

Improving the Quality of Human Services Through Results-Oriented Human Resource Management

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Public human service agencies should have the best and brightest staff. Vulnerable adults, families, and children served by these agencies need and deserve skilled, respectful, and compassionate partners to help them improve their lives. Research and field experience in child welfare services underscore that successful outcomes for children and families “*require caseworkers to be responsive to unexpected problems and individualized needs, tenacious in navigating the complex bureaucratic maze of state and federal regulations, and able to form personal relationships that win the trust and confidence of a variety of children and families.*”¹

Attracting, nurturing, rewarding, and keeping such people is a challenge. It requires adequate compensation, realistic performance expectations, manageable workloads, effective leadership and supervision, training and development opportunities, and a supportive work environment. Too often, these prerequisites are not in place. The roadblocks are variously called “red tape,” “the system,” “bureaucracy,” “civil service,” “rule bound management,” “politics,” etc.² No matter what they are called, such roadblocks are not immovable. Strategies and tools of human resource management (HRM) can dismantle many, if not all, of these roadblocks.

By improving support and management of these most important assets—the people who work there—human services agencies can better achieve the following results:

A quality workforce characterized by:

- frontline staff who have the skills, judgment, diversity, and commitment to make difficult and complex decisions and to address each service need individually;
- supervisors with coaching skills to ensure effective practice; and
- managers who lead effectively.

Continuity for children, families, and other human service consumers by retaining high-quality staff through:

- adequate pay;
- clear job expectations that focus on key skills;
- appropriate performance appraisals that are based on job expectations and competencies and that connect work evaluations to work outcomes;
- recognizing and rewarding excellence with both monetary and non-monetary rewards;
- manageable workloads;
- delegating authority for decisionmaking and encouraging creative problem-solving; and
- emphasizing staff value through respect and support.

Community partnerships with the communities served by involving them in:

- personnel recruitment to better assure the workforce reflects community diversity;
- skill building among professionals and informal support networks to better prepare all those who provide services and supports to families;
- evaluation of personnel;
- recognition of community helpers, professional and informal supports, for the contributions they make to better outcomes; and
- where possible, hiring decisions.

Achieving these results requires more intentional, aggressive, results-oriented, and visible human resource management. The vehicle for such an agenda, this paper suggests, is a strategic partnership between human service administration and human resource management.³ Human service administrators need not become HRM experts; however, they do need to learn about and draw on effective human resource management strategies by actively teaming with their human resource counterparts. As strategic partners, human resource management professionals should, in turn, share the mission and outcomes of human service professionals and appreciate the unique challenges faced by this special workforce.

A partnership between human services and human resource managers is a powerful strategy for eliminating certain barriers to more effective service delivery. At the same time, even very strong human resource

management can address only one aspect of service delivery. Other essential elements must be in place as well, such as adequate funding, sound program and operational policies, and useful technological supports. Some service delivery improvements require money, legislative approval, buy-in from leaders, and other prerequisites. Nevertheless, a consistent, high priority, well-resourced effort to attract, develop and support the people providing human services, through the type of partnership outlined on this paper, can produce results.

This paper reviews critical workforce issues in human services (Section I) and how HRM strategies could and do address these issues (Section II), concluding with an agenda for a strategic partnership between human services and human resource management (Section III). Throughout, the paper uses child welfare services as a prime example of how human resource management issues affect human service delivery. However, most of the points made about child welfare could apply to other frontline services to vulnerable families and children.

Appendix A provides a brief compendium of selected jurisdictions that have implemented many of the best practices described in Section II. Appendix B contains a glossary of commonly used HRM terms.

Critical HRM Issues in Human Services

1

People are the heart of effective human services delivery. How these people are treated in the workplace affects the families and individuals they serve. Research in public sector child welfare programs reveals that worker turnover, supervision, and organizational climate play integral roles in successful family reunification and child functioning.⁴

Yet human service agencies, particularly those charged with child welfare, face a series of challenges in building and maintaining a skilled and diverse workforce. These challenges include unwanted staff turnover, few qualified candidates, unfilled vacancies, maintenance of skill levels, and weaknesses in supervision and leadership.

In addition, workloads are demanding and salaries are comparatively low in a job market that devalues public service. Performance appraisal, recognition, and reward programs are often inadequate or nonexistent. These dilemmas may soon become even more pronounced, since well over half the states are currently forecasting serious budget shortfalls for the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

Human service agencies that seek partnerships with neighborhoods and communities experience additional challenges, such as rethinking supervision in the context of decentralized neighborhood settings, finding staff that fit well with community-based practice, and recruiting staff from the community. Genuine partnering with the community requires skill and judgment in applying the public human resource management principles and practices designed to minimize community and political influences over merit.

The following discussion describes more fully the challenges for human resource management within human services today and the effects on the quality of services delivered.

Unwanted staff turnover hinders service continuity.

The greatest concern among many agencies right now is unwanted staff turnover. In a recent child welfare workforce survey, state child welfare

“ I have had judges tell me they are the only constant in a child’s case, because they have seen families have different caseworkers at each hearing. Even 20% turnover is too high. Families should not have 2-3 caseworkers over the course of 2 years. ”

State Human Services Director

agencies responding to questions about annual turnover “reported that, on average, 20 percent of the workers and 8 percent of the supervisors left the agency during the course of one year.”⁵ The survey defined “high” turnover as 50 percent or more annually and “low” turnover as 20 percent or less annually.⁶ Many people in child welfare argue that 20 percent turnover at the frontline is still too high.

Human service administrators in large urban areas and in county-administered agencies around the country often face much higher rates than the average cited.⁷ A New York City administrator suggested that turnover among child protective service workers (those who investigate reports of maltreatment) is 30 to 40 percent, down from a high of 50 percent after implementing several HRM strategies. Likewise, El Paso County, Colorado, experienced a 30-percent annual turnover among investigators. In Durham County, North Carolina, aggregate turnover has approached nearly 50 percent annually, while the attrition rate in some job categories (child protective services) once exceeded 100 percent.

Unmanageable workloads, paperwork demands, poor supervision, low pay, and not feeling valued or respected are some of the reasons individuals, particularly child welfare workers, give for leaving their jobs.⁸ A 1996 North Carolina statewide study concluded that staff left their social service jobs because of “inadequate pay, tough working conditions, lack of recognition for a job well done, chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and overwork.”

When an employee leaves, valuable knowledge is lost. New frontline staff in most child welfare agencies cannot carry a full caseload during an initial probationary period; veteran staff must carry heavier caseloads to compensate. Service delivery within child welfare relies heavily on the relationship and continuity between the staff and the recipients; thus, high turnover is particularly troublesome. Research in child welfare has shown that worker turnover is a major factor in failed family reunification efforts.⁹ Conversely, successful programs have staff who stay. As one observer noted, “Case managers find that families known to an alphabet soup of agencies remain unhelped until someone finally is there long enough and is close enough and persevering enough to forge the kind of authentic relationship that helps to turn lives around.”¹⁰

Unwanted turnover is costly.

