



Self-Assessment Workbook for

Building a
Stable and Quality
Child Welfare
Workforce

Center
for the
Study
of
Social
Policy

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How Much Time And Resources Will It Take To Complete This Workbook?

The process of reviewing the materials and developing an action agenda varies depending on what outcome is desired. For example,

- A 15-20 minute review of the separate sections may be sufficient to trigger ideas and immediate actions from agency leadership; or
- A period of weeks or even months may be necessary to develop more long term action agenda to strengthen or implement strategies. This effort may require establishing a workgroup that meets regularly to discuss and explore application of these materials to current challenges.

Who Needs To Be Involved?

Although this workbook can be used productively by child welfare administrators and staff, it is likely to be a more productive effort if human resource managers are also directly involved. Child welfare administrators alone may not have all of the necessary information to be able to develop and use workforce improvement strategies without enlisting the assistance and support from human resource managers.

By forming a partnership to complete the self-assessment, human resource managers can better understand the unique characteristics of child welfare service delivery. This better understanding should position them to use available policies and practices more effectively or develop new practices to strengthen the child welfare workforce. Innovative leaders in social services and human resources across the country suggest that the self-assessment and developing an action plan is most effective through a partnership. In addition, maintaining a continuous dialogue is an essential catalyst to innovation and developing a strong, effective child welfare workforce.

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About This Workbook

Public child welfare systems are burdened by high, unwanted workforce turnover. In every jurisdiction, this dilemma is costly — both in dollars and human development. For every worker who leaves, the most conservative estimates suggest that \$10,000, will be spent to recruit, hire and train a replacement. More importantly, inadequate staffing directly affects the most vulnerable families and children that the system is designed to help. Successful community outcomes — safe children, strong families, and thriving communities — are more difficult to achieve when staff turnover is constant, replacements are under qualified and poorly prepared, and supervisors lack the skills to coach and lead good practice.

This workbook is designed for child welfare administrators and Human Resource (HR) managers. The guidance focuses on HR management: its direct role in the delivery of high quality services to children and families; the need for HR management to be closely aligned with the mission, values and principles of child welfare; and innovations that are positive, practical steps for developing a successful child welfare workforce.

Why Focus on Human Resource Management?

Public child welfare and other human service agencies can confront their workforce challenges, in part, by maximizing innovative human resource (HR) management policies and practices.

Many counties and states are improving the quality and stability of their public workforce in a number of ways including reengineering HR management policies and practices. These improvements include:

- Developing recruitment guidelines that provide a clear understanding of the job demands;
- Creating more flexible and streamlined hiring procedures that allow candidates to be hired to fill vacancies quickly;
- Providing more incentives and creative recognition programs that encourage the best workers to stay;
- Creating organizational cultures focused on results; and,
- Developing good cooperative relationships between unions and management.

Research and field experience underscore that positive results for children and families are more likely to happen when workers have a good and continuous relationship with the families they serve; are satisfied with their own work environment and supervision; and are empowered to achieve successful outcomes with their clients. Confronting the challenges that impede these conditions through promoting human resource (HR) best practice management philosophies and policies is an important step toward progress.

How can this workbook help?

The self-assessment guide, promising strategies, and suggested action agenda format provide a means for intentionally focusing on improved recruitment and retention of qualified staff. The self-assessment prompts consideration of current operating strengths and constraints. The promising strategies are grounded in best practices that have track records for effectiveness in both the private and public sectors. The action agenda provides a format for identifying and consolidating strategic priorities.

By using this workbook, child welfare agency leaders and their human resource managers are encouraged to consider and seek answers to the following questions:

- How can a more stable, qualified staff be achieved with the human resource support currently available?
- What are the desired HR management practices and strategies that could be implemented?
- What support is needed from HR management to better achieve more effective recruitment and retention?
- What steps are necessary to put this support in place?
- What are the priorities for action?

The Workbook at a Glance

The workbook has five sections that can be used alone or in combination with one another:

STARTING POINT

Through a series of worksheets, this section helps focus on a jurisdiction's environment. Users are asked to compile information about child welfare operations and human resource management support of these operations to develop a picture of the current setting as context for considering work-force improvement strategies.

- **Child Welfare:** Several sources of information may be used here. These sources include the mission, values, principles and desired outcomes of the child welfare agency. These organizational elements have significant influence on recruitment and staff who should be encouraged to stay. Other information about demographics and characteristics help describe who does the work. A description of the agency's relationship with the community it serves helps provide direction for how the community might be engaged in recruitment and retention.

- **Human Resource Management:** The desired information identifies how responsibilities are shared for a selected group of HR activities in order to set the stage for what kind of changes can be done by the child welfare agency alone and what changes will need the support of the designated human resource management authority.

PROMISING STRATEGIES

Continuing the use of the worksheet format, the three other sections identify promising strategies for strengthening:

- **Recruitment and Hiring**
- **Professional Development and Employee Retention**
- **Organizational Culture and Employee Relations**

The worksheets allow users to determine which strategies they are already using and which they would like to try.

Leaders and managers are encouraged to review all of the workbook materials and then start with the set strategies of most interest.

In reviewing the different strategies, users are prompted to:

- Think about their initial reaction to the list – activities that are ongoing and ideas to try in their agencies.
- Consider the strategies that already exist in their agencies and how they can make the most out of these strategies before starting something new.
- Take a deeper look at the strategies they desire to implement in their agency to determine how easily they could be accomplished. Are they:

Readily doable — meaning implementation most likely will not require new money, policy changes or additional capacity;

Feasible with some effort – meaning implementation has fiscal, policy, and/or capacity implications; or

Difficult – meaning the financial resources, policy changes, legislative action, and/or human resource capacity needed for desired actions will be difficult to obtain. (Change is likely to take much longer in this category and the partnership between HR and child welfare is especially critical here.)

One or more of the suggested strategies may already be in place in some jurisdictions, and many others can be implemented with minimal additional investments of time, energy and money. Implementing other strategies will require a sustained commitment from leadership and new funding or potential cost shifting among existing commitments.

ACTION AGENDA

After completing the self-assessment and reviewing the promising strategies, leaders and managers can begin to set priorities and develop an action agenda to strengthen existing policies and practices and implement new strategies. In developing an agenda for action, it is likely that all three levels of effort (readily doable, feasible, or difficult) will be needed to respond to different challenges. The more complex the challenge, the more collaborative work arrangements and team-based problem solving between child welfare agencies and human resource departments becomes necessary.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

This section includes:

- A Human Resource Management Glossary
- A List of National Organizations and Tools

Starting Point

This section is designed to help users create a “snapshot” of the factors that influence child welfare workforce development. The snapshot is formed from information about both child welfare and human resource (HR) management operations and the larger community in which the agency operates.

How much information is needed to create the snapshot? If the self-assessment process is used on a state level, information should reflect the entire state. If the process is used on a regional or county level, information used should reflect regional or county operations. Gather information that is readily available and accessible, which for the most part, includes very basic elements of existing operations. Compiling the basic elements, however, may lead to more questions and a need for more information. “Going deeper”—asking more questions, compiling more information – can result in a fuller baseline for taking more comprehensive action. The depth and expansiveness depends on the characteristics of the jurisdiction.

OUR CHILD WELFARE SETTING: What we do, who we are, workforce development challenges we face, and our relationship with the community

Worksheet 1 guides users to compile information about the agency’s 1) mission, 2) values, 3) principles, and 4) desired outcomes for the children and families it serves. It prompts users to consider the degree to which these elements are clearly understood by existing staff and potential job candidates.

Additional helpful information includes:

- **Practice model:** these are agency expectations for working with families and communities;
- **Job analysis:** that focuses on the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to accomplish the work;
- **Job descriptions;** and,
- **Staffing projections** for new positions based on caseload projections.

