

2006 ROONEY AWARD
- Innovative State Human Resource Management -

Nomination Form
Deadline: March 17, 2006

Program Title: Cooperative Process for Healthcare Recruiting and Retention
State: South Carolina

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1. Please provide a brief description of this program.

The Healthcare Employees Recruitment and Retention – Pilot Program is a three-pronged approach to recruiting and retaining healthcare workers. The first aspect of the program provides select state agencies greater flexibility in the use of compensation and education incentives for current and prospective healthcare employees. These initiatives aim to help state agencies become more competitive with the private sector in attracting, hiring, and retaining highly qualified healthcare workers. The next aspect of the program involved the creation of *SC's Hottest Jobs* website, which serves as a central location for applicants to indicate interest in healthcare positions. Finally, the program enhances communication and cooperation between state agencies through the creation of a Healthcare Recruitment Consortium. As a result, state agencies are collaborating in their efforts to recruit healthcare workers to the State and saving money through collective recruiting efforts, such as joint representation at career fairs.

The following is a summary of the compensation and education initiatives included in the scope of the pilot program:

- (1) Compensation: Expanded use of bonuses for healthcare workers. This includes an increase in the amount and frequency of bonuses for reasons of sign-on, referral, and retention.
- (2) Education: Expanded incentives to encourage advanced education of healthcare employees. This is done in an effort to help state government “grow our own” healthcare workers. The program allows increased educational initiatives, such as:
 - Leave for Class –allows an employee in an approved degree program the ability to attend class during working hours if the class cannot be scheduled outside the employee’s normal work schedule.

- Paid Practicum –allows an employee to be paid while working on a practicum or required clinical experience towards the completion of a degree in an approved program.
- Loan Repayment –allows an employee’s outstanding student loan associated with the completion of a degree from an approved degree program to be partially paid by the agency.
- Tuition Assistance Expansion – expands our current tuition assistance guidelines to include: allowing an employee to receive reimbursement for a maximum of 10 credit hours instead of six; allowing probationary employees to participate in tuition programs; and providing tuition pre-payment instead of reimbursement for employees willing to pursue a degree in an approved healthcare program.

The *SC’s Hottest Jobs* website was specifically designed to broaden the pool of potential healthcare workers. It accomplishes this goal by serving as the centralized source for information on critical healthcare vacancies and streamlining the application process. The site creates an place where potential applicants can quickly express interest in employment with state government, and agencies then pursue applicants with qualifications that meet their needs.

2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?

This pilot program began on June 15, 2004 and will end on June 15, 2007.

3. Why was this program created? (What problem(s) does it address?)

The State of South Carolina’s Healthcare Employees Recruitment and Retention Pilot Program was created to address some of the significant challenges the State is facing in recruiting and retaining qualified healthcare workers. The pilot program’s purpose is to give agencies greater flexibility in using human resources solutions to enhance an agency’s ability to attract and retain healthcare employees.

4. Why is this program a new and creative method?

The Healthcare Pilot Program is a new and creative approach because of its comprehensive nature. The pilot program includes strategies that require legislative or regulatory changes to implement. The pilot program also allows agencies a great deal of flexibility in utilizing the available incentives to meet their growing healthcare needs. The program also encourages agencies to collaborate in various recruiting efforts, thereby leveraging their recruiting activities while creating efficiency and saving money.

5. What was the program’s start-up cost? (Provide detailed information about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

The program is funded through voluntary agency participation in the pilot. Since no new funding was granted for this program, agencies contributed approximately \$13,500

to a pool of money for utilization by all participating agencies. The money is used to purchase shared resources, such as marketing materials, including post-it notes with a newly designed healthcare logo and compact discs offering potential applicants a preview of career opportunities in state government. The money is also used to pay admission fees for career fairs in which the consortium members agreed to participate, along with travel expenses of the recruiters who attend on behalf of the entire consortium.

6. What are the program's operational costs?

All expenses of the program are managed within the \$13,500 of contributions by the participating agencies. The expenses of the program fall in the following main categories:

- Marketing and promotional materials
- Admission fees for healthcare-related career fairs
- Travel expenses

7. How is this program funded?

This Program is self-funded through contributions made by participating state agencies from their current budgets.

8. Did this program originate in your state?

Yes, this program originated in South Carolina.

9. Are you aware of similar program in other states? If yes, how does this program differ?

While other states may use some of the approaches outlined in the pilot program, we are not aware of any other state using a comprehensive program such as this.

10. How do you measure the success of this program?

Agencies will report on their use of compensation and education initiatives associated with the pilot program. Quantitative measures of the program's success will include an evaluation of the degree to which the program helps agencies recruit and retain critical healthcare positions. These measures will include, among others, an analysis of the quantity and quality of applicant pools, turnover rates, and the length of time positions remain vacant. We will also seek to determine which program components are more effective than others in order to develop our recommendations for extending the length of the pilot program, expanding the program to other critical occupations, and making appropriate changes to state law or human resources regulations.

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

This program is still in its trail phase, and if it is determined to be successful, a recommendation may be made to extend this approach to other occupational groups within the engineering, finance, and accounting disciplines.