High turnover has high financial costs. The administrative costs and time required to recruit, hire, and train a replacement are extensive.

Human resource analysts generally suggest that the cost of replacing an employee equals one-third to one-half of the exiting employee's annual salary. Using this industry standard, one state personnel office estimated that replacing a social worker with a mid-range salary of \$27,000 would cost approximately \$10,000.¹¹

Vacancies, unfilled for extended periods of time, contribute to low morale.

In Durham County, North Carolina, child welfare jobs have remained vacant an average of three months because of inadequate candidate pools and hiring procedures. Such unfilled vacancies have a negative “ripple effect” on services. Vacancies cause work backlogs. To address backlogs, incumbent workers must assume responsibility for higher caseloads, while new workers are recruited, hired, and trained. For workers who stay, this situation contributes to what is commonly called “burnout.” Several factors affect how long positions are vacant, such as hiring freezes and other financial barriers. Most often, delays are bureaucratic problems, such as multiple levels of authorization, job-posting requirements, and slow, protracted deliberations during the search process.

Specialized skill requirements often limit the recruitment pool.

According to human service administrators, the most critical challenge is finding workers who will be a “good fit.” The types of skills associated with successful human service programs include judgment, engagement, assessment, problem solving, collaboration, creativity, and communication.¹² These skills are needed to gather appropriate information and respond individually to the circumstances and needs of children and families. Dealing with those compromised by domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental illness requires individual approaches. Techniques and services that work with one family may not work with another or those that work with children may not work with older youth. In addition to sophisticated skills, some unique characteristics of human service responsibilities produce an unusually high degree of stress. Often, workers are dealing with high-risk situations involving individual or community safety. Frontline child welfare workers, for example, make on-the-spot decisions about children's safety and their family's ability to keep them safe.

Job demands combined with low salaries hinder recruitment.

Factors other than service responsibilities add to the stress. Workers often cope with long and odd hours, high caseloads, extensive documentation requirements, and “multiple bosses.” At every staff and management level, the job is “24/7.” Experience shows that attachment is essential to maintaining the connection that creates success with these families.

Caseloads are often too high to connect effectively with families. Demands for documentation and deadlines compete with time devoted to clients. Furthermore, human services are delivered today in an environment of court and federal oversight and public scrutiny of failures with limited acknowledgement of success. In recent years, many child welfare agencies have come under threat or are embroiled in litigation. Survey data collected from frontline staff in North Carolina suggest that child welfare work is similar to other highly demanding professions. In some way, it is a “calling” for which only a small percentage of the workforce is suited.

In contrast to the skills and demands of human service work, all categories of human service workers have traditionally been at the lower end of pay scales when compared to other jobs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics consistently reports social work as one of the five lowest paying professional jobs for both men and women.¹³ Salary is not always the number one reason for staff turnover, but pay is certainly a major difficulty encountered in attracting and retaining competent employees.

Agencies fail to evaluate, recognize, and reward good performance.

Dissatisfaction with performance appraisal systems is another of the most common complaints heard among public employees, not just human service workers. Civil service systems have bred an aversion to making performance distinctions and are frequently incapable of rewarding superior performance. “Good workers” generally receive the same pay raises as everyone else. Too often, the only way to give significant increases to excellent direct service providers is to reclassify their positions to higher levels and/or promote them. This resolution often means removing valuable employees from direct service and into administrative roles.

Promoting an outstanding classroom teacher into school administration for an increased salary is a parallel. Too often, the promoted employee may not possess the aptitude, disposition, and skill set to be a successful supervisor or principal. This resolution is particularly unfortunate in child welfare where, because of staffing shortages and increased caseloads, every supervisor selection is critical to the success of the work and the

families. Unfortunately, the alternative is for individuals to continue their excellent service delivery without any tangible recognition, which only contributes to poor morale.

Measuring performance is a thorny component of this problem. Performance measures are even more challenging in human service work where clear expectations for anything other than timely paperwork are often missing and successful outcomes with families are elusive. In child welfare work, frontline staff are often evaluated on the timeliness and quality of their documentation and their compliance with procedure, such as frequency of client contact. Too often, the purpose of these requirements is not related to child and family outcomes. Human service staff, like other employees, need clear job expectations that focus on key competencies and connect work effort to outcomes.

Professional and leadership development is often weak or in short supply.

Successful human service operations have learned that effective training and continuous support of learning are essential. This recognition is particularly true when frontline staff have wide discretion in decisionmaking with families and services.¹⁴ People want and need job readiness and growth opportunities. They do not want to feel stagnant or inadequate in their responsibilities. Unprepared workers leave because they are not adequately prepared to perform their jobs and, so, are not confident; consequently, the job is not what “they bargained for.” Competent workers will leave to develop skills and grow elsewhere. Without growth opportunities, many skilled workers move on to other positions.

Staff development is often another weak link in many public and private organizations. In the public sector, training time is frequently used to review state policies rather than learn new skills. Not surprisingly, public sector agencies generally devote less than 1 percent of their budgets to training and development compared with 5-6 percent in the private sector.¹⁵ In addition, training budgets are often the first sacrificed in difficult times.

Leadership development is increasingly a critical HRM function. As “baby boomers” move toward retirement, the average age of the workforce is changing, thinning out leadership and requiring replacement. Case studies of successful private sector companies as well as public sector initiatives point to leadership as an essential factor in success.

“Employee Grievances are escalating. Between 1998 and 2001 there was nearly a 40% increase because there is a lack of supervisory development and conflict resolution.”

**State Personnel Director in
a Human Services Agency**

Yet, here too, the “development” aspect is overlooked. Often, the common attitude is that leaders are “born,” not “created,” and finding good leaders is pure chance. However, as one observer noted, *“leaders... have many skills in common that are not mysterious and can be learned. These include: the willingness to experiment and take risks; to manage by ‘groping along;’ to tolerate ambiguity; to win the trust simultaneously of line workers, politicians, and the public; to respond to demands for prompt, tangible evidence of results; to be collaborative in working with staff; and to allow discretion at the front lines.”*¹⁶ Programs that nurture natural leaders by providing further skill development and learning are essential.

Labor relations can affect continuity with families and consumers.

Like civil service systems, labor unions are intended to protect workers. Job security is a fundamental goal. As a result, labor unions are frequently cited as barriers to change. Because longevity (seniority) is the preferred union criterion for allocating rewards, a strong union presence can further compound some of the more rigid procedures and practices of merit systems. Civil servants in over 30 states have collective bargaining rights. Unions can often be expected to bargain for across-the-board raises, restrictions on managerial discretion, and extensive protections against employee discipline and/or removal. The union representing one state’s public human service staff recently played a major role in approving reorganization plans as the agency prepared for severe legislated budget cuts. The union influenced the reassignment of most employees, even some who were essentially under contract to the state through private foundation funding. In addition, as a result of negotiated “reduction in force” procedures, administrators with years of experience (but a number of years away from frontline) will once again carry a caseload. For the first time in years, they will be working directly with families and children rather than programs and policies. Despite current direct-service experience and established relationships with the families they serve, more recently hired staff will likely be laid off because they have fewer years of state employment.