Worksheet 2 requires data about the demographics and characteristics of the current workforce.

Worksheet 3 prompts users to consider a list of common stumbling blocks to the development of a high quality workforce.

Worksheet 4 asks users to consider the environment in which the agency operates and its relationship to the community it serves, the courts and the media because they can all influence workforce quality and stability.

OUR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SETTING: Functions and responsible parties

Organizationally, where is the HR management authority lodged? Is it in the child welfare agency (or its “parent” Department of Human Services) or is it centralized in a jurisdiction-wide personnel (Civil Service) agency? Or, is there some combination of centralized and decentralized authority? This is a critical element to know before beginning this work. The distribution of roles and responsibilities has implications for change and who should be involved in making changes and adopting new strategies. The greater authority the child welfare agency has internally gives it greater discretion and flexibility to implement HR practices. More centralized authority potentially requires lengthier and more involved negotiation to make changes because any change can have implications for other agencies within the jurisdiction.

Worksheet 5 helps leaders reflect on and identify who is responsible for a variety of typical HR activities. Not every topic mentioned is relevant in all locations, and there are no “right” or “wrong” ways to accomplish most of these functions. However, if many HR tasks are not being done by anyone, then important methods in the “care and feeding” of the workforce are likely to be ignored.

WORKSHEET 1: Elements for Designing a Good Fit Between Agency and Candidates

A “good fit” between an employee and the organization relies first and foremost on the individual’s comfort with the organization’s mission, stated values and principles, and clarity about what the organization is attempting to accomplish. Compile the following elements and consider how clear they are, both internally and externally: 1) Mission, 2) Values, 3) Principles, 4) Desired outcomes for children and families resulting from the organization’s efforts.

Using this worksheet, assess how clear are these elements.
 (Check the most applicable score for each one)

Organizational Element	Degree of Clarity within the Organization				
	Designate degree the element is clear throughout the organization using the designated scale				
	1=Not clear to anyone	2=Clear to a few; not clear to majority	3=Do not know	4=Clear to most; muddy for a few	5=Clear to all
Mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Principles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desired Outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Can these elements be clearly communicated to potential candidates? Do you know what candidate characteristics will be compatible with these elements?

WORKSHEET 2: Demographics and Characteristics of Current Workforce

Demographics	Data
Average age	
Racial distribution	
Gender distribution	
Typical educational attainment	
Average years of employment with this agency	
Characteristics	Data
Caseload sizes	
Annual turnover rate	
Staffing patterns (percent in each function: management, supervision, frontline, administrative support)	
Current percentage of authorized positions that are vacant	

WORKSHEET 3: Common Workforce Development Stumbling Blocks

Consider the question, *What do we need to fix? Are any of these familiar? The promising strategies contained in worksheets 6, 7, and 8 will suggest ways of addressing many of these problems.*

Current Child Welfare Workforce Development Stumbling Blocks	Comments
Inadequate pool of qualified candidates	
Hiring freezes	
Non-competitive starting salaries	
Non-competitive benefits package	
Slow and cumbersome hiring	
High turnover among workers we want to stay	
Lack of professional development opportunity and growth	
Limited career ladder	
Inflexible work schedules	
Few incentives for exceptional performance	
Inadequately qualified managers and/supervisors	
Non-supportive work environment	
High levels of grievances	
Grievance resolution is adversarial	

WORKSHEET 4: Community Relations

Check the circle that best describes the specific aspect of community relations

Aspects of Community Relations	Very Good	Fair	Poor
Our agency image in the community is ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our relationship with neighborhood leaders is ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our relationship with local media is ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our relationship with the local judges and court administration is ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our relationship with local institutions of higher education is ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

WORKSHEET 5: Human Resource Management Activities/ Functions and Responsible Parties

Who Takes Primary Responsibility for the listed activities/functions? (check all possible circles)

	Activity Not Occurring	Primary Responsible Party			Involves Union Management
		Human Resource Agency (Civil Service Agency)	Agency	Joint/Both	
CLASSIFICATIONS AND JOB COMPETENCIES					
Setting Minimum Job Qualifications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing Job Descriptions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining/Updating the Classification (Career) System	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RECRUITMENT AND HIRING					
Establishing Personnel Ceilings (FTEs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advertising for Vacant Positions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Testing or Pre-screening Applicants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interviewing Applicants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making Final Selection Decision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
COMPENSATION AND MONETARY REWARDS					
Establishing Starting Salary Levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allocating Raises and Bonuses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing Incentive Systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implementing Incentive Systems (Decide Who Gets What)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND PERSONNEL ACTION					
Developing/Maintaining/ Updating Performance Appraisal System	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deciding Who Gets Promoted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Processing Grievances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reviewing Adverse Personnel Actions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING					
Providing Orientation for New Workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing Training/ Professional Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Delivering Training/ Professional Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
WORK PLACE FLEXIBILITY					
Developing and Approving Flexible Schedules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Approving Job Sharing and Similar Arrangements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Promising Strategies

Recruitment and Hiring

Good recruiting requires a logical plan and structure. Failure to think about how the hiring process works for those desiring to be hired can overlook some important barriers to getting the right people at the right time. Organizations often do not have the information and/or analyses they need to adequately define desired candidate qualifications or offer a realistic job preview to potential candidates. The lack of investment in good candidate selection only compounds retention problems. Exploring how recruitment and hiring can be improved while still adhering to essential legal and professional standards is an important and valuable part to making long-term improvements in workforce development.

The recruitment and hiring strategies are organized into the following five clusters:

Defining Job Qualifications. Well-defined job qualifications better ensure a good “fit” between the candidate and the job. This includes knowing what knowledge and skills to look for in a candidate rather than relying solely on a degree, certification, or test. Knowledge and skills include language and cultural competencies. The mission, values, principles, outcomes, and practice standards, and an established core competency model are particularly important to defining job qualifications.

Outreach. Many organizations rely on posting job openings in newspapers, trade journals, and on college campuses and wait for candidates to apply. An organized outreach program reflects a targeted and aggressive recruitment effort in communities and at colleges and universities. Active outreach is often needed to achieve a more diverse candidate pool, one that reflects the diversity of families being served.

Job Previews. When candidates withdraw, the agency is saved from spending already scarce resources on evaluating, hiring, training, and replacing that candidate when their expectations are not realized. Mechanisms that allow potential candidates to better understand a “day in the life” of a typical human services worker, gives them an opportunity to “self-select.” In other words, they are able to decide for themselves if this is a job they want to pursue.

Application and Hiring. Cumbersome hiring procedures continue to be a significant competitive disadvantage for jurisdictions. Many job seekers drop out before completing the application process. Streamlined application and hiring processes better ensure that the “good ones” do not get away because they become impatient with the wait. A focus on the interview process is also important. Too often interviews are not effectively used to assess the “goodness of fit” because questions are not designed to capture insight about necessary behaviors and/or misunderstandings about what is legally allowed. There needs to be a balance between “selling the job” to the candidate and rigor in assessing the candidate’s potential.

Entry Level Compensation and Monetary Incentives. Research indicates that most employees are not primarily motivated by pay, irrespective of the sector in which they work. This appears to be true overall for human services as well. However, if a worker’s pay is seriously out of line compared to peers, or if an agency’s compensation is generally low compared to the sector as a whole, there will likely be fewer candidates from which to select. Compensation structures such as broadbanding or hiring bonuses are generally jurisdiction-wide and are difficult for the child welfare agency alone to change.

