planning Report  
Web address: <http://da.state.ks.us/ps/documents/00work.pdf>

State: Minnesota  
Topic: Strategic Staffing Guidebook  
Web address: <http://www.doer.state.mn.us/stf-strat/strstf-1.htm>

State: Washington  
Topic: Workforce Planning Manual  
Web address: <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/workforceplanning/index.htm>

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Workforce Planning Resource Guide, Department of Health and Human Services, November, 1999.

## CASE STUDIES

### **CASE STUDY #1 DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE**

In December 2001, the Department of Finance effected a departmental reorganization, which resulted in dismantling two of its divisions, namely Procedures and Controls and Accounting and Reporting. Effective with the reorganization, Central Financial Services, Department of Finance, organized itself into six divisions, namely Accounting Operations, Accounts Payable, Automated Financial Systems, Financial Oversight and Compliance, Financial Reporting, and Special Projects.

In continuation of the first phase of the Department of Finance's reorganization, a request was made at the May 2002 workforce planning meeting to review the accounting positions within the Financial Reporting (FR) division. It had been observed by Finance's senior management that the FR division was experiencing difficulties in retaining fund accountants who work in highly specialized positions (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), Auditors Report for Public Accounts (APA), and Bonds Disclosure). Due to the complexity of these positions, it can take up to two years to become proficient and develop the in-house expertise required in these subject areas. Because these positions were at the Accountant II (S-24) level, the incumbents were leaving the department for promotional opportunities at the S-27 level within other County departments. In order to prevent this movement of key positions, the Department of Finance sought an enhanced career ladder, which would serve to facilitate the retention of these key Accountant II (S-24) positions. This career ladder would serve as the tool for enabling the identified Accountant II positions to move noncompetitively from the S-24 to S-27 grade once they met the requirements for the S-27 level.

DHR, DMB, and the Department of Finance worked collaboratively to arrive at a career retention tool which, through a phased-in approach, established three Accountant III (S-27) positions with a mandatory underfill at the Accountant II (S-24) level.

Concurrent with the above implementation, DHR, DMB, and the Department of Finance worked to further enhance the career ladder for the CAFR, APA, and Bonds Disclosure sections by establishing three Financial Reporting Manager (S-29) positions as managers of these sections. The level of knowledge and expertise required in the Department of Finance is unique due to its centralized

responsibilities, which results in significant training and development. The Department sought to reap the benefit of this investment by developing a career ladder which improves the prospects of retaining the key accounting positions assigned to the Financial Reporting Division.

As a result, three sections which are vital to the success of the Department have career ladders which serve to retain technical expertise at the departmental level, while providing employees with the opportunity for career growth.

This workforce planning effort has offered many benefits, including:

- Benefit to employees in that they have the ability to acquire job-specific skills and expertise, while being able to move noncompetitively to a higher grade. Staff has praised this process and has said that this is definitely an incentive to stay on with the Department and utilize the knowledge gained to better support the mission of the Department of Finance.
- Benefit to the Department of Finance in that it has increased its ability to retain employees who are critical to its success. Morale has been improved, and the Department's management philosophy is empowering and motivating employees.

## **CASE STUDY #2 COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD, ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICES**

During a recent workforce planning meeting, Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS), an agency of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, presented a proposal to consolidate its Supervised Apartment Program and Recovery House. Grant funding for treatment services had remained constant over the past years, while staff salaries and operating costs continued to rise. Until recently, ADS had been able to absorb the cost overruns. However, due to State and County budget cuts, the additional cost could no longer be absorbed without a net decrease in client service.

Recovery House is a halfway house model, requiring residential program coverage several days per week, for 12-18 hours per day; therefore, any elimination of staff positions would render the program ineffective, as criminal clients served by the program would not have adequate supervision or treatment services available to them.

ADS proposed a two-step process to address these concerns. First, grant funding and County funding were to be switched, thus allowing for a cost-per-bed-day purchase congruent with flatlined grant funding. Second, the Recovery House and Supervised Apartment programs were combined. By combining the two programs, appropriate clinical services and supervision could be provided to the clients.

Once the grantor agreed to the transfer of funds to other residential programs, Steps to Recovery, a consolidation of the Supervised Apartment Program and Recovery House, was formed.

The process of making these changes was quite complicated and involved multiple steps. DHR and DMB partnered with the Community Services Board to ensure that the process occurred with minimal program or client disruption. DHR and DMB offered step-by-step guidance on the tasks that needed to be completed, and provided recommendations that allowed the program to incorporate the necessary changes, while adhering to County guidelines regarding positions and budgetary resources. Changes were facilitated quickly, which resulted in better quality client services with minimal staff disruption.

