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5 Stage Employee Attraction and Retention Model

V.G. YOUNG INSTITUTE OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT

JUDGES AND COMMISSIONERS CONFERENCE FEBRUARY 22, 2023

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS ARLINGTON

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The 5 Stage Employee Attraction and Retention Model

In the public sector, especially in the Public Works/Road and Bridge departments, many cities and counties struggle to keep good employees, find quality replacements, and then develop them with the hopes of them staying with the organization.

This presentation and resources will help you in that day-to-day struggle.

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T-X STIC

TEXAS STATE TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION COUNCIL

This special project was awarded to The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), Texas Local Technical Assistance Program (TxLTAP) under a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Texas State Transportation Innovation Council (STIC) grant to develop and distribute innovations in workforce development for Local Public Agencies (LPAs) across the state of Texas.

The focus of this project is to assist cities and counties in the ongoing process of attracting, onboarding, training, engaging, and providing succession planning for their Public Works and Road and Bridge personnel as much as possible.

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Resources have been developed and are available now. The main objective of this project is to provide tools that will provide:

- Proven approaches to recruiting employees into a public sector job.
- Onboarding strategies and processes recommended for cities and counties bringing on new hires for higher retention rates.
- Training course resources recommended for new hires regardless of job classification.
- Training courses recommended for Public Works/Road and Bridge personnel.
- How to tie training, job descriptions, and employee performance plans together for continuous employee engagement.
- Employee engagement tools and strategies include personal and professional development, coaching, mentoring, and employee recognition programs.
- Providing guidance on which tools may work best depending on the size of your organization.
- All tools will be downloadable from the TxLTAP website so that you can edit and make the tools your own.

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See us at the TxLTAP booth in the vendor hall to obtain a hard copy of the 5-Stage Model to Attract and Retain Employees (aka the *Guide*).

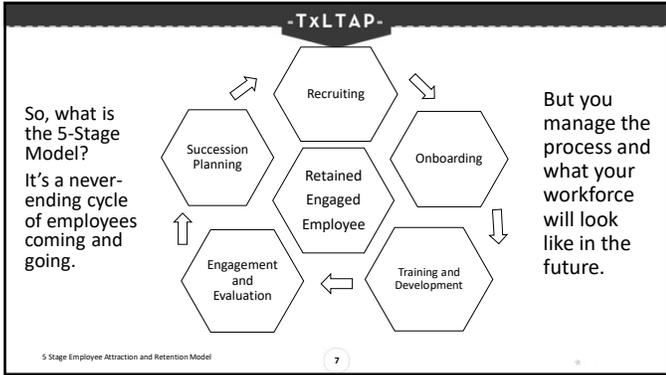
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Our special thanks to the following personnel who are taking time from their regular job duties to review and provide input on the *Guide* and resources. This project could not have been possible without their expertise and guidance to help all of our municipalities and counties in Texas.

Lori Ardoin – Orange County
Tania Rushing – Wichita County
Baby Raley – City of Richardson
Kevin Godley – Bexar County
David Sanchez – City of Amarillo
Haley Smithson – Wichita County
Dana McWilliams – Ector County
Don Spear – City of Dallas
Kelly Rodriguez – City of Killeen, Texas Municipal League Trustee

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So, what is the 5-Stage Model?

It's a never-ending cycle of employees coming and going.

Recruiting

Succession Planning

Onboarding

Retained Engaged Employee

Engagement and Evaluation

Training and Development

But you manage the process and what your workforce will look like in the future.

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Facts, Myths vs. Reality, and FAQs

Before we get into the 5 Stage Model, let's look at some of the facts surrounding employee retention we all face today, myths that occasionally prevail in some workplaces on why not to implement a program to retain employees, and a few frequently asked questions about such a program.

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Fact: Your organization competes with the private sector and many other public sector organizations to attract and retain the best employees possible.

Fact: Whether you are a metro, urban or rural city, or county, you will have employee turnover. Your high turnover rate depends on the programs and practices you have in place today. The fewer practices you have to address turnover, the higher your turnover will be.

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Fact: You have direct and indirect costs that can reach 200% to replace employees who leave you.

