

Workforce Shortage: Recruiting and Retention Strategies

The workforce shortage is here and, unfortunately, it is here to stay. How will you meet the demand of your community, customers, and clients and continue to provide the services they expect? Be an employer of choice!

Ask the following questions across your organization:

- 1) Why would someone want to work at my agency? According to [Forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com), to win the war for talent, you need to examine your culture. “Because 95% of candidates will evaluate culture before they apply. Review your [social media] posts, website, current press releases, and what employees are saying about your company. Is your message clear, are you relevant, and does your environment support creativity? Attract millennials by offering rapid career advancement and work flexibility.”
- 2) Do we have strengths in-house (bench strength) and when can I promote from within?
- 3) Should we update job descriptions, transform policies, and build incentives?
- 4) Can we offer incentives for referring qualified candidates?
- 5) How do we invest in employees?

Plan ahead: Be prepared for upcoming retirements and consider hiring replacement staff to allow for overlap, training, and transfer of knowledge. Identify hard to replace positions and create a succession plan for those positions even if there is not an impending retirement.

Work with current staff: Map strengths and then find people to complement your team. Set up a referral-based program. Get to know what your employees like about your organization and showcase it with potential employees. Cultivate an engaging culture that values your employees.

Prepare attractive job postings: Be realistic—don’t write job descriptions for Unicorns (they don’t exist). Consider the terms used in a job description. Is the description inclusive? Will it attract a diverse pool of job-seekers?

Advertise jobs online: 80% of local government found online job posting to be the most effective strategy in connecting with qualified candidates. Use social media and cast a wide net by placing job ads in channels outside of your geographical area and contain general information about your local government, including size, amenities, and other characteristics that might attract interested applicants. Build your brand by telling your agency’s story of public service.

Be flexible: Be willing to train or mentor the right person. Hire for values, train for skills. Consider flexible schedules, working locations, benefits, and incentives. It’s not only about the money. Employees want to engage in meaningful work.

Resources:

[Workforce of Tomorrow](#), Local Government Research Collaborative and the Center for State & Local Government Excellence
[11 Strategies Companies Can Use to Overcome the Talent Shortage, Forbes.com](#)
[The Most Effective Recruitment Strategies in Local Government, ICMA](#)