This new model allowed Alcohol and Drug Services to provide a continuum of services, while absorbing the necessary reductions in positions.



### **CASE STUDY #3**

#### **RESTON COMMUNITY CENTER**

As part of its strategic planning efforts, Reston Community Center (RCC) identified the Community Center's main business lines and key factors driving its businesses. The management team determined that its programs should remain the focus in order for RCC to meet the demands of the growing population in the area. In order to continue delivering programs to meet their customers' needs, RCC had to align its positions along these business lines, while recruiting and retaining staff with the right skills and competencies in these positions.

The Executive Director had eight direct reports including the Deputy Director, Comptroller, and Directors of Media and other programs including Aquatics, Seniors, Teens, Youth, Special Events, Classes/Workshops, and the Performing Arts. While the organization chart appeared flat, there was no definition of RCC's business lines.

First, RCC distinguished between its programming function and administrative operations of the Community Center.

With regard to the programs area, RCC categorized the different programs under four main areas: General Programs, including Seniors, Youth, Teens, and Classes/Workshops; Performing Arts, including the Technical/Theatre function, Box Office, and Arts education; Aquatics; and Special Events.

In the programs area, DMB and DHR met with RCC to align positions and resources along business lines. A decision was reached to create a Director of General Programs to oversee the various programming functions.

With regard to administrative operations, there was a Deputy Director who was responsible for oversight of the Center's Customer Service, IT, and Facilities functions, and a Comptroller who was responsible for oversight of the Financial and Human Resources aspects of the Center.

RCC's management team evaluated its external environment (the Community Center is located in an area with multiple food venues) and decided that having a snack bar on site no longer added value to the center, as food services was not one of RCC's business lines.

Also in the operations section, the Deputy Director analyzed the utilization rate of the RCC facility. Through surveying the needs of the business and residential community, the determination was made that there was sufficient room to increase facility usage; as a result, a Facility Booking Manager position was created. This position would serve to reach out to community businesses and

groups, 'sell' event space, optimize RCC's revenue stream, and better manage the facility and scheduling system and calendar. The result has been a significant reduction in the cost of processing a room booking coupled with nearly a 100% increase in booking revenue in FY03.

Positions with new functions (e.g., a backup Finance and HR Specialist) were established and moved under the appropriate businesses, while positions with obsolete functions and skills were eliminated (e.g., Snack Bar Manager). An existing, vacant Administrative Assistant III position was reclassified to Administrative Assistant V, and a corresponding Customer Service Manager position was established within Operations. The Customer Service Manager supervises Front Desk staff at two separate facilities, among other duties, and provides consistency in service delivery for all patrons throughout the community.

The new RCC organizational structure can now capitalize on the Community Center's strengths and help the Department achieve its mission of serving as the Reston community's hub of programs and information, while meeting the needs and demands of the growing community.

**TIMELINE**

January – March     DHR and DMB available to consult as departments put together Workforce Plan.

**March**                 Workforce Planning Sessions are conducted with departments.

April – August        Ongoing consultation and development of strategies to implement workforce planning items.

July – September     DHR and DMB available to consult as departments put together Workforce Plan.

**September**           Workforce Planning Sessions are conducted with departments.

October - February   Ongoing consultation and development of strategies to implement workforce planning items.

# Appendix J

Workforce Planning Implementation Schedule					
Program		AGENCY: ABC			
Area	Priority	Items In Progress	Requested Action	Action Plan	Status
XYZ	Carryover	A/E _____ to _____		ABC to provide DHR with online PD for review	ABC to provide DHR with online PD

Workforce Planning Implementation Schedule				
AGENCY: ABC				
Program: Actions for Implementation March - August, 2003				
Area	Priority	Requested Action	Action Plan	Status
XYZ	1	A/E _____ to _____	Agency to provide online PD, outlining duties of position, to DHR for review	Draft of position duties to be completed by agency by 4/2.

Workforce Planning Implementation Schedule				
AGENCY: ABC				
Program Phased-in Implementation				
Area	Priority	Requested Action	Action Plan	
XYZ	Carryover	Revise/update class specification for _____ classes	ABC to provide proposed spec changes to DHR	ABC to provide proposed spec to DHR
			DHR to review proposed spec changes	
			DHR and ABC to discuss issues related to changes	
			DHR to assess impact of changes; consult with DMB	
			if fiscal impact may exist	
			DHR to coordinate draft of specs with other user agencies,	
			as appropriate	
			DHR to finalize draft of specs and facilitate through official	
			approval process	
			May involve market review of assigned pay grades	