Direct costs stem from:
- Recruiting replacement. There is always a cost to hiring new employees. Background checks, physical and drug testing costs, and the amount of time others in your organization spend on the process.
- Advertising. You will need to spend money to post your job ads online. Marketing paid ads and other advertising costs add up.
- Onboarding. Providing access to onboarding documentation, new employee equipment, paperwork, and benefits packages, and providing access to company resources.
- Time to interview and assess candidates. The number of hours you and others spend reviewing resumes, preparing for and conducting interviews, and choosing a replacement.
- Time to train new employees. Once you hire a new employee, you'll need to invest time in training and coaching them on the job. The number of hours spent doing this can add up quickly.

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Fact: 94% of employees say they would stay at a company longer if it invested in their learning and development. Source: (LinkedIn Learning Report, 2020)

Fact: Clear onboarding processes improve retention rates by 23%. Source: TeamStage Employee Retention Statistics: A 2022 Overview | TeamStage

Fact: Inadequate employee training accounts for 40% of resignations. Source: TeamStage Employee Retention Statistics: A 2022 Overview | TeamStage

Fact: Roughly a third of employees resign within the first six months. Employee retention statistics in 2022 reveal that out of 1,000 employees, 31% quit their jobs in less than six months from the hire date. Employees listed onboarding experience and unclear job expectations as one of the primary reasons for their resignation. Source: TeamStage Employee Retention Statistics: A 2022 Overview | TeamStage

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Fact: Well-written Job Descriptions (JDs) help new hires to understand their job and sets them up for success and to be a highly contributing employee to your organization. The JD, along with coaching and mentoring from their manager, helps set job performance expectations for the employee to achieve. How JDs are integrated into the five Stages of the Workforce Retention Plan is covered in detail.

Fact: Well-written JDs incorporated into a Performance Plan, and Performance Evaluation will help managers provide feedback to their employees on how well they are doing and in areas where they can improve their performance. Without a good Performance Plan and JD, it becomes difficult for employees to know what is expected of them and for a manager to provide an accurate and effective appraisal.

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The following are from the 2022 Department of Labor Statistics based on surveys of over 100,000 employees who had changed jobs within the last two years.

Fact: The top reason that employees leave is lack of opportunity.

Fact: 28% of employers say they did not provide employees the opportunity to grow in 20/20 hindsight.

Fact: Only 30% of employees do what they are best at or trained to do.

Fact: 57% of workers are open to new job opportunities.

Fact: 54% of employees who changed jobs did so felt they were undervalued and unappreciated at their job.

Fact: 52% of employees who left felt their manager could have done something different that would have caused them to stay.

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- **Myth:** We don't need a retention program; many people want a city or county job.
- **Reality:** A successful retention strategy aims at decreasing employee separations and attrition by engaging and motivating employees for the long run. Your organization's goals are critical to a successful employee retention strategy. Some of the elements of a sound strategy include:
  - Salary and benefits that are in alignment with the local area.
  - Transparent onboarding process.
  - Work-life balance support.
  - Productive leadership.
  - Open communication culture.
  - Employee engagement.
- Source: TeamStage Employee Retention Statistics: A 2022 Overview | TeamStage

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Myth: Implementing a Workforce Retention Plan sounds like a lot of work, and I don't have the time to mess with it.
Reality: The real question is, how much time and work production are you losing right now by not having an entire staff? Yes, implementing a plan will take time and effort, but it will pay for itself down the road in terms of reduced rework, increased productivity, and not having to be in a constant hiring cycle.

Myth: I have heard that other organizations tried a program like this, and it failed. I don't want to start something, invest much time, and it falls flat on its face.
Reality: Any program dealing with workforce development, retention, training, etc., is only as successful as its leaders and management make it. If you want to be a proactive rather than a reactive organization, investing time and effort into a retention program will pay off in the short and long term.

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Q: What other assistance can I get under this project regarding how to use this information?
A: There are provisions in this project for a well-qualified HR professional consultant to come on-site and help your HR personnel, administrators, commissioners, and managers (you decide whom to bring to the table) to discuss and customize plans for your organization – all at **NO CHARGE**!

Q: I do not know how to implement a Workforce Retention Plan; where can I get help?
A: This project is designed to provide your organization with a "jump start" to implement a Workforce Retention Plan with the already developed tools. TxLTAP stands ready to provide a consultant to come onsite and help you.