The community partnership approach presents a new set of challenges.

Current efforts to establish community-based service delivery, locate service providers in the neighborhoods of consumers, and engage resident leaders and neighborhood institutions in a collaborative service delivery process, similar to community policing or charter schools. In the child welfare field, this trend involves working with neighborhoods and

communities to build effective public-private partnerships for shared child welfare responsibility. For example, a vision proposed by leaders in child protective services states that a *“community partnership for child protection...is a confederation of parents, other members of the family, and community, public and private agencies that, over time, assumes a far-reaching role in the design and implementation of a service delivery system that protects children.”*¹⁷

Community-based work, however, presents its own challenges to traditional human service organization and delivery, and, in turn, traditional human resource management. As with community policing, agencies must restructure their work and organizations through *“strategic planning, new professional incentives, retraining, and tactical integration with traditional policing.”*¹⁸

Experience shows that cultural sensitivity is critical. In preparation for handling a variety of issues, staff based locally should reflect a community's ethnic profile or the community's experience.

Recruitment, job qualifications, training, and supervision are all affected when the community is a partner. Ideally, community leadership should play a role in recruiting and hiring decisions. However, involving the community can have unintended consequences. First, the effect could be a very complex, time-consuming, and even intimidating process that actually discourages managers and applicants. Second, the effect could potentially introduce political bias, which civil-service systems were designed to avoid. HRM expertise is needed to develop effective means for including the community without creating new problems.

Staff based in community settings, such as schools or family resource centers, encounter poor working space and limited technical support. They may lack the computers and telephone systems that make their jobs easier. They can also suffer low morale in separation from co-workers. Such isolation also impedes effective supervision as supervisors remain in central offices with limited day-to-day contact with neighborhood-based staff.

In community partnerships, the variety of different cultural and educational experiences encourages an approach to professional development that takes advantage of this diversity to strengthen the community as well as skills of the staff. This approach requires broadening the philosophies and opportunities that define training for formal and informal service providers. For example, training for mediation and facilitation bridges many circumstances and settings for both “professionals” and “nonprofessionals” working with the community and both can benefit from conflict resolution skills and running an effective meeting.

Using HRM Strategies to Build a Stable, Qualified Workforce

2

In the past, human resource management functions were highly centralized, specialized, and control-oriented to ensure proper office and governmental procedures, especially in the public sector. Human resource management was responsible for classifying job positions, recruitment, and hiring as well as ensuring employee benefits, employment laws, and employee discipline. In some instances, human resource management served line managers as advisors or consultants on specific problems.

Over the last decade, human resource management in the public sector has evolved considerably with useful innovations for building a more stable, better-qualified workforce. In fact, *Governing Magazine's* Government Performance Project 2001 noted: “Classification systems in some states are being winnowed down from thousands of titles to hundreds. Pay for performance, although still controversial, is a hot topic. Improved performance appraisal is a common goal.”

As a result of these trends, strategies and tools for addressing many workforce issues in the human service field exist in the public sector's HRM “tool kit”—even if not yet widely implemented.¹⁹ These human resource strategies may not be widely known to human service administrators. Likewise, human resource professionals may not have considered the unique aspects of human services. Consequently, HRM best practices may not be achieving their full potential to improve public human service delivery.

The strategies available in the “tool kit” are organized here as they could be used to address the five challenges for the human service workforce previously discussed: 1) retention, 2) vacancies, 3) quality, 4) labor relations, and 5) community partnership.²⁰

The following discussion of best practices in public human-resource management draws from the City of Phoenix and Maricopa County, Arizona; Sacramento County, California; and from the states of North and South Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin. These jurisdictions were recognized as leaders within public human resource management by their peers and by national observers, such as *Governing Magazine*. Other jurisdictions and strategies are highlighted in Appendix A.

Strategies for retaining good people.

Retention strategies are diverse. They include increasing compensation and other financial rewards, using outcomes and competency-based appraisal systems, and enhancing how employees feel about their work in other ways.

■ Monetary rewards and increased compensation flexibility.

Given current economic conditions, executives and legislatures may be reluctant to fund increased salaries or other monetary rewards. However, the cost of an increase for one who merits it, compared with the cost of replacing any worker, makes such monetary increases more reasonable to consider. Several jurisdictions have improved compensation and monetary rewards for entry-level and long-term staff, including social workers. A variety of measures are used, such as “signing bonuses,” “longevity” pay, and reform of the entire compensation and classification system.

Bonuses may provide a good short-term solution to hiring challenges, but a more comprehensive strategy is greater compensation flexibility through reformed classification and compensation schemes. One major innovation in public-sector human resource management is “broad banding.”

Under traditional civil service classification systems, most new appointments are made only at the minimum salary grade. New hires generally start at the lowest salary within their grade or classification. In contrast, a broadly banded system combines several narrow job classifications into much larger categories and creates a wider pay range for each classification. This option enables agencies to increase employees’ salaries without reclassifying or promoting them. Wider pay bands were created in the **State of Wisconsin** when 500 job classifications were collapsed into 315. The **State of South Carolina** collapsed 2,200 job classifications into about 500 and reduced the total number of pay grades from 50 to 10, creating very wide pay bands separated, on average, by nearly \$23,000. In addition, a reformed classification system can enable monetary rewards for exceptional performance. In **Wisconsin**, supervisors were empowered to enhance pay in accordance with employees’ duties, acquisition of new skills, and performance levels. These reforms affected turnover and employee satisfaction. **South Carolina’s** turnover has slowed and is currently about 15 percent. Reportedly, supervisors have increased satisfaction, because they are now more able to: 1) reassign workers more easily, 2) give substantial “bumps” in pay, and 3) craft counter offers.

■ **Outcomes and competency-based performance appraisal.**

Another emerging strategy for retaining employees replaces classic rating scales (checklists of traits) with more outcomes-based and competency-based measurement tools. In the **State of Washington**, a supervisor and subordinate work independently to develop a draft performance plan linked to the agency's goals. Once each has identified a work plan *and* a set of identifiable outcomes, they collaborate to develop a final version of the evaluation criteria. (See sidebar at right.) In this manner, the expectations and objectives of both the manager and employee are clarified and synchronized. The **State of Washington** believes this approach has been successful. They point to initial employee survey results, indicating satisfaction levels with the new evaluation system at 97 percent. In contrast, the previous performance appraisal strategy had generated a 93 percent *disapproval* rating.

Another common reform is the “360-degree evaluation”—that is, supervisors, peers, subordinates, and clients assess the employees. In **Washington State** and other jurisdictions, anonymous surveys solicit the opinions of various groups. The purpose is to provide workers with a more comprehensive and insightful look at how their performance is perceived and how it impacts diverse groups. Feedback from these diverse sources can result in altered work plans, revised priorities, or even the reassignment of personnel to different tasks.

