WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PLANNING PROCESS

DEFINITION:

A Workforce Development Plan (WDP) is an assessment of the knowledge and skills of the current workforce linked to the anticipated knowledge and skills of the future workforce to best meet agency goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are determined by a strategic plan which in part recommends changes to the way the workforce is recruited, hired, and retained, including how the current workforce will be replaced due to attrition. In short, a WDP attempts to get the right people in the right job at the right time with the right knowledge and skills.

WHY CREATE A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

- Many state employees will likely leave state service within the next two to three years due to retirements and other reasons, taking critical knowledge and skills with them; planning for this transition is important work.
- The WDPs would identify knowledge and skill gaps between the current workforce and future needs.
- Plans will assist in determining the knowledge and skills of those to be recruited and hired in the future, especially for critical jobs.
- A WDP will allow for a more orderly transition to a reconfigured workforce based on changed internal and external factors.
- Planning helps identify obsolete worker skills which permits more targeted training to provide for the needed workforce skills of the future.
- With a plan in place, workers see where their department is going, motivating many that see their skill set as needed for the foreseeable future.
- A WDP allows for a more effective replacement strategy for those likely to leave any given department.
- A plan allows for more accurate workforce projections which assists in better budgeting decisions.

WHAT WOULD A PLAN INCLUDE?

Please note that these five designations (listed below) are not mutually exclusive. In addition, the topics under each category could arguably be placed elsewhere. The more important issue is having the topics identified, not under which category they best fit.

At a minimum, the broad categories of a WDP include recruitment, selection, retention, succession, and knowledge management.

- Under **recruitment**, the plan would address such topics as outreach, job fairs, education of potential state workers (e.g. high school and college students), "marketing" Maine (as a place to be) and state service, and streamlined recruitment approaches.
- Under **selection**, the plan would seek increasing efficiencies in the whole hiring process so talent is not lost to competitors while great candidates await a hiring decision.
- **Retention** would include topics such as motivation strategies, mentoring, coaching, job shadowing, building communities of practice, and training; retention efforts can (along with succession planning) create talent "pools" of people likely to advance into critical jobs.
- **Succession** planning includes the difficult work of assessing possible losses of workers, identifying which people are in critical positions (once "critical" is defined), and creating strategies to address those anticipated losses.
- **Knowledge Management** efforts require knowing, among other things, who needs what knowledge (skills also come under this rubric), how to get it to them in real time, and identifying who has that which needs to be shared.

ASSUMPTIONS:

- Departmental leadership believes that having detailed knowledge of their workforce allows them to satisfy customers with greater effectiveness and efficiency.
- Departmental leadership believes that workforce improvement efforts begin at recruiting efforts, require on-going workforce development, and need to have strategies in place for workforce replacement (Succession Planning).
- Department leadership recognizes that knowledge-what people know and what they need to know to be successful-must be managed so those who need to know something indeed know it when they need to know it.
- Departmental leadership recognizes that competent, motivated, and respected employees are an essential element to providing effective and efficient government services.
- Department leadership recognizes that it is now more difficult to recruit people to state government, especially certain disciplines.

- Department leadership recognizes that certain agency positions will be priorities within the WDP since they are critical to effective operations or they are positions for which there are insufficient in-house candidates.
- Department leadership will create a WDP that recognizes that the department is not an "island" but works within and beyond the larger context of state government.
- Departmental leadership agrees that much of the analysis of the workforce will be built around core and job-specific competencies.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

I. BHR and an oversight committee will provide guidance, technical assistance, and tools to allow each department to develop a WDP
     A. Form an oversight committee with representatives from several departments and commitment from all participating commissioners
     B. Form design committees within each participating department, responsible for developing a WDP linked to a current strategic plan and following the template provided by the oversight committee
     C. Establish a learning community whereby departments share and assist others, where appropriate, in developing quality WDPs
     D. Obtain stakeholder support for and participation in workforce development
     E. Create a viable monitoring system to assure that plans are developing on time and following the established process and format

