

-TxLTAP-

5 Stage Employee Attraction and Retention Model

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY ENGINEERS AND ROAD ADMINISTRATORS

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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.



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.

The 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 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 you can edit and make the tools your own.
- On-site consultation time to work with you in determining how to set up and use the How to Attract and Retain Employees: 5-Stage Model at no cost to your city or county.

A comprehensive *Guide* (titled *The 5-Stage Model to Attract and Retain Employees for Public Works and Road and Bridge Departments*) has been developed that is available to you either in hard copy or can be downloaded from the TxLTAP Website.



UNIVERSITY OF
TEXAS
ARLINGTON

**DIVISION FOR
ENTERPRISE
DEVELOPMENT**



5 – Stage Model to Attract and Retain Employees for Public Works and Road & Bridge Departments for Texas Cities and Counties







6 Stages of Onboarding

Pre-Boarding	Day 1	1st Week	1st Month	3rd Month	6th Month
•Preparation for new employee	•New employee orientation	•Introduction to organization, people and tasks	•On-the-job training and education	•Check in and feedback	•Check in and feedback

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**SPECIAL
THANKS**



So, what is the 5-Stage Model?
It's a never-ending cycle of employees coming and going.

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

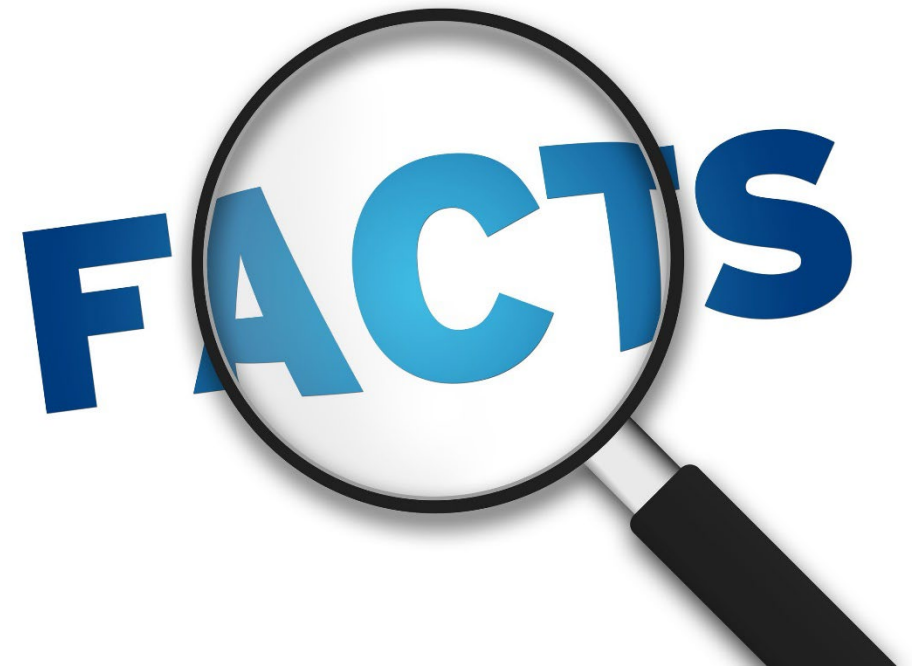
Facts, Myths vs. Reality, and FAQs

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.



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.



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

Direct costs stem from:

- Recruiting replacement of the worker. Hiring new employees is costly. Some charges are background checks, physical and drug testing costs, and your organization's time on the processes.
- Advertising. It costs money to post job ads online and other advertising costs.
- Onboarding. Providing new employees access to onboarding documentation, equipment, paperwork, and benefits packages adds up, as well as access to company resources.
- Time to interview and assess candidates. The number of hours you and others spend reviewing resumes, preparing and conducting interviews, and choosing a replacement.
- Time for training new employees. It takes time to train and coach new employees. These hours can add up quickly.

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](#)

Fact: Well-written Job Descriptions (JDs) help new employees understand their jobs, set them up for success, and be highly contributing employees 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 Retention Plan is covered in detail.

Fact: Well-written JDs incorporated into a Performance Plan and Performance Evaluation help managers provide meaningful feedback to their employees on how they are doing and where they can improve. With a good Performance Plan and JD, it becomes easier for employees to know what is expected and for a manager to appraise them accurately and effectively.

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.

MYTHS

- **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](#)

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 a full staff? Implementing a plan takes time and effort, but it will pay for itself in terms of reduced re-work, increased productivity, and not tied to a constant hiring cycle.

Myth: I have heard that other organizations tried a program like this, which failed. I don't want to start something and invest a lot of time only to see it fall 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.

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.



Q: How much detail needs to be in a Workforce Retention Plan?

A: As much as you desire. This project has identified five critical phases in the lifecycle of an employee. You can decide whether to use all the different 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 and effort will creating and maintaining a Workforce Retention Plan take?

A: Another way to put it is how much time do you have to defend a wrongful termination lawsuit, an EEOC complaint, or a Worker's Compensation Claim because of a lack of a good retention plan that has critical components such as Job Descriptions, Performance Plans, and close out those plans? Using the tools and resources created for you provides a head start to develop and implement a good retention plan.