Review the strategies in these clusters going as deep with the assessment as you choose following the suggested prompts:

Prompt	Assessment Activity
Initial Reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check off the strategies you are already doing. • Check off the strategies you are interested in trying.
Second Take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have enough information to make a decision? • What more do you need? How can you get it? • Who has primary responsibility – Child Welfare operations or Human Resource management? • Are we making the most of what we are doing? What, if anything, could you strengthen in how the existing strategies are being applied?
Deeper Look	<p>Use the suggested numerical scoring to estimate how difficult it will be to strengthen existing strategies or implement new ones:</p> <p>1 = Readily doable Efforts will likely not require new money, policy changes, or capacity. Depending upon the structure of the agency’s HR management support, most changes of this nature can be accomplished with relative ease by the child welfare agency because the authority already resides within the agency.</p> <p>2 = Feasible but will take some effort Efforts that have possible fiscal policy, capacity, and implications for implementation. This strategy will generally require the cooperation of a HR management authority, whether it is directly in the child welfare agency or is external — such as the County or State HR Office, or the commitment of a few financial resources.</p> <p>3 = Difficult HR capacity, policy changes, legislative action, and/or financial resources are needed to implement this strategy. This level of action is the most challenging. Change is likely to take much longer to achieve.</p>
So What?	<p>Ready to Develop an Action Plan for Improving Recruitment and Hiring?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine which existing strategies need to be strengthened and which new strategies should be pursued. • Set priorities among the chosen strategies. • Go to the Action Agenda section of the package to further develop the steps you will take.

WORKSHEET 6: Recruitment and Hiring Strategy Assessment

Starred (*) items have been shown to be most effective in some jurisdictions

	Already Doing	Interested in doing	How difficult would it be to strengthen / implement? 1 = Readily doable 2 = Feasible but will take some effort 3 = Difficult
DEFINING JOB QUALIFICATIONS			
Formal job analysis using a staff survey approach and validated by subject matter experts to identify tasks, responsibilities and qualifications needed, keyed off organizational goals, existing work demands, and the language and cultural characteristics of the children and families served.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Informal Job analysis using focus groups to collect information about tasks, responsibilities and qualifications needed for the job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Job competencies based on case practice standards, an established core competency model, and the language and cultural characteristics of the children and families served.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
OUTREACH			
*Employee referral bonus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
*Continuous recruitment (hiring takes place continually, whether or not a vacancy has been declared, allowing a “surplus” of caseworkers to fill in for workers who are temporarily absent.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Targeted recruitment that aims to fill diversity or educational gaps including on-site visits and job postings are aggressively distributed to potential applicants, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • newspapers that specifically serve the communities of greatest need; • professional societies; or • client and community groups. 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Job announcements and related information are posted on the Internet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Recruiters regularly go to colleges and employment fairs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Internships/ community service opportunities are available to high school students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
High schools and community colleges in specific communities are targeted for recruitment efforts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Partnerships with one or more schools of social work that allows the agency to provide 1) advice and guidance about curriculum; 2) field instruction; 3) practicum settings; 4) guest lecturers, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Recruitment of part-time employees among retirees from public and private sectors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3

Continued on page 12

WORKSHEET 6: Recruitment and Hiring Strategy Assessment

Starred (*) items have been shown to be most effective in some jurisdictions

	Already Doing	Interested in doing	How difficult would it be to strengthen / implement? 1 = Readily doable 2 = Feasible but will take some effort 3 = Difficult		
JOB PREVIEWING					
*Internships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
*Realistic job video: for example “A typical day in the life of a child welfare worker”.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Temporary assignments: “job shadowing” by prospective workers or job rotation opportunities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Professional development that allows individuals to proceed through a series of jobs and educational requirements that provide greater exposure to field work and acquisition of skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Brochures or Internet sites that describe the mission and work of public child welfare.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
APPLICATION AND HIRING					
*Accessible applications, examples: • <i>On-line job applications.</i> • <i>Multiple locations for exams/applications if they are not available on-line.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
*Hiring decisions are made in the child welfare agency (no external approval required.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
No limitations on the number of candidates that can be interviewed (i.e. no “rule of 3”.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Competency-based, behavioral interviewing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
On-the-spot hiring authority – recruiters are empowered to make offers to qualified candidates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
ENTRY LEVEL COMPENSATION/INCENTIVES					
*Competitive wage and benefits package.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Pay differentials for unique competencies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
*Broadbanding or the ability to offer higher entry-level classifications to increase entry level salary flexibility particularly for those who have previous relevant experience or particular language or cultural competencies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Hiring bonus.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Education loan forgiveness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

Promising Strategies

Professional Development and Employee Retention

Many of the most ambitious human resources (HR) reforms have zeroed in on the factors that employees weigh most heavily when they are deciding whether to stay with or leave their public child welfare agency job.

Why Employees Stay:

- **Commitment to children and families**
- **Being part of a good team**
- **Being trusted with responsibility**
- **Recognition for contributions**
- **Opportunities for:**
 - Achievement
 - Personal growth
 - Career advancement
 - Making a difference

Why Employees Leave. Research indicates that the top reasons employees leave are poor supervision, unmanageable workloads, lack of job autonomy, unacceptable working conditions, and low pay—especially if it is low compared to similar positions in other human services agencies.

The development and retention strategies are organized into the following four clusters:

Supervision: Supervision is a critical element in retention – caseworkers leave their supervisors, not their jobs. These strategies apply to the quality of direct supervision staff receive.

Training and Development: Training often focuses on procedures rather than skills. In addition, training is too often seen as a “fix” or a punishment rather than an opportunity for professional growth. Approached differently, continuing education can play an important role in retaining staff. Training programs should focus on competencies that employees need to be effective in their work and tied to strategic needs of the organization. Training and development efforts should focus on helping to create a learning environment by ensuring that staff receive opportunities to increasingly build and enhance skills.

Leadership Development: Effective leadership may be the single most important factor in an organization’s ability to be effective; therefore this cluster refers to the intentional support and “grooming” of leadership skills among supervisors and mid-level managers.

Wage and Benefits Structure: A national survey of human services workers has suggested that their good will and motivation to serve those who are in need is exploited with very low salaries. Although individuals are not drawn to the child welfare field because of the pay, salary does play a role. Additionally, sometimes the only way for people to receive greater compensation is to be promoted. A promotion, however, is not always the best career move for the individual or the organization. Some strategies allow more flexibility than others to provide an adequate salary for acceptable performance and to recognize and reward exceptional performance. Some agencies also use financial incentives to encourage people to stay through the early years—2 to 3—when turnover is often at its highest.

Review the strategies in these clusters going as deep with the assessment as you choose following the suggested prompts:

Prompt	Assessment Activity
Initial Reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check off the strategies you are already doing. • Check off the strategies you are interested in trying.
Second Take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have enough information to make a decision? • What more do you need? How can you get it? • Who has primary responsibility – Child Welfare operations or Human Resource management? • Are we making the most of what we are doing? What, if anything, could you strengthen in how the existing strategies are being applied?
Deeper Look	<p>Use the suggested numerical scoring to estimate how difficult it will be to strengthen existing strategies or implement new ones of interest.</p> <p>1 = Readily doable Efforts will likely not require new money, policy changes, or capacity. Depending upon the structure of the agency’s HR management support, most changes of this nature can be accomplished with relative ease by the child welfare agency because the authority already resides within the agency.</p> <p>2 = Feasible but will take some effort Efforts that have possible fiscal policy, capacity, and implications for implementation. This strategy will generally require the cooperation of a HR management authority, whether it is directly in the child welfare agency or is external — such as the County or State HR Office, or the commitment of a few financial resources.</p> <p>3 = Difficult HR capacity, policy changes, legislative action, and/or financial resources are needed to implement this strategy. This level of action is the most challenging. Change is likely to take much longer to achieve.</p>
Now What?	<p>Ready to Develop an Action Plan for Improving Professional Development and Retention?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine which existing strategies need to be strengthened and which new strategies should be pursued. • Set priorities among the chosen strategies. • Go to the Action Agenda section of the package to further develop the steps you will take.