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Q: How much detail needs to be in a Workforce Retention Plan?
A: As much or as little as you desire. This project has identified five critical phases in the lifecycle of an employee. You get to decide if you want to use all five Stages or eliminate some of them. You can expand the tools and information at any Stage, or you may choose to scale it down. It's your program; you are the ultimate decision-maker.

Q: How much time will it take to create and maintain a Workforce Retention Plan?
A: The best answer is "How much time do you have to invest in defending a wrongful termination lawsuit; an EEOC complaint; or battling a Worker's Compensation Claim due to a lack of a good retention plan that has critical components such as Job Descriptions, how to prepare Performance Plans and close out those plans? Using the tools and resources developed for you provides a jump start to developing and implementing a good retention plan.

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Q: If we adopt a Workforce Retention Plan for our employees, who should be responsible for reviewing, monitoring, and maintaining it?
A: If your city or county has a Human Resources Officer (HRO) or HR department, that is the logical business unit you need to work closely with. HR will routinely work with commissioners and/or managers to ensure they receive the required documentation for the employee file. In the absence of an HRO or HR department, it is recommended that a business unit in your organization with some HR experience handle the logistics of the program. Again, if you need help setting up the program and training a person to handle it, the TxLTAP Program can provide on-site assistance with such a request.

Q: Once a Workforce Retention Plan has been set up, can we change it?
A: Yes. As business functions change within any organization, the plan should be capable of changing if needed.

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The goal of all of us in public works is to keep our highly skilled and experienced employees and not lose them to another employer.

As managers and supervisors, we are responsible for taking specific actions to keep those employees.

If you fail in those duties, you will experience continual turnover in your workforce and all of the negative consequences of high turnover.

Let's dig into how to keep those employees and keep them engaged.

Retained
Engaged
Employee

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Getting good quality candidates to apply for a job and then selecting the best of the best is the first step in building a solid workforce.

In the *Guide* that will be published, we provide you with resources, ideas, and suggestions on how to effectively recruit the best talent possible regardless of the location or size of your organization.

Let's look at some of the resources that will be provided for you to use in the Recruiting section of the *Guide.*

Recruiting

ARE YOU AWESOME? JOIN OUR TEAM

WE ARE HIRING WE WANT YOU APPLY NOW!

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Leveling the Playing Field:
Strategies for Hiring Public Sector Employees

Despite the challenges we face in the public sector, there are still several effective recruiting strategies that Local Public Agencies (LPAs) can use. By understanding our unique challenges and implementing an effective recruiting strategy for your organization, LPAs can continue attracting good employees.

Benefits
There are numerous benefits that LPAs can offer, and some that the private industry cannot match. Among them are:

• Medical insurance
• Optional Coverages such as dental, eyecare, life insurance, disability
• Retirement plans such as monthly annuities
• Paid Leave – sick leave, vacation time
• Paid Holidays
• Other Paid Leave such as paid leave awards, jury duty, blood donation, voting, recovery time as an organ donor, court proceedings to adopt a child, community service

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Leveling the Playing Field:
Strategies for Hiring Public Sector Employees

Benefits – continued

- Training and development opportunities
- Tuition reimbursement plans
- Merit Increases
- Longevity pay
- 13th Check Scenario

Benefit	Monthly Value	Annual Value
Health insurance premiums paid on behalf of the employee	$400	$4800
Employer-paid contribution towards retirement (6.0% annual salary)	$186	$2232
Paid time off, 80 hours annual	$120	$1440
Paid holidays off (varies, but using 10 holidays or 80 hrs)	$120	$1440
Training attendance, average 80 hours annual	$120	$1440
TOTALS	$946	$11,352

* All figures are based on an employee making $18.00/hr
* Full time, 2080 hours = $37,440 annual or $3120/month

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Attraction Benefits

You can offer benefits to encourage applicants to move to your geographic area so that you may reach beyond your immediate area. Some suggestions are:

- Relocation assistance
- Sign on bonus
- Flexibility in work schedule
- Employee Assistance Program
- Work-Life balance
- Having a clear mission
- Retention bonus
- Presenting a positive and safe work environment
- Diverse work environment
- Job Security

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Types of Recruiting Strategies

There are many ways you can go about recruiting candidates for your organization. Some ideas are presented here that you may wish to explore if you are not using them already.

Suppose you are only posting job openings on your city/county website. In that case, you are doing yourself a disservice by not reaching out to other potential candidates who do not frequent or even know about your website. You need to diversify and post your job announcements in as many ways as possible.

