NASPE 2018 Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award: Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

Overview of Strategic HR Service Delivery

The State of Tennessee’s Department of Human Resources (DOHR) is transforming the enterprise HR function from a decentralized, administrative role to a strategic partner role through Strategic HR Service Delivery. The initiative drives organizational excellence across the state enterprise by centralizing transactions in DOHR to increase the capacity of the agency HR business partners to focus on strategic HR priorities. This one page overview shares the background context, implementation logistics, and current status of Strategic HR Service Delivery.

The Tennessee Department of Human Resources (DOHR) is a cabinet-level agency that drives the strategic direction of human resources for the State, which is the largest employer in Tennessee with more than 43,000 employees. DOHR serves in a support role and has overall responsibility for statewide human resources policies and services for cabinet departments, boards, and commissions in the executive branch; and provides technical services to the legislative and judicial branches. Each cabinet agency has an HR business partner who implements DOHR policies, processes, and initiatives; however, they are located in and report to the appointing authorities in the agencies they serve. After leading a major overhaul to transition state employment practices from a tenure-based model, to a performance-based model, DOHR began Strategic HR Service Delivery in 2016 to place a focus on HR strategy. The initiative created a new shared service HR structure that centralizes transactions to assure consistent, repeatable processes; increase their efficiency and accuracy; and empower agency HR business partners to implement HR strategy across the enterprise.

DOHR’s Assistant Commissioner/Chief Business Partner is working with agency HR Business Partners and Executive Leadership teams to implement three key phases of Strategic HR Service Delivery. First, routine transactions were mapped and are being centralized in DOHR for maximum efficiency, generally by removing steps or leveraging technology. The expected operational improvements, including a 75% expected reduction in HR errors and rework and an increase in transactional accuracy rate from 84% to 96%, has a potential cost savings of $1.5M - $4M in recurring funds. Second, agency HR business partners survey key customers, including executive and senior leaders, to determine the unique strategic HR priorities necessary to achieve their specific operational and strategic objectives. Finally, DOHR partners with agencies to develop and implement customized action plans to focus on critical HR issues, such as recruitment and selection, employee retention and engagement, leadership development, and succession planning.

For the past eight years, DOHR has been working to drive an organizational culture change to reward performance excellence, continuous learning, innovation, and servant leadership. We are committed to positioning the State of Tennessee as an employer of choice and to build a talented, thriving workforce to empower the state to provide the best possible service at the lowest possible cost to citizens, and continuously improve in doing so.

Strategic HR Service Delivery provides an enhanced, more efficient HR experience for employees, managers, and agency HR professionals, allowing leaders to identify and address critical HR and Talent Management priorities. The initiative drives state-of-the-art employment practices to recruit, retain, and reward talented workers and position the State as an employer of choice.