■ **Employee recognition.**

In most employment settings, including human service agencies, part of employee satisfaction is tied to understanding exactly how the job fits within the agency overall. Being clear about where their work fits once done, how their duties support the organization's goals, and how their own efforts contribute to family well-being are very significant to good employees. Recognizing efforts and valuing contributions helps form this understanding as do clear job descriptions and effective supervision. Several jurisdictions have implemented efforts to help staff feel valued, respected, and supported. **Maricopa County, Arizona**, implemented a revised leave plan that enhanced morale and established an “emotional commitment agenda.” This effort includes a number of inexpensive measures aimed at making the workers feel valued, such as employee picnics, years-of-service pins, revamped monthly newsletters, and the introduction of recognition awards. The sidebar on page 16 highlights another jurisdiction.

Using the Performance Appraisal System to Focus on Competency Development

The Washington State approach requires that the supervisor and staff member meet on a regular basis to review and adjust the employee's performance plan, as events warrant. At the end of the review cycle, the manager and subordinate separately write draft assessments of the performance period and then meet to discuss and achieve consensus on the employee's output. The process is “developmental.” It identifies key competencies that the employee might need to accomplish the specified objectives. Once competencies are identified, the supervisor can refer the employee to appropriate training for the requisite knowledge, skill, or ability. These competencies then become the framework for HRM criteria, including performance expectations, performance evaluations, succession planning, and even compensation and training.

Celebrating Staff

The Durham County, North Carolina, Department of Social Services has a wide range of initiatives that strive to appreciate, empower, and support workers and improve supervision. Worker appreciation includes systematic efforts to provide employees with small gifts on special occasions, such as chocolate hearts on Valentine's Day or birthdays and to make managers accessible—a strategy of “management by walking around.” An employee committee is responsible for identifying problems, recommending solutions to management, and sponsoring morale-building programs. In addition, management was particularly aggressive at trying to reduce stress levels among child welfare workers, where 82 percent of County turnover occurs.

■ **Effective communication.**

Another key area of employee satisfaction is communication. Experience from the field suggests that employees directly relate job satisfaction, in part, to the communication flow of the organization. In large businesses and public agencies with multiple locations and decisionmaking levels, business decisions are often articulated in an untimely, unexplained manner. This lack of real-time “circular” information leaves employees (especially frontline workers) discouraged, disconnected, and disempowered. People have a need to know and understand. Lacking timely and effective communication, they will rely on assumptions and hearsay to form an opinion, which inevitably adds to burn out and negative work environments.

Strategies for quickly filling vacancies with qualified candidates.

Quickly hiring qualified candidates shortens the time that existing staff must do “double duty.” Two major strategies for reducing the time a position remains vacant are continuous recruitment and eliminating unnecessary “hoops” for candidates. Both strategies rely on proactive management in the human service agency and in human resources.

Continuous recruitment.

Many public sector HRM systems have already adopted “continuous recruitment” practices to provide a pool of candidates when vacancies occur. In contrast, traditional civil service practice discouraged real recruitment efforts until a job was “posted.” **The State of Wisconsin** does continuous recruitment for many job classifications. Applications are always being accepted, and candidates are routinely screened. Therefore, when a position opens, **Wisconsin** is not required to formally announce and/or advertise the specific vacancy in order to process applicants. This practice permits prompt referrals to the interviewing agency and more rapid hiring.

Reduce or eliminate hiring “hoops.”

Traditional written “civil service examinations” often represent an enormous hurdle for applicants and recruiters. Such examinations may expand the recruitment process beyond six weeks to two months. In addition, many positions can only be filled through a rigid examination process. The side bar on page 17 highlights the Maricopa County process.

Alternatives that have reduced the elapsed time required to hire staff include:

- Eliminating written examinations for certain positions and replacing them with resumes and/or applications that contain the applicant's qualifications;
- Using a skills inventory, a questionnaire, or checklist that applicants are asked to complete;
- Eliminating restrictions on the number of applicants who can be interviewed;
- Allowing applicants to apply online with computers; and
- Creating walk-in testing centers for positions that still require some kind of written or performance tests (for example, typing tests).

Strategies for building and enhancing workforce quality.

As with retention, a number of strategies are used to improve the quality of staff and managers in human services. These strategies include incorporating required skills into job descriptions, offering incentives and rewards for staff who increase their skills, and focusing training on skill development.

Candidate qualifications based on required job competencies.

Current trends are moving away from arbitrary job qualifications, such as specific educational degrees, toward a more holistic evaluation of job competencies. The **Wisconsin** classification specification for Child Support Program Specialist reads, "the qualifications for this position will be determined at the time of recruitment...based on an analysis of goals and worker activities performed and by identification of the education, training, work or other life experience which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been required." When recruiting for positions, **Wisconsin** staff often identify competencies such as 1) "the ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing" or 2) "knowledge of methods relating to offenders, reflecting an understanding and acceptance of offenders, and gaining offenders' confidence and cooperation." In interviews, job candidates are asked to explain and demonstrate how they acquired the required competencies. Candidates can refer to academic, work, or life experience.

Streamlined Hiring

A new hire in Maricopa County, Arizona, can be identified and placed in a job within ten days. This approach to timely hiring includes: 1) limiting the application period to five days instead of weeks; 2) announcing openings weekly and disseminating these notices widely; 3) extensive use of technology so that applicants can fill out all requisite paperwork online with computers or by fax rather than coming to an office because transportation can be a problem; 4) allowing the Office of Human Resources to initiate a search as soon as a vacancy becomes apparent (no need to wait until the employee actually leaves the position;) and 5) targeting recruitment and streamlined certification.

Internships Expand Candidate Pool

Johnston County, North Carolina, arranged with nearby colleges and universities to hire interns (for about \$6-\$7/hour) into pre-vocational appointments. Most are placed in high-need areas—child welfare and investigations—and before graduation become familiar with the demands of the job. Upon graduation, these individuals represent a trained and pre-selected pool of candidates.

Partnerships with universities prepare candidates and provide ongoing skill development.

Studies indicate that individuals with social work training are likely to stay longer and be more successful in human service delivery positions than individuals without degrees in social work.²¹ Individuals with formal social work training often better understand the demands of the job and are less surprised by them. This orientation comes, in part, from internship experiences in human service agencies as part of their social work training.

A number of states and local jurisdictions have developed partnerships with universities to better prepare the candidate pool. In **North Carolina**, a *Child Welfare Education Collaborative* was established among the accredited social work programs in the state's public universities and the county Departments of Social Service' agencies. Stipends (\$15,000/year) are awarded to students who intend to pursue careers in child welfare. In exchange, students agree to stay in the field of child welfare for at least the number of years that they receive funding for their education. Federal monies (through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Act (TANF) and the child welfare program funding known as "IVE"²²—(fund the program along with required state matching funds. To expedite the graduates' transition into the frontlines, the universities altered their Master's course offerings to encompass the "core competencies" that a social worker must have to work "in the field." The program has proven so successful that expansion is now underway to the Bachelor's degree level.²³ Other states report similar success. A local county experience is summarized in the side bar on the left.