Not all of these recruiting strategy suggestions are applicable or may not work for your organization. An example is posting a job opening for an equipment operator at a local retailer (naturally, with their permission), such as a feedstore that will work for a rural county but perhaps not in a large metro city.

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Types of Recruiting Strategies

- Job Posting Sites
- Facebook
- Job Fairs
- Hosted local recruiting event
- Recruiting at a local event
- Open House
- Industry event
- Local Retail Store
- Organizational Job Bulletin Boards
- Professional Organization Job Bulletin Board
- Universities, Colleges, Trade, and Technical Schools
- Setting the Stage for Future Generations

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A Word About Job Postings

What information goes into your job posting, whether online or hard copy based, is important. It needs to provide enough information to the candidate but not be too brief or vague and not overwhelming with information. Finding the right balance of information to get the candidate's attention and outlining high-level job activities is essential.

Job Title	Opening and closing date of job posting
General Description/Summary of Functions	Primary Duties/Duties and Responsibilities
Minimum Qualifications	Benefits and Salary
Licenses/Certifications	Contact Information
Physical/Environmental Requirements/Other Information	
Legal Wording on Job Posting	

The following four slides represent actual job postings from cities and counties in Texas posted from 9/1/22 – 02/05/23. Let's look at them to see if they sent a compelling message on what was wanted in an employee.

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COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT

COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT
Will be accepting applications.
Requirements:
Must have a valid
Texas Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
Applications Deadline: Until position is filled
Applications may be obtained:
www.____.com

This job description leaves a lot to be desired when providing information. The only thing a candidate needs to have is a Texas CDL (A or B?).

- Don't have to lift anything…
- Don't need to operate anything...
- Don't need to work on the roadway…
- Don't have to do any equipment maintenance...
- Working hours?
- Benefits?

Surprise! To the candidate when they find out what they really have to do.

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Road & Bridge Department

Road and Bridge Worker

The ▓▓▓ County Road and Bridge Department is currently accepting applications for a R&B Worker. Benefits include health insurance, retirement, county holidays, sick leave and vacation time. Applicants MUST have a valid Texas Class-A Commercial Driver's License. Drug testing is required. Road and Bridge Workers operate heavy machinery and equipment such as motor graders, dump trucks, and front-end loaders. Other job duties include building and repairing cattle guards and culverts and providing general road repair. A summary of the duties of the position and county applications are available at the County Judge's Office ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓. Resumes may accompany an application, but are not required. Applications may be dropped off at the County Judge's Office, mailed to ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ Texas ▓▓ or emailed to ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓. Position is open until filled ▓▓ County is an EEO employer.

A few things to consider. Break out the information into categories as suggested on slide 26. To obtain more detailed duties, the position requires an in-person visit to the Judge's office – this eliminates any persons who may reside out of the area to make the trip and apply. No mention of a salary or hourly wage. Any candidate will ask, "is it worth my time to apply or not?"

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HELP WANTED

▓▓ County is accepting applications for its Area #1 Road & Bridge Department. Full time position, Monday - Friday 8 hour days. Benefits at eligibility include paid health insurance, paid sick, vacation, holiday and retirement.

Minimum qualifications are HS diploma or GED and a **CDL Class A** with an insurable driving record. Must pass a pre-employment drug screen and comply with Drug and Alcohol procedures. Primary duties include, but are not limited to:

- Welding, roads, and parks. Operating heavy equipment such as: dozer, blade, backhoe, dump truck, mowers, etc.
- Must be able to lift 50-100 lbs.
- Must be able to work/communicate with Fire Department, EMS, Sheriff's Department on an on call basis
- General Maintenance of machinery, plumbing, mechanical

Please apply at the office of ▓▓ County Human Resources, first floor of the courthouse. ▓▓ County does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in employment or the provision of services.

Applications will be accepted until positions are filled. No phone calls.

Let's look at some of the problems

- Welding, roads, and parks. What does that mean?
- Lift 50 – 100 lbs. Big difference here. 100 lbs. will eliminate many candidates.
- Maintenance of machinery, plumbing, and mechanical sounds like a mix of several job classifications – not just a roadway worker.
- Applications must be made in person at the County Courthouse. This will eliminate many potential candidates.