II. Every department will establish and implement a WDP built around a strategic plan
     A. Assure that each department has a strategic plan that looks into the future (at least to 2014) and makes recommendations on the quantity and quality of the future workforce
     B. Assure that each WDP has clear and specific strategies on, at a minimum, recruitment, selection, retention, succession, and knowledge management
     C. Assure that each department create a WDP work plan with realistic timelines
     D. Assure that all internal department work teams represent the range of work and workers within that department
     E. Assure that all relevant departmental personnel are trained on WDP content and processes
     F. Assure that all WDPs have a detailed implementation strategy with names of people assigned to specific tasks with specific timelines (Action Plans)

III. Current and future state workers will benefit from their department's WDP that improves, at a minimum, recruitment, selection, retention, succession, and knowledge management processes

    A. Create a process and set of measures to determine that the knowledge and skill needs of the current workforce (e.g. training, mentoring, job shadowing, etc.) are met

    B. Establish and implement a process for determining how the current job (the "work") is done and how it will likely be done in the future

    C. Establish and implement a process for determining what current work may not be needed in five years and what work not now done will likely be needed in five years

    D. Create programs that encourage employee growth and offer strategies for acquiring new knowledge and skills, especially around career development

    E. Train all involved in hiring to use the WDP as a guide for future hiring, promotion, and employee development decisions

    F. Creativity will be emphasized when designing or modifying efforts involved in recruitment, selection, retention, succession, and knowledge management

IV. All WDPs will have specific implementation strategies for all changes that require law, policy, or procedure adjustments

    A. All design teams will, during the development of their WDP, assure that all parts of their WDP are consistent with laws, policies, or procedures unless the objective is to change these

    B. All design teams will establish appropriate metrics and baseline information in order to measure the value of newly implemented efforts

    C. All design teams will determine if any changes in position classifications, benefits, or salary are required because of the WDP recommendations

    D. Establish an internal monitoring mechanism to periodically analyze employee hiring, career development, and exit experiences, feeding that information back to leaders who are responsible for making program adjustments

    E. Establish a mechanism to monitor the value of any partnership established by each department that is involved with the department's work

    F. Each WDP will have an implementation strategy outlining what must be done prior to implementation and a separate strategy for making adjustments during the first few years after implementation

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

While there are manifold reasons for each department to have a strategic plan and workforce development plan, one reason alone rises above others. Because of circumstances and conditions several decades ago, state government has a demographic bulge several years wide approaching retirement. An unprecedented number of people will or could retire now through the next few years. This bulge, while quantitatively serious, is exacerbated by certain qualitative dimensions.

That is, some of the employees that are in the bulge are in critical positions, positions that demand a knowledgeable, experienced person. Another dimension is that some agencies are more impacted than others-they have a higher proportion of employees within that bulge. These departments could be left with few people ready to move into positions of high responsibility. A third dimension is that there has been no formal, system-wide effort to share the knowledge and skills of those in the bulge with those that may have to replace them. This is, figuratively, the "battle of the bulge".

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Expanding on the issues noted above, all organizations need to be planning for the future. A critical element of that planning concerns personnel. That is, fundamentally, agencies need to project the number of people expected to be needed, with what knowledge and skills, in, at a minimum, each of the critical functions. Armed with that speculation, leaders can determine what strategies to employ with the current work force and what must be done in the recruitment and selection arenas to assure that new hires are compatible with agency direction.

Current staff needs professional development efforts. They need programs that expose them to people and experiences that contribute to their professional growth. They need to be trained to increase their knowledge and skills. While the "half-life" of knowledge varies among the many disciplines, even service providers experience the fact that half of the work knowledge they currently possess will be unneeded in about four years. Therefore, it is incumbent upon leadership in any agency to bring that new knowledge into the agency. This permits employees to grow and change as the job itself changes.

The above paragraph begins to describe a learning organization, championed by Peter Senge in his much lauded The Fifth Discipline. In short, a learning organization never stops determining

what knowledge is needed where. Or how to best share that knowledge within the agency. Or how to create a culture where sharing knowledge is expected (part of any performance management system) and rewarded. Strategic or workforce development plans can lead to knowledge acquisition and sharing being routine. This is not typical in most organizations. It must be consciously pursued and fiercely defended until this thinking becomes institutionalized. Therefore, the transition to a learning organization can begin with a WDP than recognizes and designs for it.

