

NASPE Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Awards Nomination

“Workforce and Succession Planning Strategic Initiative”

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

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Summary -

With nearly 28% of salaried employees becoming eligible for full retirement over the next four years, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) embarked on two strategic initiatives to address workforce and succession planning challenges. Managers in the 2011 Executive Development Academy crafted several recommendations regarding the agency's workforce. From these, agency executives included two related initiatives in the FY 2011-2012 Agency Strategic Business Plan: 1) to establish an effective succession planning program in the Department and 2) to establish a career development planning process for agency employees.

To begin, the Department dedicated a position for hiring an agency workforce planner to develop the workforce, succession, and career development planning program. Filling the role in January 2012, the planner first assessed the agency's workforce climate. Secondly, based on the results of the assessments, the planner developed recommendations for implementing solutions. Conferring with stakeholders, strategies for adopted recommendations were developed and implementation followed. The responses to the following questions do not discuss a workforce planning model as there is a multitude of resources that illustrate the essential components; rather, the discussion illustrates the concrete actions taken since January 2012 as part of PennDOT's program. These may inspire other organizations with their initiatives.

Does more work need to occur? Absolutely. Because workforce needs are constantly changing and workforce, succession, and career development planning is an ever-evolving process and not an event, PennDOT will continue to monitor its workforce and act to mitigate issues.

1. Brief description of the submission

The concepts of workforce, succession, and career development planning are not new and the challenges facing public, private, and non-profit employers are constantly changing. Succession planning is a key human resource issue, identified by NASPE as the number one human resource issue in 2014. Likewise, succession planning was cited as the second top issue pertaining to public sector talent management in IPMA-HR's 2014 Benchmarking Survey. Academic scholars, field experts, and business practitioners increasingly advocate the need to prepare for the future's new workforce, identified by NASPE as the number one challenge in 2015. Moving past the conceptual framework, PennDOT has undertaken the following actions thus far to implement its workforce, succession, and career development planning:

Time Period	Action
<i>January 2012 and ongoing</i>	Assessed organizational structure and utilization of complement, responses to State Civil Service Exam Needs, workforce planning reports, and other resources to establish a foundation of the Department's workforce.
<i>January 2012 – June 2012</i>	Developed and distributed a workforce planning survey to each of the 11 District Human Resource (HR) Officers. Analyzed the results that included feedback from Engineering District Executives and Assistants.
<i>July 2012 – December 2012</i>	Generated 30 recommendations based on findings from the assessments. Subsequently, identified the feasibility of implementation and reduced the number to 22.
<i>October 10, 2012</i>	Prepared a Department-wide policy on workforce/succession planning and designed a Career Development Plan template and process (both in line with strategic initiatives).
<i>June 2012 – December 2012</i>	Designed a workforce and succession planning training module and subsequently conducted 30 half-day training sessions at each of the Department's 11 engineering district offices and central office for nearly 900 managers (supervisor of at least one supervisor). The sessions included discussions on awareness, importance, policy, demographics, forecasting, resources, employee recognition, knowledge management, and career development planning. The total cost of training each participant amounted to \$3.60 per participant or \$98.69 per session. Miles traveled amounted to 4,508.
<i>January 2013 and ongoing</i>	Following the on-site sessions, a debrief to include a discussion on each district's completed workforce planning survey was conducted with the HR Officers and the District Executive, Assistant District Executive, and County Managers. In addition to relaying information to managers during the training sessions, managers shared concerns about existing constraints that

	limit their ability to fully address workforce and succession planning challenges. These challenges were subsequently evaluated for solutions.
<i>January 2013 and ongoing</i>	Assess Employee Mobility (EM) results. EM surveys are system-generated to new hires, transferring employees, and voluntarily separating employees to determine the reasons that attract a candidate to PennDOT, the reasons for transferring jobs, and the reasons for separating from employment, respectively. This information is then used for generating recruitment and retention strategies.
<i>February 2013 – April 2013</i>	Prepared EM reports on labor relations issues such as claims of harassment, discrimination, and policy or law violation activity; safety; and equal opportunity issues. Results were reconciled with formal complaints. Those without existing complaints were investigated.
<i>June 2013</i>	The Department’s Bureau of Human Resources launched its “HR Portal” to all employees that includes a link to workforce and succession planning training and resource materials.
Planning and design <i>July 2013 – February 2014;</i> program launched <i>March 2014;</i> <i>ongoing</i>	Launched the School-to-Employment at PennDOT (STEP) Program, a cooperative education/ internship program that focuses on high school students and offers participants meaningful work, career practice, skill development, and hourly pay. Students support a variety of PennDOT functions, including work in skilled trades, professional/technical/business, and the administrative/clerical fields.
<i>January 2014</i>	Blended the roles of Complement Manager with Workforce Planner to manage and assess the Department’s complement to better balance existing complement and workforce needs.
Survey designed <i>Fall 2013 – March 2014;</i> distributed <i>April 2014;</i> implementation of corrective action – <i>ongoing</i>	Designed a “stay” survey that was subsequently redesigned and distributed from the Executive Deputy Secretary for Administration as a climate survey by the Department’s Innovations Office. Results were subsequently shared with affected bureaus and actions plans were generated to address issues.
Planned <i>December 2013 – June 2014;</i> implemented <i>July 2014</i>	Following a holistic approach, the agency workforce planner/complement manager worked with the Employee Services Division and the Bureau of Fiscal Management to identify positions where appropriation charges could be changed to save on personnel costs. This initiative freed up nearly \$30 million dollars for transportation maintenance, with no loss of personnel.
Developed <i>July – December 2014;</i> pilot launched <i>February 2015</i>	Collaborated with Information Technology to create an online version of the Career Development Plan to make completion and extraction/reporting of data more efficient.
<i>Ongoing</i>	Placement and position classification staff collaborate with the State Civil Service Commission on reviewing Civil Service exam needs, opening select exams, and revising Minimum Experience and Training requirements and job specifications to facilitate changes to increase candidate pools.
<i>Ongoing</i>	Recruitment staff have pulled in the agency workforce planner to assist at college recruiting events to gain a better understanding of candidate questions and job interests.