Similarly, the **Virginia** Institute of Social Services Training Activities (VISSTA) is a cooperative agreement between the State Department of Social Services, the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work, and local Departments of Social Services. VISSTA was formed several years ago to provide skills training for local staff. VISSTA course offerings are extensive and diverse, addressing such topics as domestic violence, substance abuse, ethical decisionmaking, and others²⁴

These partnerships reflect an advantage within the child welfare field, which is the availability of federal funding for training support and tuition reimbursement programs.

Incentives for obtaining new or enhancing skills.

Workers in **Wisconsin** are eligible for "Discretionary Compensation Awards" (DCAs) that can total 12 percent of their salaries on an annual

basis. These awards are intended for exceptional workers, those who warrant increases on equity grounds (i.e., poorly paid in relation to the labor market), and those who are reassigned to expanded duties. In some cases, DCAs can be awarded to retain valuable employees who receive counter offers from other employers. The opportunity to obtain meaningful salary increases is designed to encourage workers to acquire additional skills and responsibilities that will benefit service delivery. In effect, DCAs are a form of skill-based pay in which salary enhancements are tied to both performance and employee development. As such, DCAs provide an inducement for employees to participate in training opportunities, to accept greater responsibility, and to become involved in professional organizations.

Professional development to improve competency, skills, and success.

In **Sacramento County, California**, supervisors are encouraged to assign training and development opportunities that will enhance employee skills. The County also established a Career Counseling and Guidance service for employees who register for training programs. The focus is on devising a career development plan that maximizes workers' chances of professional success. The **City of Phoenix** and **Maricopa County, Arizona**, target employee development on those skills that will increase employee value and promotion potential. This focus enables each jurisdiction to “grow its own” managers over time, producing a workforce with the requisite useful skills to accomplish service goals. The **City of Phoenix** offers over 150 courses on almost any conceivable topic. Departments are also authorized to customize their own training for special groups, usually an entire workgroup that progresses together through a sequence of courses.

Targeted leadership development opportunities.

The **City of Durham, North Carolina**, has an Executive Leadership Program to develop collaborative skills in upper management. Other examples of leadership development strategies come from **Arizona, California**, and **Colorado**:

- The **City of Phoenix** exposes supervisors to a wide range of training opportunities in a leadership academy. Core classes address such topics as coaching, discipline, performance appraisal, strategic planning and organizational culture. A management academy for higher-level managers includes such subjects as change management, emotional intelligence, diversity, response to the media, and political strategies.

- Some agencies in **Sacramento County, California**, are engaging in succession planning. The talents and abilities of existing staff are evaluated, their training needs identified, and search plans initiated to fill “skill vacuums” that cannot be met by the current labor force.
- **Maricopa County** maintains a three-level training program for its supervisors and managers. The training targets both practical skills and process objectives intended to heighten organizational commitment and cooperation. Sessions are also used expressly for managing change. Participants are expected to commit themselves to a plan (personal and organizational improvement) before concluding the program. Learning groups are carefully mixed to foster cross-departmental dialogue. Sometimes entire schools are integrated as a means of encouraging collaborative behavior among various managerial levels.
- **El Paso County, Colorado**, initiated an internal leadership institute for self-identified “emerging leaders.” This institute is open to all staff (administrative and program, line and management. They meet once a month for 6 to 8 months in 4-hour sessions to address crosscutting issues. About 10 percent of employees participated in the first year. **Monroe County, North Carolina**, has a similar program with a curriculum that includes pertinent projects for the County. Its size is restricted, however, and participants are selected.

Strategies for working with labor unions.

Labor unions need not be an obstacle to achieving reform or workforce quality. In fact, labor unions are often an impetus to collaboration and mutual problem solving. This often starts by achieving greater mutual understanding between labor and management. Efforts to build labor-management partnerships have succeeded, resulting in better collaboration among management, employees, and unions and leading to further support for change.

Training focused on labor-management relationship building.

In the public sector, effective consensus bargaining in **Wisconsin** demonstrates that training is critical to success. Training on labor-management cooperation is included in orientation for new employees, as an ongoing topic for professional development and in preparation of various negotiating team members. For the most part, the training

focuses on the “process” of labor-management relationships, including team-building, consensus-building, planning capabilities, and dealing with change. Other elements of success include:

- active and dedicated support from agency leadership;
- skilled negotiators, carefully chosen for their experience and temperament;
- problem-focused negotiation sessions (i.e., serial topics, such as scheduling, sick leave, discipline, and the like); and
- perception by representatives of both management and labor as a partnership group.

Labor-management teaming.

Workshops comprised of both labor and management leaders were held around the State of **Wisconsin**. These sessions fostered collaboration and teaming. Each session was capped off with an action-planning exercise in which participants identified real-world solutions to address issues and problems at specific work sites. Current plans include allowing labor representatives to participate in hiring decisions, fostering greater employee involvement in the creation of around-the-clock work schedules, creating self-directed work teams, and reducing sick leave and absenteeism.

Strategies for community partnerships.

Efforts to work in partnership with and involve communities in human resource management activity are limited. Directly involving the community in personnel or service delivery decisions has been avoided for a variety of reasons. First, such involvement has not been desired by many agencies. Second, civil service systems have been designed and implemented to limit outside influences over personnel decisions. However, one available strategy for involving neighborhoods is to ask their help in recruiting locally. This approach is particularly useful for recruiting bilingual workers or those with a particular cultural understanding. Another strategy that reflects sensitivity to the community served, if not direct involvement, is maintaining a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community served. Finally, any strategy that encourages individual employee involvement in community work can be effective toward building more direct and reciprocal involvement by the community.

Aggressive and targeted recruitment in selected communities and neighborhoods.

Examples of outreach and targeted recruitment in the community include the efforts in the **City of Phoenix** and **Maricopa County, Arizona**. **Phoenix** developed a “tool kit” for recruiters to use when visiting high schools. The intent is to encourage students at an early age to consider public employment in the hopes of meeting the City’s long-term recruitment objectives. **Maricopa County** targets community-based organizations for some positions. For example, service organizations aiding the indigent and unemployed are enlisted to help recruit workers for some job categories. These organizations all receive weekly notices of job openings. These more aggressive approaches to recruitment can help meet the challenges of human service work, including supporting community-based service delivery. In **Sacramento County, California**, the Administrator for Public Protection/Human Assistance Agency proposed examining the possible use of high-school interns (“hire tomorrow’s employee today”) to introduce them to careers in public service.

Maintain a workforce that reflects the cultural diversity of the population served.