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▓▓ COUNTY JOB POSTING

POSITION TITLE: Full Time / Road Hand
BENEFITS: Holidays, Vacation, Personal, Sick Leave, Retirement, Insurance
REPORTS TO: Commissioner Pct 4
SALARY: $33,248.26 annually

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS:
High School diploma or equivalent. Road Rebuilding And general road repair. Be able to operate all heavy equipment, motor grader, backhoe, tractors, brush cutters, front-end loader, drive large dump truck, run welders, cutting torch air equipment, hand tools and maintenance on all equipment.

DUTIES:
1. Road rebuild and general repair. Using heavy equipment including dump trucks, motor graders, front-end loaders, tractors. Hauling gravel and rock from pits. Spreading oil and rock.
2. Using hand tools, shovels, rakes, chain saws, axes. Haul and spread asphalt and oil. Install culverts, work with cement.
3. Drive truck to pick up gravel and rock. Drive off truck and spread it.
4. Use tractor to clear right-of-ways and remove brush. Use backhoe and front-end loader to clean ditches. Use dump truck to haul silt away.
5. Use welder and mechanical tools to do maintenance on equipment, lawn mowers. Some precincts require vehicles maintenance, overhaul engines, transmissions, and whatever is required.

Application may be picked up at:
▓▓▓ Pct 4 Commissioners Office

Or download from ▓▓ County website ▓▓▓▓ Employment Opportunity to:
Applications MUST be returned by mail or hand delivered to the ▓▓ County Pct 4 Commissioner's Office. Deadline to submit application: Open until position is filled

This job posting is better than the past three examples but still lacks important information to attract quality candidates.
- Duties include driving a dump truck, but no requirement to have a Class A or B CDL.
- A salary of $33,248.26 is listed and implies this is an exempt job, which it is not. The posting should be listed as a per-hour rate of pay.
- Information on Education and Experience is not specific enough and includes job duties.
- Overhaul engines and transmissions? That is a mechanic job, not a Road Hand job.

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A Final Word on Recruiting

Remember, when you do any type of recruiting, advertising, attending recruiting events, etc., you need to tell your story about the benefits you offer. This will get the attention of many potential applicants versus salary by itself.

Be sure to have the most current literature that is professional in appearance and content and easily readable for candidates to digest.

Dress for the occasion and present yourself in the best professional manner possible.

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Onboarding

Once we selected the best candidates we wish to hire, they have accepted and passed the physical, drug test, and background checks, we now need to bring them aboard.

We should use a process referred to as "onboarding". Onboarding is not the same orientation where new hire paperwork is completed.

Many organizations do not have an onboarding strategy or process for new hires. In the absence of an onboarding strategy or process, it is left up to their supervisors how they will be handled once they report for work. Some supervisors will do a good job explaining the job to the employee and may even assign them a "shadow" employee to introduce them to the rest of the workgroup and to walk them through the various tasks they are assigned.

What method do you have? Let's look at how an ideal onboarding program works.

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Industry On-boarding Statistics:

Without a structured on-boarding process:
- 4% never return after the first day on the job.
- 20% leave within 45 days on the job.
- 33% look for a new job in their first six months of employment.
- 90% decide within six months if they intend to stay or start looking for other opportunities.
- 23% leave before their 1st anniversary with the organization.

With a structured on-boarding process, you can realize:
- 20% increase in management satisfaction with new hires.
- 50% increase in productivity of the new hire.
- 58% retention of new hires after three years with your organization.

Other onboarding statistics
- 75% of new hires say training is most important to them in the first six months on the job.
- 56% of new hires say having a mentor or a "go-to person" is especially important when getting started.
- 41% of Human Resources professionals agree that their organization needs to improve onboarding.

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The benefits of having a structured onboarding process outweigh the reservations or, in some cases, outright objections that supervisors may pose. Benefits of structured onboarding include:
- Decreased attrition rates with new hires.
- Increased productivity of new hires.
- Reduction of EEOC complaints of one business unit using a lean model (or lack of) for onboarding versus another business unit that makes onboarding an investment with the new hire.
- Accelerated integration of the new hire into the business unit and the feeling of being a part of the team.
- It's repeatable. It's in writing; a supervisor should follow the playbook instead of making it up as they go.