<i>Ongoing</i>	Recruitment staff have created social media accounts, like Linked In, to perpetuate the recruitment of difficult-to-hire positions.
<i>Ongoing</i>	A committee of agency managers assesses workforce issues from a practitioner’s perspective. Committee members are elected by the Secretary’s Office and are independent of HR. Recommendations are vetted through HR for viability, consideration, and implementation as appropriate.

2. Duration the submission has been operational (month and year)

The concept for establishing a workforce, succession, and career development planning program was formulated in 2011 and the implementation phase began January 2012.

3. Reason why the program was created

The program was created to identify and mitigate challenges to the Department’s workforce in light of over a quarter of the agency’s employees becoming eligible to retire within the next four years and, most importantly, to maintain a qualified—ready and able—workforce in the state’s transportation industry. Perpetuating this, executives leaders want to create a culture of workforce, succession, and career development planning among agency managers, supervisors, and employees.

4. Reason why the program is new or creative

The concepts of workforce, succession, and career development planning have been around for decades. However, this is the first time that PennDOT has had executive leadership initiating a holistic approach with definition in the agency’s strategic plan, human resource policy, and individual performance measures for managers, supervisors, and employees.

5. Start-up costs

There were no start-up costs associated with the program.

6. Operational costs

Operational costs include compensation for the agency workforce planner.

7. Program funded

Expenses are covered through routine personnel and operating budgets and funding.

8. Origin of the program

Fittingly, PennDOT's program started as part of a team project from managers in the Department's 2011 Executive Development Academy.

9. Awareness/difference of similar programs in other states

Many other states have workforce and succession planning models, and to some extent career development planning. However, we are not aware of specific actions that other states have taken in implementing the process.

10. Measurement of success

a. Quantitative measurement

While there are too many components of the program to discuss individual measurements in this paper, according to weekly complement reports, PennDOT maintains a steady 96.5% rate for filled salaried positions. According to the Governor's Annual Workforce Report, PennDOT's turnover rate of 6.0% in 2014 (due primarily to retirements) is below the Commonwealth's average turnover rate of 7.9%. Likewise, the Department's voluntary separation rate within the first five years of employment is 1.1% versus 1.5% for the Commonwealth.

b. Qualitative measurement

The following reasons in rank order are self-reported by new employees hired at PennDOT through the Employee Mobility New Hire Survey as reasons for selecting PennDOT as their employer: job security, retirement benefits (demonstrated that employees plan to stay), health care, salary, and career change. The Transfer Survey indicates that employee change jobs

primarily due to promotional opportunities. The Exit Survey of employees voluntarily separating reveals that retirement is the number one reason for departures.

11. Program growth/change since inception

The program is ever-evolving and drives the creation of sub-programs/initiatives in support of the holistic approach. For example, the STEP Program was created in 2014 as a means, in part, to introduce high school seniors to PennDOT jobs. STEP’s initial year was run by the agency workforce planner and now is transitioning to the Seasonal Programs Coordinator as an established recruitment and placement option. Around the same time as STEP’s rollout in March 2014, PennDOT shared its workforce planning activities with the Governor’s Office of Administration’s HR Talent Management Workgroup, which includes a number of agencies. In October 2014, PennDOT participated in the “Strengthening Skills Training and Career Pathways Across the Transportation Industry” meeting in Washington, DC, sponsored by the US Department of Transportation, that included hundreds of public, private, and non-profit representatives from across the United States for the purpose of sharing transportation industry career issues and corrective strategies and initiatives. Examples of future PennDOT initiatives include:

Time Period	Action
In process	Collaborating with the HR Development Division to design and rollout an online workforce/succession planning training segment for new supervisors and refresher for current supervisors.
In process	Developing a Career Pathways program by recruitment staff. The online tool will enable employees to determine career steps/qualifications needed to reach desired jobs.
Discussions occurring with unions	Exploring with the Federal Veterans Administration, Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, and unions the feasibility of implementing a training and work experience program for veterans with disabilities.
Discussions occurring internally	Exploring with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and agency program managers the prospect of participating in AASHTO’s youth programs to introduce school children to careers in the transportation industry at an early age.