During the 1970s, **Sacramento County, California**, established “culture competency” as a qualification for certain jobs. In the County’s definition, “culture” is more than a language competency. The County requires that a candidate for a position with an identified culture (for example Hmong, Latino, African American, etc) demonstrate language proficiency and cultural knowledge through a testing procedure. Successful candidates receive a 5-percent differential in their salary. The Public Protection and Human Assistance Agency recruits for culture-specific positions based on the demographics of the population served. Layoffs, when necessary, are also determined by caseload needs. Therefore, the last hired is not automatically the first laid off, if the size of the population served by the newer employees requires all culturally competent staff to work with that population. Although the County does not have quantitative data to demonstrate cost effectiveness, anecdotal data are positive, including reduced cost of interpreters because fewer are needed.

Promote employee community involvement.

Maricopa County, Arizona, has a new policy on “Civic Duty Leave.” Recognizing that government agencies have a special responsibility to

promote citizenship, the County encourages volunteerism by providing paid leave for anyone engaged in civic activities. Thus, workers are prompted to volunteer for charitable or public causes (United Way projects, Habitat for Humanity initiatives, driving voters to the polls or serving as poll workers, and even school-related activities, such as parent-teacher organizations).

3

Defining and Building a Strategic Partnership

“ We need our human service administrators to clearly articulate outcomes and goals. Knowing the impact of service delivery allows human resource managers to develop better “productivity” measures and build budget requests accordingly. In our county, the County Human Services strategic plan identifies the number of homes participating in the weatherization program as a goal. It may be more useful to identify the goal in terms of saved energy costs or reduced evictions from increased energy efficiencies. This kind of goal setting would better enable HR to support requests for more inspectors.”

County Human Resource Manager

Given the workforce challenges in the human service field and the innovations in human resource management, now is an opportune time to define the nature of a “strategic partnership” between the two disciplines and the agenda for building such a partnership.

The vision of partnership.

By partnership, we mean a working relationship between human service agencies and human resource managers that is:

- **Intentional** – regularly seeking each other out, conferring with one another, and solving problems together using data tailored to the workforce issues in human services;²⁵
- **Aggressive** – constantly seeking out best practices, analyzing their potential to meet human service workforce needs, and advocating for their adoption or adaptation, when appropriate;
- **Results oriented** – focusing on the outcomes of their efforts related not only to timeliness or turnover but also to the well-being of the adults, children, and families served by human service agencies; and
- **A higher priority** – increasing the familiarity of human services with the strategies and trends in human resource management and advocating for those innovations that will improve the human service workforce.

In short, we’re striving toward much greater attention to the people dimension of public human service systems.

Working together, human service administrators and human resource managers can craft an approach - a workforce plan — to achieving the workforce goals of quality, continuity to consumers, and partnership with communities. This will require continually defining and revisiting such elements as:

- desired outcomes for service delivery expected of the workforce;
- outcome data and self-evaluation of what is working and what is not;

“ We have to be willing to have a honest discussion with our human resource managers regarding what they can let go of and for which decisions we, human services, will be held responsible and accountable. We have to be prepared to support HR with jurisdictional decision makers like our Board of County Supervisors. ”

County Human Services Agency
Manager

- best practices in both human services and human resource management;
- personal characteristics, skills, and knowledge needed for success in each human service job, whether child maltreatment investigators or eldercare givers.
- capacity gaps;
- strategies for recruitment, expedited hiring, classification, compensation, evaluation, training, succession planning, etc;
- methods for assessing the skills and competencies of job candidates that formal credentials may not reflect; and,
- community connections to nurture key competencies and recruit (and retain) candidates who have them.

The building blocks of partnership.

Leadership commitment at the highest levels is essential. Without such commitment and the resulting political will, the two disciplines will have trouble coming together or achieving change.

Following leadership, the **capacity to partner** must be in place. The National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) suggests that the partner role requires many HRM professionals to acquire a new or enhanced set of skills in consulting, analysis, communication, planning, risk-taking, and team process, among others.²⁶ This will be a leap for some. They must learn how to implement innovations in a way that minimizes unintended consequences. Introducing greater flexibility to a previously rigid system is not completely “abuse proof.” Any strategy that includes broad discretion also requires thorough training of supervisors and managers to negotiate salaries and manage more complex pay systems. Similarly, both human service administrators and HRM professionals may need additional skill building in strategic planning. It is not a standard practice in either human services or HRM.²⁷

Partnering will require a **capacity to experiment** and appropriately evaluate that experimentation. The partnership should be prepared to take a new look at old standards. A need for new measurement benchmarks may emerge as a result of applying a new perspective to traditional human resource data. Instead of reflecting on worker turnover as a measure of “organizational health,” a better focus might be “worker continuity” with its measure being the percentage of families who have had the same caseworker for an extended time. In addition, a community partnership

may open the door to new kinds of candidates and new kinds of job preparation. Requiring a specific degree can limit the candidate pool, unless human service agencies have a well-developed link with colleges and universities. Another solution may be to explore special training programs for community members to prepare them for professional and paraprofessional positions. Long-time practitioners have suggested that the necessary skills can be born of life experience, such as successful child rearing, recovery from substance abuse, or school volunteer work. However, little investigation of this approach is evident nor are the needed implementation tools available. Partnerships that undertake this approach may construct their own tools and evaluation methods.

The following figure summarizes some suggested activities as starting points for each partner.

Steps in Building Strategic Partnerships

Human Service Administration

Clearly define strategic outcomes that can be communicated to the HRM partner.

Strategic outcomes form the basis for more clearly defined job requirements, employee competencies, performance expectations and HRM data needed for planning and strategy design.

Invite human-resource management to the table during critical planning and decisionmaking. HRM is often forgotten when a child welfare system is threatened by litigation. But, HRM should be involved in discussions about improvements to the system to help make sound decisions. Moreover, these decisions have important workforce implications.

Invite labor unions to the table as partners.

Analyze human resource data. Provide feedback on what is useful and what could be more useful for solving problems and monitoring progress within human services.

Be more familiar with HRM policies and practices.

Jointly, create opportunities for increasing mutual understanding and trust.

Cross-functional teams focused on mutual issues or job shadowing can help HR managers better understand the qualifications needed for human service jobs. Likewise, human service personnel gain more knowledge and appreciation of HRM work.

Human Resource Management

Adopt a philosophy that allows risk-taking and tolerance of variability in the implementation of HRM policies. Human resource managers must be prepared to give up some control.

Keep abreast of the best practices in human resources and reflect on how they may be adopted or adapted.

Acquire the technology necessary for collecting and analyzing data that will aid in workforce planning.

*Revisit standard procedures to take advantage of existing flexibility in state or local legislation.*²⁸

Become more familiar with the outcomes and methods of human services and the unique challenges that human service workers face in their jurisdictions.

Conclusion

This is an achievable agenda.

The examples from jurisdictions around the country clearly illustrate a current and ongoing process of adopting new HRM policies and procedures. In select places, strategic partnerships may already be forming. South Carolina has transformed its HRM function by creating a pool of consultants who confer with human service agencies on their human resource problems, such as: reducing staff turnover, resolving labor-management disputes, devising recruitment strategies for high-need jobs, and structuring appropriate incentive systems. These examples also illustrate that reform and innovation within human resource management do not always require legislative action. Although civil service reform in Wisconsin required three legislative sessions, many strategies only require a new mindset by leadership.