WORKSHEET 7: Professional Development and Employee Retention Strategy Assessment

Starred (*) items have been shown to be most effective in some jurisdictions

	Already Doing	Interested in doing	How difficult would it be to strengthen / implement? 1 = Readily doable 2 = Feasible but will take some effort 3 = Difficult		
*SUPERVISION					
Coaching and mentoring skills are valued and recognized	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Policies for regular supervisor case consultations with staff for tracking service results.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Mechanism for two-way communication with supervisors and managers (staff meetings, case consultations, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT					
*Thorough system of new employee orientation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Competency based curriculum for all positions. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Engagement</i> • <i>Communication and facilitation</i> • <i>Behavioral objective setting in plans</i> 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
*Mentoring program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
On-site training beyond new worker basic training, examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supervisory level courses</i> • <i>Leadership preparation courses</i> • <i>Special training facility</i> • <i>"Virtual College" for employees (a selection of on-line courses)</i> 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Tuition assistance for job-related degrees and continuing professional education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Professional development programs, examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Professional membership dues assistance</i> • <i>Subsidized travel to professional conferences</i> • <i>Journal subscriptions</i> • <i>Subsidized continuing education opportunities</i> 	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
• Partnerships with universities provide classes and/or degree credits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

Continued on page 16

WORKSHEET 7: Professional Development and Employee Retention Strategy Assessment

Starred (*) items have been shown to be most effective in some jurisdictions

	Already Doing	Interested in doing	How difficult would it be to strengthen / implement? 1 = Readily doable 2 = Feasible but will take some effort 3 = Difficult
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT			
Succession planning and implementation (promising leaders are identified early and given appropriate opportunities.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Leadership training, examples: • <i>Formal mentor program</i> • <i>Leadership academy</i> • <i>Job shadowing program</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Special course curriculum for prospective leaders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
WAGE AND BENEFITS STRUCTURE			
*Adequate Salary, examples: • <i>Cost of Living Adjustments keep pace with inflation.</i> • <i>Valued workers can be reassigned to new duties to increase compensation.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Pay bands are sufficiently wide to allow employees with superior skills in direct practice to receive appropriate compensation without requiring a promotion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Pay for performance, examples: • <i>Bonus for accomplishment.</i> • <i>Differential pay linked to performance appraisal.</i> • <i>Pay linked to skill (or licensure) acquisition.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3
Retention/Length of Stay Incentives for staying a certain period of time, such as 3 or more years, examples: • <i>Monetary bonus</i> • <i>Paid time off/sabbatical/discretionary leave</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3

Promising Strategies

Organizational Culture and Employee Relations

Organizational culture and employee relations exercise significant influence on “agencies’ ability to recruit and retain staff as well as make long-lasting workforce changes. This is particularly true for child welfare. Research has shown that positive work environments compliment and encourage worker activities that lead to success with families. Furthermore, culture and relationships are most within the control of leadership. Improving organizational culture and employee relations does not rely on changes to administrative rules and regulations. Ultimately, an important proxy for the quality of an agency’s management is the extent to which worker attitudes are taken into account when significant decisions are made. Today’s challenges provide an excellent catalyst for an enhanced conversation among all child welfare workers, whether management or labor.

The organizational culture and employee relations strategies are organized into the following three clusters:

- 1. Quality of Work Life Programs:** Caseworkers and supervisors have tough jobs. These strategies provide for staff work-related needs, respond supportively when tragedies occur, and demonstrate that good work is valued. They also offer differing support based on generational or family responsibilities. The workforce represents different age groups and different life stages. Recognizing and responding to different employee needs can enhance both recruitment and retention.
- 2. Performance Appraisal and Career Management:** Performance appraisal systems are often perceived as being arbitrary and ineffective, or just additional paper work. An effective performance appraisal system focuses on strengthening individual skills, knowledge, and abilities, and an assessment of what additional training, coaching, and mentoring is necessary to help employees set and achieve career goals. Performance evaluations should be aligned with mission, values, and practice standards of the agency.
- 3. Labor-Management Cooperation:** There are numerous instances in which unions have served as spurs and/or eager participants in the change process. On the flip side, organizations too often experience adversarial labor-management relationships that are not likely to be productive for either management or labor.

Review the strategies in this section going as deep with the assessment as you choose following the suggested prompts:

Prompt	Assessment Activity
Initial Reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check off the strategies you are already doing. • Check off the strategies you are interested in trying.
Second Take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have enough information to make a decision? • What more do you need? How can you get it? • Who has primary responsibility – Child Welfare operations or Human Resource management? • Are you making the most of what we are doing? What, if anything, could you strengthen in how the existing strategies are being applied?
Deeper Look	<p>Use the suggested numerical scoring to estimate how difficult it will be to strengthen existing strategies or implement new ones of interest.</p> <p>1 = Readily doable Efforts will likely not require new money, policy changes, or capacity. Depending upon the structure of the agency’s HR management support, most changes of this nature can be accomplished with relative ease by the child welfare agency because the authority already resides within the agency.</p> <p>2 = Feasible but will take some effort Efforts that have possible fiscal policy, capacity, and implications for implementation. This strategy will generally require the cooperation of a HR management authority, whether it is directly in the child welfare agency or is external — such as the County or State HR Office, or the commitment of a few financial resources.</p> <p>3 = Difficult HR capacity, policy changes, legislative action, and/or financial resources are needed to implement this strategy. This level of action is the most challenging. Change is likely to take much longer to achieve.</p>
Now What?	<p>Ready to Develop an Action Plan for Improving Organizational Culture and Employee Relations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine which existing strategies need to be strengthened and which new strategies should be pursued. • Set priorities among the chosen strategies. • Go to the Action Agenda section of the package to further develop the steps you will take.

WORKSHEET 8: Organizational Culture and Employee Relations Strategy Assessment

Starred (*) items have been shown to be most effective in some jurisdictions

	Already Doing	Interested in doing	How difficult would it be to strengthen / implement? 1 = Readily doable 2 = Feasible but will take some effort 3 = Difficult		
QUALITY OF WORK LIFE PROGRAMS					
*New work arrangements, examples: • <i>Flexible scheduling options</i> • <i>Case teaming</i> • <i>Compressed work week</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Worker safety measures, such as teaming policies, arrangements with law enforcement, and cell phones.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Adequate and sufficient technology support such as fully functional office equipment, computers, and vehicle fleets.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
*Employee recognition, examples: • <i>Regular nonmonetary awards for efforts "above and beyond the call."</i> • <i>Bonus for special or exemplary effort.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Continuous program of work place improvements, example: • <i>Periodic employee attitude surveys that lead to improvements.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Designated work teams / committees to work on office issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Programs and benefits geared to different workforce age segments and/or family responsibilities, for example: • <i>Child care support</i> • <i>Elder care support</i> • <i>Wellness programs</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND CAREER MANAGEMENT					
Performance appraisal system is • <i>Based on tangible, behaviorally defined, and realistic goals;</i> • <i>Aligned with practice standards and defined core competencies;</i> • <i>Linked to valued outcomes, such as child well-being;</i> • <i>Well-communicated to employees including distributing tools and forms to be used; and</i> • <i>Considered to provide objective and valid assessments.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Appraisals use 360-degree evaluation method (by superiors, peers, subordinates, and perhaps clients.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Job movement and promotions based on equity considerations, examples: • <i>Promotions are based on objective measures (performance.)</i> • <i>Job opportunities are made widely known to the incumbent workforce.</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

Continued on page 20

WORKSHEET 8: Organizational Culture and Employee Relations Strategy Assessment

Starred (*) items have been shown to be most effective in some jurisdictions

Already Doing	Interested in doing	How difficult would it be to strengthen / implement? 1 = Readily doable 2 = Feasible but will take some effort 3 = Difficult
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- *Career ladder(s)
- *A clear and achievable progression of career options is evident.*
 - *Workers are developed for leadership and advancement.*
 - *Options are available for clinical as well as administrative advancement.*

1 2 3

- Flexible career system/classification scheme, examples:
- *Broadbanding (job classifications are fluid and wide.)*
 - *Supervisors have significant discretion in worker assignments.*
 - *Workers have some choice in their assignments.*

1 2 3

LABOR-MANAGEMENT COOPERATION

- Established mechanism for resolving staff grievances and resolving problems, such as a Labor-Management Committee.