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 would be the logical place to start. HR will routinely work with commissioners 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 program's logistics. Again, if you need help setting up the program and training a person to administer the program, a TxLTAP Consultant 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.

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.



Stage 1: Recruiting and Selection. 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*, 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*.



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

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

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

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.

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

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. Let's look at them to see if they sent a compelling message on what was wanted in an employee.



UVALDE COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT

2967 N US 89
Uvalde, Texas 78801
Phone: 330-278-8780
Fax: 330-278-0214

UVALDE 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.uvaldecourty.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.

Road & Bridge Department

Road and Bridge Worker

The [redacted] 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 [redacted]. Resumes may accompany an application, but are not required. Applications may be dropped off at the County Judge's Office, mailed to [redacted] Box 1726, Mason, Texas [redacted] or emailed to [redacted]. Position is open until filled. [redacted] 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?”

HELP WANTED

Winkler 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 Winkler County Human Resources, first floor of the courthouse.

Winkler 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.



TARRANT 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, use welders, cutting torch ,air compressor, 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 saw, axe. Haul and spread asphalt and sand oil. Install culverts, work with cement.
3. Drive truck to pick up gravel and rock. Drive oil 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.

Applications may be picked up at:
 Tarrant County, Pct 4 Commissioners Office
 504 E. 11th
 Ft. Worth, TX 76102

Or download from Tarrant County website - Tarrant County Employment Opportunities tab
 Applications **MUST** be returned by mail or hand delivered to the Tarrant County Pet 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

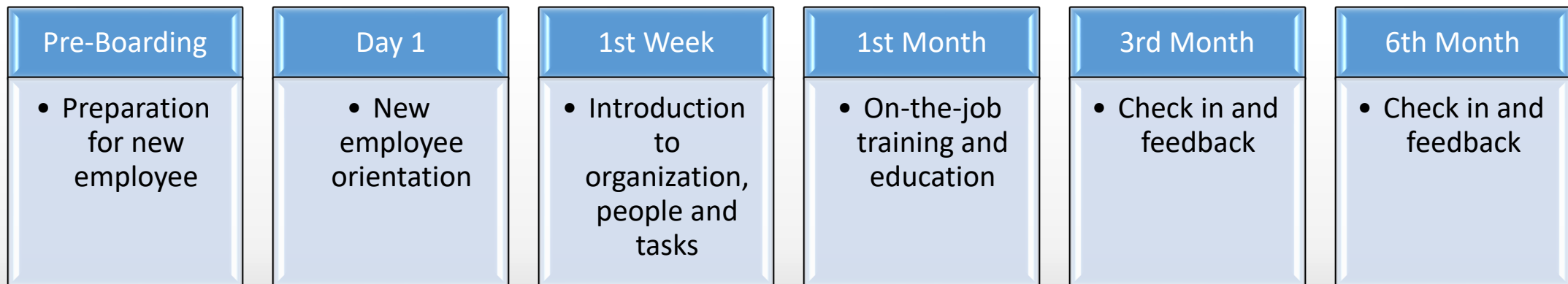
During the onboarding process, employees should be thoroughly introduced to their organization. They learn the culture and business objectives by participating in meetings and starting projects with co-workers. Managers should schedule regular check-in meetings with new employees so that they get comfortable 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.

The Six Stages of Onboarding

In order to effectively onboard a new hire, you need to follow a structured process as discussed earlier. Onboarding can take as long as six months, but you may want to structure your onboarding to last only two or three months, that's OK. Having the simple strategy of having an onboarding process puts you ahead in the game.

Refer to Stage 2: Onboarding in the Guide for additional information.





Training and
Development

Stage 3: Training and Development
After recruiting your new hire and completing Pre and Day 1 onboarding, your new employee is ready to go to work? 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.

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. Some of the more common excuses 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.

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.

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

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.



Stage 4: 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.

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 only use them as a resource to get the job done. We must continuously engage them throughout their careers if we want them to remain with the organization, grow with it, and be productive.

Depending on your comfort level and your organization's needs, you may choose to use all the suggested Employee Engagement strategies listed or only some of them. 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

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.

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.

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 time for all employees, such as September 1 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 and 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.

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.

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**.

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.

EXPERT



SUPPORT

KNOWLEDGE

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.

Succession Planning

In public sector employment, many believe that succession planning is an activity that is not required 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 in which people will want to work, recruiting in new ways, creating leaders throughout the organization, developing employees, and continuously planning succession for all key positions.

Not all suggestions and strategies that will be provided in this stage may apply to your organization depending on its size, the resources you have on hand to manage the process, or your willingness to take on this stage in the lifecycle of an employee.

If you choose not to engage 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.

A Warning Regarding Succession Planning

According to Wikipedia, succession planning *“is a process and strategy for replacement planning or passing on leadership roles. It is used to identify and develop new, potential leaders who can move into leadership roles when they become vacant.”*

The danger we face when planning and implementing succession planning in the public sector is not to follow the Wikipedia definition blindly, as we are required by law to use competitive hiring practices rather than “appointing or selecting” an internal candidate to move into a leadership role. We will cover overcoming those challenges to conduct succession planning in a public employment environment.