This is an urgent agenda.

Workforce and workload issues are crippling effective human service delivery in many jurisdictions. As a result, vulnerable adults, families, and children are not getting the quality services that they deserve and that many in the human service workforce want to provide. Human services and human resource management need to move together quickly and steadily to develop the necessary capacity for effective partnership.

Finally, this is a learning agenda.

As these partnerships take hold, our knowledge will expand. More will be known about what works and what does not and why. Together, human service administrators and human resource managers can achieve effective change if the creative thinking and energy exemplified in the HRM practices highlighted in this paper are systematically applied to the challenges of the human service workforce.

ENDNOTES

1. Glisson, Charles, and Hemmelgarn, Anthony, "The Effects of Organizational Climate and Interorganizational Coordination on the Quality and Outcomes of Children's Service Systems," *Child Abuse and Neglect*, vol. 22, no. 5, 1998, pg. 404.
2. Several authors and organizations have enumerated bureaucratic roadblocks to greater government efficiency, flexibility, and effectiveness, including Lisbeth Schorr in *Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America*, 1997, the National Performance Review and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, the National Academy of Public Administration, and David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*, 1992.
3. Leaders in the field of public administration and personnel management have promoted this call for partnership. The National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) has defined strategic partnerships as a team approach with human resource management sharing the human service agency's mission and outcomes and being an active member of the management team: *Strategies and Alternatives for Transforming Human Resources Management* (Washington DC: National Academy of Public Administration, 1995). The International Personnel Management Association (IPMA) is encouraging its members to be strategic business partners: *HR Strategic Planning* (IPMA, 2002).
4. Hess, Peg McCartt, Folaron, Gail, and Jefferson, Ann Buschmann, "Effectiveness of Family Reunification Services: An Innovative Evaluative Model," *Social Work*, vol. 37, no. 4., 992; Glisson and Hemmelgarn, *Op. Cit.*; and Cicero-Reese, B., and Black, P., "Research Suggests Why Child Welfare Workers Stay on the Job," *Partnerships for Child Welfare*, vol. 5, no. 5, pp. 5 and 8-9, February 1998.
5. *The Child Welfare Workforce Challenge: Results from a Preliminary Study* (Milwaukee WI: Alliance for Children and Families, American Public Human Services Association and the Child Welfare League of America, May 2001).
6. *Ibid.*
7. Discussion comments at a meeting of human service administrators and human resource managers convened by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, Washington, D.C., June 20, 2001.
8. "High and demanding workloads" was cited by 82 percent of the states as "highly problematic" in retaining people; low salaries were "highly problematic" for 46 percent of the states responding to the survey: *The Child Welfare Workforce Challenge, Op. Cit.*
9. Hess, Folaron, and Jefferson, *Op. Cit.*
10. Schorr, Lisbeth B., *Op. Cit.*, pg. 11.
11. Interview with Amanda Andrade, Director of Personnel, Missouri Department of Social Services.
12. Schorr, pp. 10-15.
13. *Career Guide to Industries*, Standard Industry Code 835 (Washington DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000-2001).
14. Schorr, pg. 10
15. Carnevale, David, "Employee Development and Training," in Steven Hays and Richard Kearney (Eds) *Public Personnel Administration: Problems & Prospects*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1995.
16. Schorr, pg. 9

17. Farrow, Frank, "Child Protection: Building Community Partnerships," prepared for the Harvard Kennedy School of Government's Executive Session on New Paradigms for Child Protection, Cambridge MA, 1997, pg.6.
18. *Community Safety and Justice: A Guide to Key Ideas, Effective Approaches, and Technical Assistance Resources for Making Connections Cities and Site Teams* (Baltimore MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, Technical Assistance/Resource Center, 2001, pg. 23.
19. *Governing Magazine's* Government Performance Project 2001 also cautioned, "The states are hardly moving in lockstep toward some generally agreed upon human-resource system. This is an area in which there remains real diversity in practice and philosophy." (governing.com)
20. The cited best practices are described more fully in "Human Resource Management Innovation in Selected Jurisdictions" a separate document containing individual case studies of seven jurisdictions; the information was collected in Winter / Spring 2001.
21. Booz-Allen and Hamilton, "The Maryland Social Services Job Analysis and Personnel Qualifications Study: Executive Summary" (Baltimore MD: Department of Human Resources, 1987); Albers, E., Reilly, T., and Rittner, B., "Children in Foster Care: Possible Factors Affecting Permanency Planning. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1993, pp. 329-341; Cicero-Reese and Black, *Op. Cit.*; Olsen, L., and Holmes, W., "Educating Child Welfare Workers: The Effects of Professional Training on Service Delivery," *Journal of Education for Social Work*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1982, pp. 94-102.
22. This refers to Title IVE of the Social Security Act.
23. The relevant contacts at the Jordan Institute of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, are Nancy Dickinson and Evelyn Smith-Williams,.
24. *Virginia Institute for Social Services Training Activities Course Catalog*, 2001-2002.
25. When a strategic partner, human resources is involved with a leadership team when major decisions that affect the future of the organization are discussed and debated: *Strategies and Alternatives*, NAPA, *Op. Cit.*, pg.10.
26. IPMA has developed a set of 22 specific competencies that human-resource professionals must master to become part of the solution, not part of the problem. These competencies are organized into four key roles: expert, business partner, change agent, and leader.
27. IPMPA's 2000/2001 benchmarking survey reports that only 42 percent of respondents say their central personnel agency has a written strategic plan. *HR Strategic Planning*, IPMA, *Op. Cit.*
28. Sacramento County, California, determined that no legislative barriers existed to some HRM changes. Likewise, Jonathan Walters found barriers to civil service reform in Massachusetts could be addressed with administrative changes. See Walters, Jonathan, *Toward a High-Performance Workplace: Fixing Civil Service in Massachusetts* (Boston, MA: Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research, White Paper #13, 2000).

APPENDIX

COMPENDIUM OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICE REFORMS



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Aggressive Human Resource management (HRM) reform has been an ongoing process within public agencies for nearly thirty years. The absolute number of specific reform programs is impossible to gauge. One limiting factor is the simple fact that the United States contains over **80,000** governmental jurisdictions. Every one of these city, county, state, or special purpose agencies has probably introduced some type of HRM reform in the recent past. In addition to the sheer volume of technical, legislative, and procedural revisions in civil service systems, most of the alterations are the direct byproduct of “diffusion of innovation.” That is, once a good idea has been identified and successfully implemented, the reform spreads to other public jurisdictions without much fanfare. Thus, there may be many cases in which worthy reform programs have been introduced; yet the host agencies receive little or no outside recognition from the professional community.

With these thoughts in mind, the following list of HRM Best Practices is intended to accomplish three goals.