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A comparison of orientation and onboarding

When you compare the focus, duration, setup, content, and outcome of orientation and onboarding, you can see how different and necessary both are to your new hires.

Orientation
- Focus: Role in the organization
- Duration: One-time event
- Setting: Classroom or office, depending on the number of persons being onboarded
- Content: Big picture
- Outcome: Ready for training

Onboarding
- Focus: Role in the work team
- Duration: Sequence of events, time to be determined
- Setting: On-the-job
- Content: Individualized
- Outcome: Ready to contribute

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Effective Onboarding Takes a Minimum of 12 Weeks

While an orientation agenda can be boiled down to a checklist, onboarding is more of a strategic approach to engaging and retaining the new employee.

During the onboarding process, employees should be thoroughly introduced to their organization. They learn the culture and business objectives by participating in meetings and starting projects with co-workers. Managers should schedule regular check-in meetings with new employees so that they get comfortable talking to one another. Gradually, they will learn the specifics of their role and responsibilities, such as how to correctly complete key tasks, whom to go to with questions, how to get approval for their work, and how to make suggestions.

An onboarding plan should focus on what matters most to each department to help new employees connect department-wide goals and day-to-day tasks.

For more information about onboarding and other details about this 5 Stage approach, get your copy of the *Guide* at the TxLTAP booth.

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TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

PERFORMANCE ADVANTAGE
EDUCATION
ORGANIZATION
SUCCESS
EMPLOYEE TALENT
LEARN CAREER PEOPLE STRATEGY FUTURE
ACTIVITIES EVALUATE
GOALS HUMAN RESOURCES

Training and Development

Ok, we have recruited them, onboarded them, and they are ready to go, right?

Wrong!

We have only begun the journey to develop and retain a good employee.

Training and development activities should not be sporadic or scheduled after someone is injured or a piece of equipment is ruined. It is a career-long process that does not stop.

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Most of us would agree that some degree of employee training is an absolute must. Yet, many organizations place the training and development of employees at the bottom of their list. Some managers and supervisors give many misguided reasons or excuses for not providing training or development activities. While a manager or supervisor may try and deliver logic or excuses for not engaging their employees in training, many reasons counter those excuses. Some of the more encountered reasons are:

1. I need my employees working; I don't have the time to send them to be trained.
2. They won't learn anything they already should know.
3. I can never get the training I need when I want it for my employees.
4. I don't know what training I need for my employees, so I don't bother.
5. I don't know how to follow up on the training event my employees may attend to determine if it was effective.
6. I don't have a budget for training.
7. I'm afraid my employee may know more than me.

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When you provide training for our employees, they win, you win as their supervisor, and your organization wins. Let's look at the counterpoint to the reasons above managers don't provide training.

1. You don't have time for rework, failure to perform, accidents, or injuries.
2. Training reduces risk to your workforce and improves employee efficiency.
3. Nobody comes to work with 100% knowledge of how to do everything.
4. Then, you need to spend some time researching training providers and work with one or several that are flexible in their schedules to meet yours. A good training provider is highly flexible in when they can deliver the training and where the training takes place, such as your location.
5. You need a consultant or workforce development specialist to develop a training plan for your employees. The Texas Local Technical Assistance Program (TxLTAP) can provide this service for **NO COST**. More detail on these services will be provided later in this Stage.

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"The only thing worse than training an employee and having them leave, is to not train them, and have them stay." – Zig Ziglar.

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There are a lot of training and development activities available for city and county employees, regardless of their job title and job duties.

Your responsibility as a manager or supervisor is to identify the training that is best suited for your employees and then make it available.

Use our *Guide* to help you identify the best training not only for your employees but also for yourself.

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employee engagement

Engagement and Evaluation

Just like training and development activities, continual employee engagement processes must take place for you to retain your employees.

Another critical step in employee retention and continual employee improvement is to conduct periodic evaluations on employees to let them know where they excel, where they can push themselves to improve, and where they may be having problems they can self-correct.

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What is Employee Engagement?

Once we have hired an employee, done a good job of onboarding them, and they have completed some training, it does not mean we now ignore them and just use them as a resource to get the job done. If we want them to remain with the organization, grow with it, and be productive, we need to engage them continuously throughout their career.