1 2 3

- Training is encouraged and provided for supervisors working with staff around grievances and convening meetings to resolve disputes.

1 2 3

- Consensus Bargaining is used:
- *Negotiations are conducted in good faith and establishes trust, respect and mutual understanding of each side's needs and goals.*
 - *Non-adversarial tone between management and labor*
 - *Employee attitudes are solicited and used in discussions*

1 2 3

- Productive bargaining is used:
- *Clear objectives are set for every bargaining topic/item, and everyone understands the reason(s) for each.*
 - *Measure each bargaining chip by its objective.*
 - *Consider the impact of bargaining on future years.*
 - *Grievances are mediated and settled rather than arbitrated or "litigated"*

1 2 3

3. What human resource management practices would we like to have available that we do not have now?

Consider the new strategies you identified:

- What is needed from HR to better support achievement of more effective recruitment and retention?
- How can this support be put into place?
- What is a realistic timeframe for putting the changes in place? Can some be done in the next 3-6 months? Will some take longer?
- Do the roles and responsibilities identified in the Starting Point need to change?

Using the chart below, create a general plan for implementing the new strategies you identified.

Strategy	What has to happen?	Who will be responsible?	Timeframe?

References and Resources

Glossary of Human Resource Management Terms and Concepts¹

Adverse Personnel Action

Any action by an employer that results in a loss or disadvantageous change in work condition for the employee; typically, the legal definition of adverse action is confined to those personnel decisions (termination, demotion, significant change in job assignment) for which a grievance may be filed. The current trend under reinvention is to reduce the range of adverse actions so as to provide public managers with expanded flexibility in the use of human resources.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

The use of less formal procedures to resolve conflicts. A widespread phenomenon in many legal areas (landlord/tenant disputes, child custody), ADR is also very popular in HRM as a means of expediting the handling of grievances. Many jurisdictions now require that grievances be mediated prior to the holding of a formal hearing.

Annual Turnover Rate:

See Turnover

Attitude Surveys

An increasingly popular means of probing the thoughts of citizens and/or employees by distributing questionnaires; the instruments solicit feedback on satisfaction levels with the work environment, modes of supervision, pay, employment policies, and any number of related topics. Attitude surveys are a highly effective means of taking the temperature of the labor force, and can be inexpensively designed and administered (e.g., distributed in pay envelopes on an annual or semi-annual basis). Anonymity is essential for reliable results.

Behaviorally-Anchored Rating Scale (BARS)

More advanced form of the classic rating scale used in performance evaluation; BARS include descriptive phrases of various levels of performance in order to provide the evaluator with “anchors” that focus judgments and improve the validity of the evaluation process. For example, if the trait “meeting deadlines” is being assessed, a behaviorally-anchored set of options might include “the employee can be counted on to always meet deadlines and even turn projects in early,” to “the employee fails to meet critical deadlines even when verbally warned by the supervisor.”

Benefits Package: see Cafeteria Plan; Defined Benefit Plan; Defined Contribution Plan; Fringe Benefits

Bonus

A means of providing financial rewards to employees. Bonuses imply one-time payments; the salary “increase” does not become part of the worker’s base salary. For this reason, politicians are attracted to the use of bonuses, whereas insightful employees are not as enthusiastic. A relatively new phenomenon is the use of on-the-spot bonuses (\$50, \$100, \$500) that supervisors can grant to employees who perform above and beyond the call of duty. These are popular among employees, largely because of the psychological impact rather than the instrumental reward.

Bounties

The payment of financial rewards to incumbent employees who recommend candidates for jobs in high-need fields, such as nursing and information technology. A form of job referral that is growing within government, a typical bounty system will pay the referring employee \$500 or \$1000 after the new worker is hired and placed in a position, and then an additional amount when that person completes the probationary period. Long used as an essential means of recruitment in the private sector, worker referrals are just now becoming common in public agencies.

Broadbanding

Probably the most significant innovation in job classification and pay, broadbanding has two facets. First, the number of narrow job classifications is reduced in order to define positions more broadly (e.g., instead of Accounting Technicians 1-5, and Accountants 1-5, the only job description would be “Accountant”). Second, the old system of multiple pay grades is collapsed into broad bands that contain enormous salary ranges. With the creation of a broadband system, managers have much greater flexibility in hiring new workers at higher salaries, in changing the job assignments of employees, and in granting significant pay increases to meritorious workers.

Cafeteria Plan

A popular approach to benefits management in which employees are permitted to select from among a menu of benefit options. The employer generally sets an outer limit (usually a predetermined percentage of the

employee's salary, such as 30%), and then the worker is free to allocate that amount among such options as life insurance, medical insurance, retirement contributions, daycare, and the like. This approach to benefits management is extraordinarily popular because it eliminates the "one size fits all" approach and permits employees with differing objectives and responsibilities to take control over their own finances.

Career System

A generic means of referring to any personnel system that contains an identifiable career ladder and visible promotional opportunities. Implicit in the concept is that employees are pursuing careers, meaning that they enjoy some form of job protection and are provided (ideally) with enrichment opportunities (training, job rotation, etc.)

Civil Service

A general term used to connote the public personnel system. To some, the concept implies public employees generally, whereas others interpret it to mean the single-point-of-entry format in which applicants are screened through highly elaborate entry systems and then provided with high levels of career protections once hired.

Classification

The fundamental building block of classical HRM systems in government, job classification is a vestige of the Scientific Management School (Frederick Taylor). It involves a job analysis to assess the essential character and value of the job being performed, the creation of a job description to delineate job duties, the arrangement of similar jobs into classes, and the assignment of pay scales based on the goal of "equal pay for equal work." Job classification ultimately came to be viewed as highly restrictive on managerial discretion, and an impediment to reassignments and to rewarding good performers. Although still very common, they are being reconfigured through broadbanding, senior executive service systems, and related strategies.

Collective Bargaining

Unlike their counterparts in the private sector, public workers are not covered by the Wagner or Taft-Hartley Acts (National Labor Relations Acts). The choice as to whether or not they are empowered to engage in collective bargaining with their employers rests with federal, state, and local political authorities. Unless their political leaders proactively grant collective bargaining privileges, public employees have no right to demand that management engage in discussions over

working conditions, salaries, and the like. Thus, the range of topics that public employees can bargain over in unionized settings ranges from almost nothing, to the full range of issues that arise in business and industry. Many states grant no collective bargaining rights at all, which essentially means that public employee unions are nonexistent in those settings.

Competency-Based

Competencies are the knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes and other characteristics associated with or predictive of superior job performance. Selection of new employees is done based on these competencies rather than solely on credentials or years of experience. Once an employee is hired, these same competencies become the underlying basis for performance feedback, evaluation, and the employee's professional development. The objective is hire someone who is a "good fit" with the job requirements and to ensure that money spent on training and employee development is truly focused on content that enhances relevant employee competencies.