Those who believe in creating a learning organization embrace several "universal principles" (recognizing that there are exceptions). Where these principles are not universally believed, leaders support highly hierarchical and controlling organizations. For those who do believe them, these principles guide the development of a learning organization. The principles are:

- Everyone can learn
- But they learn in different ways and different rates
- Learning is a lifetime process
- Everyone wants to do a good job
- Learning new things makes people feel good about themselves
- Success begets success
- Learning is a shared responsibility
- People "own" their own decisions and actions
- Appreciating employee individuality is important
- Cultural diversity enhances learning and creativity

MAINE WILL FOLLOW A FIVE-STEP MODEL

- Step1: Determine the strategic direction of each department.
- Step2: Create a workforce development plan that covers (2a) a workforce analysis [current workforce skills and the skills expected to be needed in the near future] and a (2b) work analysis [amount and type of work to be done in the near future].
- Step 3: Establish a WDP implementation strategy that covers the period from design to launch.
- Step 4: Establish a post-launch monitoring and evaluation effort that allows for feedback-driven changes and modifications (based on Deming's Plan-Do-Check-Act or PDCA approach).
- Step 5: Establish a sustainability strategy that assures that rather than being a one-time endeavor, this approach becomes an institutionalized way of doing business.

This document is a beginning sketch of the development process and content of a WDP. It will provide more of a listing of the various required tasks that result in various strategic and comprehensive projections into the near future. The operating philosophy of this process to develop a WDP that is "as simple and flexible" as possible. This effort will allow for a more quantitative look at personnel needs to match that strategic view. Some key tasks include:

- Each department's leaders need to determine their involvement in a Workforce Development Plan; this would involve a formal commitment to a process, the contents of such a plan, a timeline, and a commitment of resources (mostly people/time).
- BHR will form a statewide WDP oversight committee with broad responsibilities, one of which establishes the minimum requirements under which departments may not go.
- This committee would establish the WDP process based on negotiations and discussions. It would likely follow the PDCA approach referenced earlier and the five major steps mentioned above. The oversight committee would, through negotiations, determine the content and format under each of the five components of the model.
- Surveys, covering several topics, would need to be done toward the beginning of this effort. They would begin to assess the "What Is" step-things such as the current number of employees, doing what work, demographics about those employees, their current competencies, existing employee development efforts, level of strategic planning, general readiness to embark on a WDP effort and training capabilities.
- As mentioned above, departments need to have (i.e. use their current plan, up-date a current plan, do a plan) a Strategic Plan in place since such a plan begets a WDP; that is, it is difficult to convince others of the new workforce configuration and needed competencies without identifying the future work-some work unchanged, some new work added, some current work diminished or even ended.
- The oversight committee will also determine, where needed, the Strategic Plan content and development process (this might require adapting each department's current plan); the content would likely include a vision (what does that desired future look like?), a mission (what is our core work?), other summary statements (e.g. values, philosophy, principles, preamble, assumptions), goals, objectives (some people prefer the reverse-objectives and goals), and strategies to meet objectives (some prefer the objectives to be specific enough that they replace strategies); the Strategic Plan development process might (where leaders are invested in this approach) follow the Lean Hoshin Planning Model of "nesting" plans, going from a general departmental direction to more and more specificity as the plan descends into the functional work of the department (also, a Hoshin plan seeks future breakthrough efforts while planning for continuous improvement of everyday business practices).
- The oversight committee would also assure that each WDP has a prominent "customer" section linking all internal changes to organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction for clients, consumers, and stakeholders.

- The oversight committee would also develop a web site for as a place for two-way communication and information exchange.
- This committee would also develop a "tool kit"-forms, surveys, instructions, documents, and more for departmental use in preparing or modifying Strategic and Workforce Development Plans; these would be on the web site.
- There would be an interim and final Summit, the former involving key departmental leaders and people working on WDPs; this would be primarily a "check in" event but also a chance to share knowledge, voice concerns, and make necessary changes in the process; the latter Summit would involve many more people as the primary purpose would be getting ready to implement each WDP.
- Each department would need to identify critical positions which would require a formal succession strategy to prevent critical knowledge from exiting the department without a replacement option.
- A "guide" (to be available on the web site) would be developed for each department that would offer step-by-step instructions to creating a WDP and, if necessary, a Strategic Plan.