You may choose to use all the suggested Employee Engagement strategies listed, or only a couple of them or only one, depending on your comfort level and unique needs for your organization. At a minimum, you should recognize that the strategies listed work for many organizations when properly implemented and managed. Suggested strategies as part of the continual Employee Engagement process include:

• Personal and Professional Development
• Performance Plans and Performance Evaluations
• Coaching
• Mentoring
• Employee Recognition Programs

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Personal and Professional Development

We looked at training and other development activities in Stage 3 of this model. Those activities are a snapshot in time, such as taking a three-day management class and returning to work. Personal and professional development activities are continuous (or should be) throughout our careers.

Personal and professional development activities are similar, but each carries different objectives.

Personal development can encompass a variety of training classes, continuing education by taking online courses or going back to college, seminars, attending networking groups of peers (such as Texas Association of Counties conferences or educational programs, Texas Municipal League conferences or workshops, American Public Works educational seminars, etc.). The primary objectives are:

• To make yourself more efficient and effective on the job.
• To stay current in technology relevant to your area of expertise or job functions.
• To allow yourself to move into similar job opportunities with your organization.
• To improve your self-awareness of how to react to challenges and issues.
• To help you develop relationships with other employees, managers, and others in your networking group.

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Personal and Professional Development – continued.

Professional development is a broader process that accounts not only for career development but also for personal growth. Typically career development plans are focused on steps employees can take to further their careers and may apply to all employees in the same job classification. Professional development plans are tailored to each employee's personal and professional growth.

Professional development could be industry certifications that demonstrate an employee's knowledge and some degree of experience in that area. Examples would be the PMP®, a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM), a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), Paving Inspector Certification (PIC), Certified Texas Contract Manager (CTCM), and the list goes on. Ask your Human Resources person or department for help looking at professional certifications that interest you.

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Performance Plans and Performance Evaluations

What is the Difference Between a Plan and an Evaluation?

A performance plan should be implemented either at the time of hire or at a regularly scheduled point in time for all employees, such as September 1st of each year for all employees in the organization. A plan outlines what the manager expects of the employee regarding the quality of work, safety on the job, completion of work tasks, development, training activities, getting along with others, and so on.

A performance plan is a working tool for any supervisor. They should refer to it often to see how any employee is performing. If you are an employee, you should look at the plan occasionally and rate yourself on the expectations of the plan.

A performance evaluation is precisely that, an evaluation of the criteria that were in the plan. The review will rate the individual job activities and general factors of how well employees completed their tasks. It will also acknowledge exceptionally well-done projects by employees, their work ethic, problem-solving skills, etc.

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Reasons Why Cities and Counties Do Not Have Plans

It is common knowledge that many cities and counties in Texas do not use performance plans nor conduct performance evaluations on their employees. This business model was decided on for a variety of reasons that could have included:

- Lack of knowledge of writing and closing performance plans and evaluations.
- Didn't want to do the work associated with performance plans and evaluations.
- Could not justify why to do them; all employees get the same cost of living raise across the board.
- If employees were not living up to standards, they would be terminated.
- Belief it could override a manager's decision to discipline an employee later if the employee received a good evaluation earlier.
- Fear employees will discuss their evaluation ratings with others and spread discord among the team.

These reasons, and more, not having performance plans or evaluations cannot be justified in today's work environment. Let's look at the benefits of having performance plans and evaluations.

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Benefits and Reasons Why Cities and Counties Should Have Plans

Both the employee and manager know what is expected.
No more if's, but's, or I didn't know – plans laid out in writing and acknowledged by the employee what is expected of them on the job. The plan removes any surprises for managers and employees when they know what is expected.

The plan allows for employee development.
All plans should have a section on the evaluation form that allows for documentation of completed development (training) activities in the current evaluation cycle and the next cycle, where a new plan is put into place. Employees should have a definite say in expressing what training they will benefit from to help them grow with the organization.

Plans substantially reduce the risk of litigation based on employee work habits.
Plans also document the expectations of the quality, performance, and production expected of all employees and supervisors. Using a standardized evaluation process should remove any personal bias in the ratings. You have documentation based on criteria that should be applied equally to all employees. Having a standardized evaluation process can reduce or eliminate any claims of discrimination.

There are many more benefits in the *Guide*.

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In May 2023, the TxLTAP Center will launch a new 8-hour class on writing, presenting, monitoring performance, and closing out a performance plan and evaluation with employees.