Compressed Workweek

A form of flextime that permits employees to work more than an eight hour day in order to reduce the total number of days worked each week.

Consensus Bargaining

Where any form of collective bargaining exists, consensus bargaining offers the potential to create a win-win relationship for both management and labor. The idea is to establish labor-management partnerships through the bargaining process. In so doing, a collaborative problem-solving approach is used instead of the adversarial model that typifies labor-management relations elsewhere.

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

Automatic pay increases that are tied to some measure of economic activity, such as the Consumer Price Index. A traditional fixture in public pay systems, COLAs are becoming less common as the pressures for merit-based pay increases build.

Defined Benefit Plan

A form of pension, defined benefit plans exist primarily in government (their use in the private sector has almost ended, and there is a likelihood that they will come under increasing fire in public agencies). A worker's pension is guaranteed, and fixed to a formula that is usually driven by the number of years worked, a given percentage multiplier (e.g., 2% is common), and the highest salary earned as computed in many

ways (highest year, highest twelve consecutive quarters, and the like). Compared to defined contribution plans, these are considered to be unduly generous, expensive to the public, and the source of a huge amount of unfunded liability (i.e., insufficient funds exist in the pension program to pay off promised benefits, a difference that will be made up by taxpayers). Although expensive, they represent one of (if not the) most powerful inducements for individuals to pursue a public service career.

Defined Contribution Plan

The ascendant option to defined benefit plans, employees in a defined contribution pension system make their own choices about how their retirement contributions will be invested. Employers provide matching funds, but take no active role in investment decisions. The employers' liability is thereby limited to whatever matching funds have been promised. Once the employee severs service, the employer's obligation to that worker ceases.

Education Loan Forgiveness:

See Loan Forgiveness

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

A relatively recent fixture in large jurisdictions, EAPs provide an outlet to workers who need help dealing with personal and/or professional problems. One of the personnel functions that is most likely to be outsourced, EAPs are usually targeted at substance abuse, mental difficulties, marital and family discord, and behavioral problems (anger management). Most research shows that they pay for themselves by returning troubled workers to a productive status.

Employee Attitude Surveys:

See Attitude Surveys

Employee Referral Bonus:

See Bounties

Flextime

Work schedules that grant employees some flexibility in determining their hours of work. Highly advantageous for workers with children or other family obligations, flextime has been found to be one of the most expedient means of promoting worker satisfaction at almost no cost.

Flexplace

Allowing employees to work at home or some other off-site setting. This is becoming far more common thanks to computer technology, the travails of commuting in large cities, and the simple fact that one's presence in a central office is no longer a necessity for many organizations

Fringe Benefits

Those components of an employee's compensation package that are not formally counted as "salary." On average, different kinds of insurance, pensions, and other benefits cost public agencies about 35% of every employee's total salary.

Grievance

A formal complaint lodged by an employee concerning any adverse action as defined in the jurisdiction's enabling legislation and/or personnel manual. Grievances ordinarily are first heard by a group of employees assembled for that purpose, who then make a recommendation to the governing body of the jurisdiction (or to the city manager, county manager, etc.). The array of grievable matters varies greatly, but the trend is toward narrowing the number. For example, reinvention has resulted in transfers and reassignments being removed from the list of potential trouble spots. In contrast, unions persistently seek to expand the number of grievable concerns, extending even into areas such as office assignments and supervisory demeanor.

Hiring

The process by which employees are recruited and selected into the organization. Sometimes referred to as "staffing," this function is often one of the most serious obstacles to public agency performance. Due to excessive civil service restrictions covering such processes as job notification, waiting times, authorization cycles, and the like, the hiring process can take so long that it drives away good applicants.

Hiring Freezes

Prohibition on hiring often employed by public sector agencies during tight fiscal periods.

Incentives

Any strategy or benefit that is used to encourage improved performance from employees. Extrinsic incentives, such as raises and bonuses, are the standard methods of boosting morale and output. The current trend is toward greater use of intrinsic incentives (various forms of recognition, or developmental incentives like tuition assistance).

Internship

A paid or unpaid short-term job within an agency.

Job Classification

[See Classification] The process by which jobs are evaluated and organized into classes and pay grades.

Job Design

Another term for job classification, or the initial process in which positions are dissected in order to establish their basic components and relative importance to the organization. The term has also been used more recently to imply a proactive effort to alter the content of jobs in order to make them more challenging and interesting for their occupants to organizational behavior and motivation.

Job Evaluation

The process by which jobs are analyzed in order to rank them within an organization; a fundamental component of the classification process in which the jobs are categorized according to their characteristics and relative importance. Related to position analysis, in which the individual job is scrutinized in order to identify its most important duties, responsibilities, and KSAs.

Job Rotation

The planned movement of a worker among different jobs at a similar level in the organization in order to expand his or her experience. In addition to providing a helpful motivational edge, job rotation is highly regarded because it makes more workers interchangeable (in the event of illness or turnover), and it aids in the development of employee skills.

Job Sharing

Dividing one full-time position between two or more part-time employees. This strategy is often prompted by cost-savings, since part-time employees rarely earn benefits. Also, those who share jobs are almost always more productive than one full-time employee because they are relatively “fresh” (a typical schedule calls for one employee to work mornings, and the other afternoons).

Labor-Management Committees

Special cooperative groups assembled in unionized settings to work out mutually agreeable solutions to common problems. A normal fixture in settings in which consensus bargaining exists, but not as common where more adversarial labor relations predominate.

Longevity Pay

Pay based on the length of one’s service. This can be a somewhat confusing topic currently because longevity pay has several dimensions. Most “merit systems” are in actuality seniority systems in that one’s salary goes up incrementally (and automatically, thanks to COLAs) each year. Performance has little or nothing to do with the increase. Recently, however, longevity pay has resurfaced in a more positive light in some areas in which worker retention is problematic. Where high turnover exists, significant pay increases are granted on (e.g.) an employee’s first, third, and fifth anniversary in order to encourage him or her to stay in the organization over a longer period of time.

Mediation

An alternative dispute resolution process whereby a mediator who is an impartial third party acts to encourage and facilitate the resolution of a dispute without prescribing what it should be. The process is informal and non-adversarial, with the objective of helping the disputing parties reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

Mediation-Arbitration

An alternative dispute resolution process that provides for the submission of an appeal to an impartial third party who conducts conferences intended to resolve the grievance, but who can also render a decision that is final and binding on the parties if the dispute cannot be mediated.

Mentoring

Process by which an experienced employee provides guidance and advice to younger or less seasoned subordinates or peers. Proactive systems of mentoring – in which willing mentors are expressly assigned to targeted subordinates – are effective means of developing employees for future promotions and easing their transition into the workplace. This is especially true of female employees, given the fact that too few role models exist in more traditional work settings.

Merit Pay

Basing salary increases on performance instead of other factors, especially job tenure. Although widely acclaimed, merit pay has been notoriously difficult to implement in many public settings for a variety of reasons (inadequate performance appraisal systems, insufficient resources for meaningful raises, inability to measure the ambiguous work product of many civil servants, etc.).

Merit Principle

The assumption that “the best shall serve.” Hiring, promotion, salary, and other HRM decisions should be based upon competition and the premise that the most deserving workers should receive the rewards.

Merit System

In stark contrast to the merit principle, the merit system has evolved into creature that rarely resembles what one might expect from reading the definition of merit principle. Due to many historical and political factors, merit systems are often very bureaucratic and overly protective of undeserving workers. As such, merit systems have acquired a very bad reputation among line managers, and are seen as an impediment to effective public administration. Most of the reforms currently taking place within the HRM field are intended to ameliorate the worst traits of contemporary merit systems.

Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB)

The federal agency that retained the adjudicatory responsibilities of the old Civil Service Commission when it was abolished by the CSRA of 1978. In addition to hearing employee appeals from adverse actions in the federal civil service, the MSPB is charged with protecting whistleblowers from retaliation.

Office of Human Resources (OHR)

A general term applied to the “personnel department” in any jurisdiction. With few exceptions, the OHR is located within the office of the chief executive. Current wisdom holds that the OHR should become less involved in rule enforcement and more helpful in assisting line managers to perform their HRM responsibilities.

Orientation

The process of introducing new employees into the organization and socializing them to prevailing norms and expectations. Public agencies typically do a very bad job of this, while private corporations often invest far more energy into the enterprise. Research clearly demonstrates that effective orientation programs reduce turnover, lower the anxiety levels of new workers, and reduce their tendency to acquire bad work habits from co-workers.

Pay for Performance

[See Merit Pay]

Performance Appraisal (Evaluation)

Perhaps the most poorly accomplished personnel function, in which the performance of employees is rated on an annual or semi-annual basis. Usually the responsibility of the employee’s supervisor, evaluation instruments are notoriously inadequate. One of the most common strategies is the rating scale, which essentially consists of a checklist of traits that the supervisor assesses on a Likert-type scale (1-5; 1-7). As the most common source of employee frustration and claims of “favoritism,” there has long been widespread experimentation with performance appraisal methodologies. No one yet has the correct answer.

Personnel Ceiling

As part of their role in controlling appropriations, many legislative bodies impose caps on the number of employees that can be hired in the jurisdiction. These may be aggregate caps (ceilings), or they may be broken down by agency. Once an agency has capped out, it must either stop hiring or find alternative means of accomplishing tasks if more workers are needed. Two strategies that are often used to bypass personnel ceilings include the hiring of temporary and part-time workers. Neither of these groups is usually included under the ceiling, and both categories of workers are exempt from civil service restrictions.

Productivity Bargaining

As a means of labor-management cooperation, this occurs when the union offers to exchange heightened output for wage concessions or other demands. In effect, the union seeks to purchase improved working conditions or benefits by promising to reduce staffing ratios, accomplishing more work, or even giving back old prerogatives to management. This strategy works best in areas that involve easily measured outputs (such as garbage collection).

Progressive Discipline

Disciplinary procedures that specify the exact consequences of each possible employee misdeed. Usually, the procedure delineates a large number of potential offenses (tardiness, theft, insubordination), each one of which is accompanied by the appropriate sanction (written warning for first offense, suspension without pay for second offense). These procedures are intended to provide a consistent and uniform system of punishment in order to insulate the organization from allegations of favoritism.

Realistic Job Preview

A film, tour, or other form of introduction to prospective employees that provides them with a clear understanding of both positive and negative aspects of the job applied for; intended to save time and money by running off those who may quit after going through expensive screening and/or training processes.

Recruitment

The organization's intake function by which new employees are identified and screened. Public agencies once approached this task from the perspective that a huge reservoir of eager talent exists in society, while the reality of contemporary America has proven that only aggressive recruitment strategies are likely to pay dividends.

Reengineering

In the HRM context, two definitions apply to reengineering. The first is concerned with the reorganization of work so as to make it more motivating to workers and to contribute to other desired objectives. This is also known as job design, and includes such phenomena as job rotation and job enrichment. Some scholars refer to it as "working smarter." The other definition is confined to the HRM function. To reengineer an OHR is to decentralize operations to line units, to shed specialized functions, and to change the office's role to a service and consultative model.

Reinvention

The broad and influential reinvention movement in Public Administration impacts HRM most directly. Almost all Best Practices emanate from the reinvention agenda. The most common themes are decentralization, empowerment of line managers, managing for results, strengthening accountability, and eliminating government's obsession with control functions. These translate into much greater flexibilities within recruitment, selection, evaluation, salary administration, and all other areas of the field.

Retention

An organization's ability to hold onto its workers. Many public agencies face a retention crisis because of poor working conditions, non-competitive salaries, and a strong economy that increases their employees' external job opportunities. Finding ways to retain valued employees – such as longevity bonuses, re-"enlistment" incentives, and appealing to intrinsic motives – is a major preoccupation of most public managers.

Skill-Based Pay

One's salary is tied to the number of different tasks or skills known to the incumbent. This approach to pay administration encourages workers to continually develop and refine their skills, and thereby serves as a useful spur to motivation and employee development.

Succession Planning

The proactive process by which agencies anticipate vacancies and begin far in advance to prepare candidates to fill those positions. Careful planning allows the organization to design training programs, job rotation opportunities, and other developmental programs for individuals who exhibit promotion potential.

360 Degree Evaluation

An approach to performance evaluation that collects feedback from the employee's supervisor, co-workers, subordinates, and perhaps even clients. The resulting "360-degree" look at the employee's overall job behavior is perceived as more complete and reliable than uni-dimensional approaches.

Turnover

Attrition from the workforce, often due to job dissatisfaction and other factors that might be responsive to managerial initiatives. Annual turnover rate is percent of employees who leave in a given year.

¹ Prepared by Steven W. Hays, Ph.D., University of South Carolina

Resources: National Organizations

The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP)

1575 Eye Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 371-1565
<http://www.cssp.org>

In addition to this self-assessment workbook, CSSP has several human services workforce publications on its web site.

The Center for the Study of Social Policy was established in 1979 with the goal of providing public policy analysis and technical assistance to states and localities, in a way that blended high academic standards with direct responsiveness to the needs of policymakers and practitioners. CSSP's work is concentrated in the areas of family and children's services; income supports, neighborhood-based services, education reform, family support, disability and health care policy, and long term care for the elderly. In all of its work, the Center emphasizes several common themes: (1) an approach based on outcomes accountability; (2) community service strategies that reach across categorical boundaries and are community owned; (3) new forms of state/local governance; (4) more flexible financing strategies, linked to results; and (5) attention to the human resources and other capacity-building needs required for human services systems to perform effectively.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation Human Services Workforce Initiative

701 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
<http://aecf.org/initiatives/hswi/>

Since 1948, the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) has worked to build better futures for disadvantaged children and their families in the United States. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families.

The Human Services Workforce Initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation is the first national effort to address the critical condition of the workforce that helps care for America's most disadvantaged children and families. The initiative highlights the urgent need to recruit and retain workers who have the appropriate training and support to make crucial decisions that

affect families. Through its extensive experience in the field, the Casey Foundation has found that a stable, prepared and motivated human services workforce yields real reform and better results for children and families.

Human Services Administration

American Public Human Services Administrators (APHSA) and National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA)

810 First Street, NE, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 682-0100
<http://www.aphsa.org>

Founded in 1930, APHSA is a nonprofit, bipartisan organization of individuals and agencies concerned with human services. Our members include all state and many territorial human service agencies, more than 150 local agencies, and several thousand individuals who work in or otherwise have an interest in human service programs.

NAPCWA, created in 1983, works to enhance and improve public policy and administration of services for children, youth, and families. As the only organization devoted solely to representing administrators of state and local public child welfare agencies, NAPCWA brings an informed view of the problems facing families today to the formulation of child welfare policy.

APHSA Resources Leadership and Practice Development for Human Service Professionals

The Leadership and Practice Development Department (LPD) was created in 1996 with responsibility to support and enhance the capacity of state and local human service agencies to improve outcomes by implementing new policies and effect major program reforms. The department supports agencies with a variety of training and management consulting services; all services are based on a high-performance leadership and organizational development framework. LPD works with individual states on a contract basis and with groups of states through seminars, videoconferences, and other distance and group learning venues. LPD staff provide telephone consultation to all states. The department publishes materials on a range of management and program implementation topics.