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**.



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.

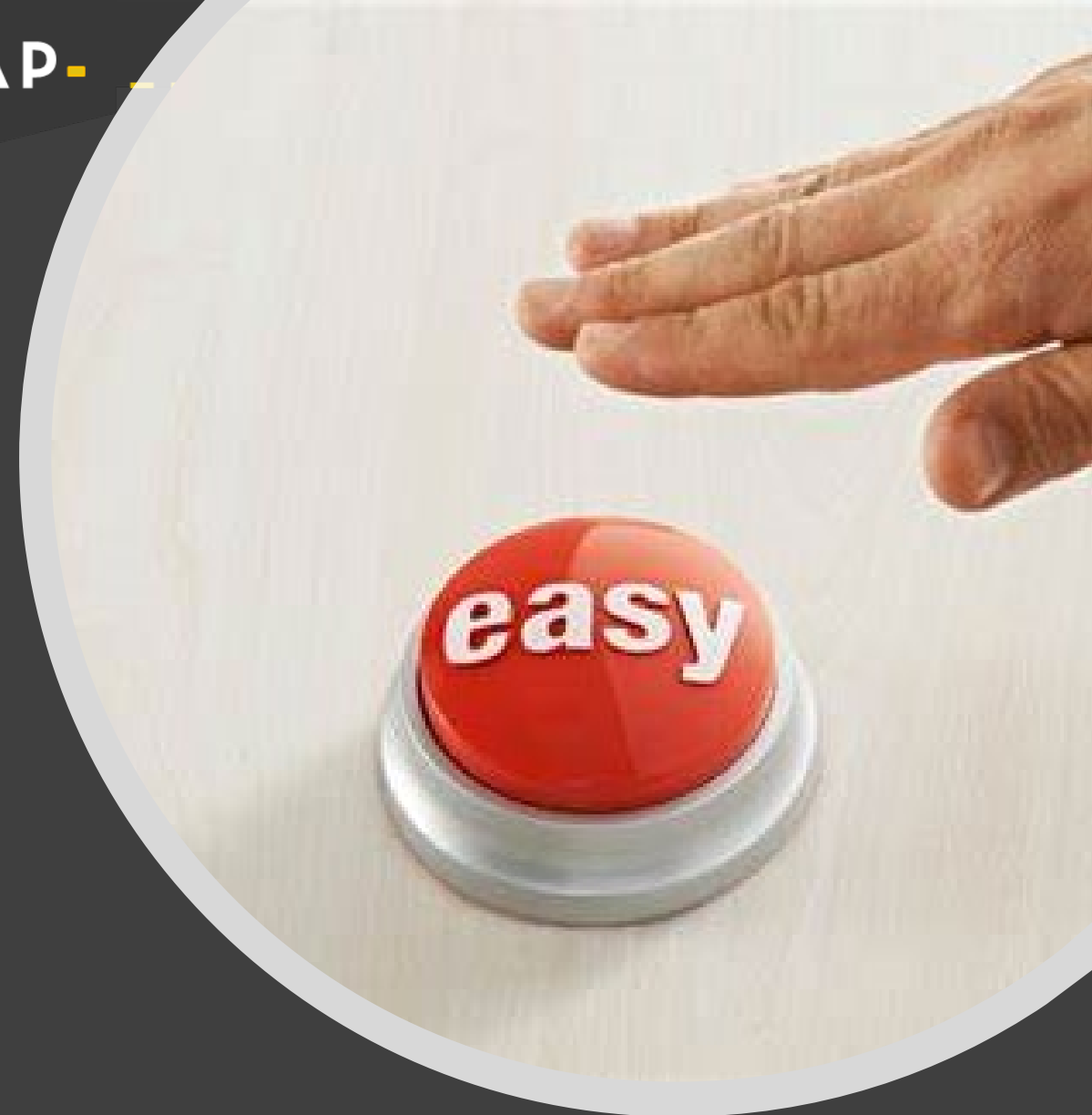
Will any of these steps in the 5-Stage Model be easy to implement and manage?

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?



Advice on When Implementing the 5-Stage Model

When the day comes that you look to start developing and implementing the 5-Stage Plan to Attract and retain employees or any other type of workforce plan, it's important that you take certain steps to prepare yourself, your department, and the organization to ensure success.

Thoughtful planning, active engagement of key stakeholders, and a realistic and clearly defined plan and implementation schedule are critical to making your program successful.

Attachment D: Workforce Strategy, Planning, and Alignment is offered if you are interested in how to plan, develop, implement, and align not only a Workforce Development Plan but almost any strategic program for your city or county.

- Overview and Making the Case for Developing a Workforce Strategy
- What is Strategic Workforce Planning?
- What is Workforce Planning?
- How Do We Develop a Workforce Plan?
- How do We Align Our Workforce Plan with Other Business Units?
- A Workforce Planning Example for Public Works or Road and Bridge Organizations



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