This class is instructed on-site at your location upon request.

Look for an announcement from TxLTAP about this new class when available. Ask for the LTP405 Developing Employee Performance Plans and Conducting Employee Evaluations

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What are the Differences Between Coaching, Counseling, and Mentoring?

There are distinct differences between coaching, counseling, and mentoring, although many think they are the same. Let's look at a basic definition of each.

Coaching – Employee coaching refers to when a leader trains employees to improve their capabilities in the workplace and help them develop new professional skills.

Counseling – Coaching is performed to prevent counseling. Counseling takes place when coaching has failed. Counseling an employee reflects that the employee is choosing not to perform or to meet the set expectations. Counseling is often the first step in developing and implementing a Performance Improvement Plan.

Mentoring – Mentoring is the practice of someone more experienced sharing resources, knowledge, expertise, and skills with those less experienced. The objective of mentoring is deliberate, facilitated learning.

The *Guide* will cover all of these components in detail.

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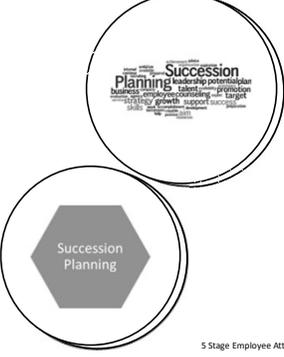
KNOWLEDGE

EXPERT

CONSULTING

SERVICE

Remember that highly experienced TxLTAP consultants are ready to come on-site to your organization and help describe these programs in more detail, help customize them to meet your unique objectives, and teach and help you start these programs all at no cost to your city or county.

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Let's take the best-case scenario for your organization and assume that you have one or more highly skilled, experienced employees that are reaching the end of their careers and are looking forward to retirement.

How do we use these employees to develop others, and how do we plan for our future leaders?

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Succession Planning

Many in public sector employment believe that succession planning is an activity that is optional for their business. This is not true. While public sector employment is set up for a competitive hire system, succession planning should be a routine that cities and counties should strongly consider using.

Succession planning in the public sector means assessing your individual employees' potential, strengthening your talent pipeline by making your organization one people want to work at, recruiting in new and innovative ways, creating leaders at all levels, developing employees, and continuously planning succession for all key positions.

If you choose to refrain from engaging in some form of succession planning, the legacy you leave behind could be one that others do not appreciate having to identify and train new talent. Leave behind a great legacy that future generations of management and workers will remember in your organization.

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Reasons and Benefits of Succession Planning

Will implementing and managing a succession plan be a snap and easy? No. It will take time, dedication, and effort. However, the benefits you will reap from such a plan, no matter how strategies decide to use, will pay off in the long run. Let's look at some of the reasons and benefits you will realize from succession planning.

Develop the Employees You Have Now
Your organization may sometimes hire for a position open to internal candidates only. If you have not developed your internal candidates to their maximum potential, you are doing the employee and your organization a disservice.

Developing Future Leaders
By developing employees to be future leaders, they may come out on top in the competitive hiring process that provides you with an employee who can step into the new role and be effective immediately.

Management Support is Evident
Developing employees to be future leaders demonstrates your willingness and support as an employer and that you have their best interests in mind and want them to remain with your organization.

Skilled Talent on Hand
By adopting succession planning, you can depend on your employees when faced with challenges and still be able to accomplish your goals. It may also help not to be short on talent and needed skills when a key employee suddenly decides to leave.

Reduce the Loss of Institutional Knowledge
Use your highly experienced and skilled employees to teach others if they are willing. When highly skilled employees retire or leave your organization, they take knowledge with them that cannot be recaptured if it has not been passed on.

There are many other reasons and benefits of implementing succession planning. Look for them in the *Guide*.

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The Guide will provide step-by-step advice and suggestions for your organization on implementing and maintaining a succession planning program compliant with state and federal laws.

Identify Key Positions
Maintain Skills Review & Adapt
Build Job Profiles
Succession Planing
Create Individual Plans
Assess Current Staff Skill Level
Training Actitives

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Will any of these steps in the 5-Stage Model be easy to implement and manage?

No.

If you use some steps, you will be way ahead of where you may be now in attracting and keeping good employees.

If you use all of the steps, you will become an organization where quality candidates will want to come to work for you.

The decision is yours – what will you do?

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QUESTIONS?

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