LPD Products and Tools

APHSA also offers a series of leadership and organizational development products that can be used in conjunction with various curricula and seminars, or offered as stand-alone products that agencies may wish to use for various capacity-building purposes.

- **Organizational Diagnostic Tool** – The purpose of this tool is to give human services administrators a set of questions that will provide a first “quick read” on how well their organizations are performing. By focusing on the 13 questions in the tool, senior executives can identify areas of strength in their organization as well as those areas that may be hindering the organization’s ability to move toward high performance.
- **A customized 360° assessment workshop** – This instrument provides individuals and teams feedback from themselves, direct reports, peers, customers, managers, and other colleagues on their performance on specific leadership competencies and behaviors. APHSA can customize and deploy this assessment instrument using various media including paper, e-mail, diskette, and the Internet. Once the feedback is collected, APHSA produces a written report outlining the individual and/or team’s leadership strengths and areas for development. During the workshop, APHSA consultants discuss the feedback process, how the reports were generated, and help individuals and teams interpret their feedback results. In addition, APHSA consultants can help individuals and teams design development plans to increase their individual and organizational leadership capacity.
- **A customized organizational climate survey** – The survey provides agencies an opportunity to collect internal data regarding how the organization views its own performance, its leadership strengths, and areas for improvement. As with the 360° assessment instrument, APHSA can customize and deploy the instrument through various media. The feedback remains confidential. APHSA provides a comprehensive written report outlining the organization’s strengths and challenges reflected in the feedback.
- **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) workshop** – The instrument and accompanying workshop are designed to help participants explore their own leadership and learning styles and how one’s styles and preferences impact individual and team

communication and performance. APSHA facilitators certified to administer the instrument and facilitate the workshops lead discussions and interactive exercises to help participants understand their own styles and how to use them to impact positively their teams and organizations.

The American Public Human Service Association has created a Workforce Data Collection Field Guide that contains practical information for agencies to use to better collect vital information on the recruitment, retention, satisfaction, and professional development needs of their workforce through the use of exit interviews, focus groups and surveys.

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)

440 First Street, Third Floor
Washington DC 20001
202/638-2952
<http://www.cwla.org>

CWLA is an association of 1,000 public and private nonprofit agencies that assist over 3.5 million abused and neglected children and their families each year with a wide range of services.

In 1998, the Albert E. Trieschman Center, renowned for its staff development and training courses for line staff and supervisors, became a division of CWLA. Now known as the Walker Trieschman Center, it coordinates and manages CWLA’s professional development activities.

Since 1999, the Walker Trieschman Center has led CWLA’s efforts to seek solutions for the workforce shortage in the child welfare field, and currently houses the organization’s Workforce Development Initiative. This initiative is guided and supported by a National Advisory Committee and is building the field’s capacity to comprehensively address immediate and long-term workforce issues.

These efforts have included linking all of the program areas and other CWLA initiatives that directly or indirectly involve the workforce. For instance, there have been efforts to jointly study workforce in Senior Services, Residential Care Certification, International Child Welfare, and other aspects of service delivery. To be effective, the workforce initiative must also work closely with government affairs, program standards, and the regional leadership.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

750 First Street, NE, Suite 700
Washington DC 20002
202/336-8324
<http://www.socialworkers.org>

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with 153,000 members. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies.

The Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research (IASWR)

750 First Street, NE, Suite 700
Washington DC 20002
202/336-8385
<http://www.iaswresearch.org>

A freestanding, not-for-profit organization, IASWR serves the research needs of the entire social work profession. Sponsoring organizations are represented on the Board of Directors of IASWR and contribute annually to its financial support. IASWR promotes social work research conducted under the auspices of other academic and professional organizations. IASWR does not conduct or fund social work research directly, except in surveys on behalf of the profession, which relate to fulfilling Institute goals.

In 2004, The Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research launched its Child Welfare Workforce Initiative, with support from the Human Services Workforce Initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Fostering Results at the University of Illinois School of Social Work's Child and Family Research Center. Publications through this initiative include:

- Factors Influencing Retention of Child Welfare Staff: A Systematic Review of Research. The study, undertaken in collaboration with the University of Maryland School of Social Work, examined the personal and organizational conditions and strategies, i.e. Title IV-E educational partnerships that impact retention.
- IASWR Research Brief 1 – *Retaining Competent Child Welfare Workers: Lessons from Research* provides an overview of the 25 studies included in the review and the conclusions drawn.

- IASWR Research Brief 2 – *Professional Education for Child Welfare Practice: Improving Retention in Public Child Welfare Agencies* details the findings and implications of the seven studies that specifically looked at the impact of Title IV-E educational partnerships on retention in child welfare.
- IASWR Research Brief 3 – *Understanding Retention in Child Welfare: Suggestions for Further Research and Evaluation* provides specific recommendations and guidance for future research studies on recruitment and retention.

National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Development

**Institute for Child and Family Policy,
Muskie School of Public Policy,
University of Southern Maine**

PO Box 15010, 400 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04112
1-800-HELP KID, 207-780-5810
<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids>

The National Child Welfare Resource Center strengthens and supports organizations committed to the welfare of children, youth and families through research, training, technical assistance and evaluation.

Human Resource Management

American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)

1120 G Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005

The largest general association of public managers, ASPA publishes *Public Administration Review*, *PA Times* (a newsletter and listing of job openings), and sponsors numerous sections – including SPALR – that publish specialized journals.

American Society for Training and Development

1640 King Street, Box 1443
Alexandria, VA 22313-2043
<http://www.astd.org>

For those interested in employee development, ASTD publishes a variety of specialized reports, training materials, and the *Training and Development Journal*.

International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20002-4201
<http://www.icma.org>

ICMA generates a stream of reference materials, training packages, and related publications relating to public sector HRM at the local level. Other relevant activities include the provision of training programs, Municipal Yearbook, Public Management, and the Municipal Management Series of reference materials. One recent example is: ICMA, *Managing Human Resources: Local Government Cases*. Washington, D.C.: ICMA, 1999.

International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans

P.O. Box 69
Brookfield, WI 53008
<http://www.ifebp.org>

Releases an annual compendium titled *Public Employee Benefit Plans*.

International Personnel Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR)

1617 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
<http://www.ipma-hr.org>

The largest professional association for government personnel managers, this organization publishes not only *Public Personnel Management*, *IPMA News*, and *Public Employee Relations Library (PERL)*, but also numerous monographs and studies.

National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE)

C/O Council of State Governments
Iron Works Pike
P.O. Box 11910
Lexington, KY 40578-1910

An organization consisting of the fifty (plus or minus one or two) state directors of personnel administration from each state capital. The secretariat is located at the Council of State Governments, and the organization is known for its efforts to identify and disseminate needed HRM reforms.

National League of Cities

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004
<http://www.nlc.org>

Another source of studies and monographs relating to HRM, including a monthly summary of labor-management relations developments in urban settings (*NLC-SPEER Newsletter*).

National Public Employer Labor Relations Association

1620 Eye Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
<http://www.npelra.org>

A primary source of applied training materials and manuals covering all phases of labor-management relations in the public sector.

Society for Human Resource Management

1800 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
1-800-283-7476
<http://www.shrm.org>

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 200,000 individual members, the Society's mission is to serve the needs of HR professionals by providing the most essential and comprehensive resources available. As an influential voice, the Society's mission is also to advance the human resource profession to ensure that HR is recognized as an essential partner in developing and executing organizational strategy. Founded in 1948, SHRM currently has more than 550 affiliated chapters and members in more than 100 countries.



*“I have seen foster kids change
workers more often than socks.”*

—OBSERVATION OFFERED BY A VETERAN FOSTER PARENT

Center
for the
Study
of
Social
Policy

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