- **To provide a framework for discussing HRM innovation.** This Compendium is intended to organize the types of HRM reforms according to their functional objectives. The traditional functions of HRM – such as recruitment, classification, compensation, performance appraisal, discipline – are all intended to promote one common objective: to make public agencies perform more effectively. They are therefore interrelated, making distinctions between different types of reform programs somewhat artificial. Nevertheless, the various “personnel functions” do provide a convenient means of conceptualizing the diverse HRM reform agenda.
- **To briefly explain the logic and content of each major thread in the HRM reform fabric.** The underlying reasons why these reforms are both necessary and worthwhile are very succinctly stated in the context of their contributions to broader HRM objectives.

- **To chronicle the specific reform programs and jurisdictions that are most noteworthy as potential models that other public agencies might seek to emulate.** This Compendium does not attempt to offer a complete accounting for each and every reform, nor does it contain the names of every city, county, or state that might deserve recognition. Instead, the entries that are included below have been culled from an extensive review of the HRM reform literature. They are mentioned primarily because of the external recognition that they have received for their accomplishments, and/or for the perceived contributions that they make to innovation efforts.

More in-depth descriptions of seven jurisdictions can be found in a companion document entitled Human Resource Management Innovation in Selected Jurisdictions.

Functional Activity: Recruitment

Ongoing reforms are intended to expedite the identification and selection of qualified applicants. Most of the efforts in this regard involve a 1) reduction in the number of recruitment steps and authorizations that must occur before placement, 2) simplified exam strategies, 3) more aggressive outreach efforts, and 4) decentralization of authority to line managers.

Reform Ideas and Programs

- Elimination of single point of entry.
- Abolition of most paper-and-pencil merit exams, expanded use of technology.
- Expanded outreach efforts targeted at high-need communities.
- Selective certification, by which agencies are empowered to hire individuals with special skills (e.g., bilingual).
- Continuous outreach in which applicants may apply for jobs at any time rather than at designated times and locations.
- On-the-spot hiring for high-need jobs.
- Highly proactive efforts to reach potential applicants and to encourage incumbent employees to assist in the search efforts.
- Financial incentives to attract needed skills.
- Early cultivation of professionals through internships, tuition programs, job shadowing.
- Elaborate orientation programs that gently introduce employees into high-stress jobs in order to reduce anxiety, promote confidence, and enhance retention.
- Employee referrals to fill job vacancies (90% of employees in private sector reportedly arrive through referrals).
- “User-friendly” application systems that incorporate an eclectic mix of outreach, low-stress testing strategies, and uncomplicated procedures are essential elements.
- Emulating private sector search firms.
- Expanded flexibility for the appointing authority—no arbitrary rule of three (etc); cluster recruiting that permits applicants to apply for several job categories through just one test or screening device.
- Linking recruitment priorities to Agency mission statements.

Exemplary Locations of Best Practices - Recruitment

State of Florida: Exemption of line agencies from most state rules on recruitment and selection.

State of North Carolina: County agencies permitted to obtain “delegated authority” to recruit and select under very general guidelines from the State.

States of Colorado and Georgia: Eliminated merit system.

State of South Carolina: Eliminated merit system; created central job bank of position announcements, on-line postings of all jobs; extensive use of career fairs; virtual elimination of formal exams.

Albuquerque, NM: Managers allowed to accrue compensatory time for energies expended in community outreach and recruitment efforts.

New Haven, CT: Recruitment teams consisting of diverse (ethnic and gender) workers used to visit career fairs, attend public meetings, school fairs, etc.

Austin, TX: Strategic planning program that ties HRM objectives – such as recruitment – to missions and goals.

Federal Government: Recruiters given authority to make “on-the-spot” offers to job candidates with needed skills, such as RNs and engineers. The only restriction is that the applicants have 3.0 or better GPAs.

Atlanta, GA: City provides low interest mortgage loans for new workers who agree to stay a given period of time, and to locate in transitional or deteriorating neighborhoods.

Maricopa County, AZ: Community outreach program includes automatic faxes of every job opening to community and social service agencies.

State of Wisconsin: Paperless application, walk-in testing, continuous recruitment, less reliance on exams, decentralized decision authority.

State of Washington: National search efforts using all the techniques of “head-hunter” firms (paid for by charge backs to the hiring agencies.)

North Carolina County DSS Agencies: The Educational Collaborative with Universities in the state provides a pool of talent with staying power. Internship programs are part of this effort.

Fairfax County, VA: Uses continuous recruitment and web site to make job vacancies widely known. They have a university partnership that monitors a Student Unit Project.

Functional Activity: Retention and Improvement In the Quality of Life for Workers.

- Compensation
- Employee Development
- Supervisory Practices

Once recruited, public agencies often are unable to retain good workers due to unreasonable workloads, low pay, poor working conditions, unenlightened leadership, and a huge variety of “job dissatisfiers” that drive away talent. A “positive organizational climate” is probably the single greatest contributor to retention and high morale.

Public agencies once paid little attention to the intrinsic needs of their workers. Enhancements in working conditions and related components of the job context are a critical “target of opportunity” because many of these initiatives can be accomplished with a relatively small expenditure of funds. Likewise, the critical connection between supervisory practices and retention have forced a revolution in the means by which some public managers are trained, overseen, and rewarded.

Reform Ideas/Programs

- Broadbanding forms of classification and pay administration; this allows managers more flexibility in the job assignments and pay assigned to their subordinates.
- Merit pay, including pay based on skill levels (“skill-based pay”), bonus systems; longevity pay; signing bonuses.
- Employee recognition programs to heighten loyalty to the organization.
- Flextime and other types of scheduling changes that make work more attractive.
- Use of worker committees to identify problems and recommend solutions to management.
- Employee mentoring and expanded orientation periods.
- Telecommuting.
- Aids to training and employee development.
- Tuition reimbursement, on-site courses, incentives to participate in training opportunities.
- Job satisfaction surveys among workers to identify problem areas and fashion responses.
- Exit interviews to pinpoint deficiencies and/or to identify ineffective supervisory practices, job irritants, and employee suggestions for improvement.
- Embellished Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) to support troubled workers and to provide paths to improvement.
- Reduce bureaucratic load on service providers in order to focus energies on clients and reduce job stress.
- Rotation of unpleasant assignments (on-call obligations) so as to reduce their impact on employees, especially those with families.
- Create a supportive and flexible work environment that encourages innovation, risk-taking, and reinforces the value of each individual (“changing organizational culture”.)
- Enhance employee empathy and understanding of the client community through interaction and training.
- Sensitivity training in areas such as sexual orientation, gender bias, ethnic differences, etc.
- Training the trainers in order to create an indigenous ability to introduce and perpetuate changes.
- Ensure that promotions are granted on a fair and impartial basis so as to protect the incentive and career system from serious employee dissatisfaction.
- Emulate private sector compensation approaches where applicable, such as through group incentives and shared savings plans.

Exemplary Locations of Best Practices - Retention and Improvement in the Quality of Life for Workers

City of Charlotte, NC: Line managers are given power to manage their personnel systems, and held accountable for such outcomes as worker retention. New city manager introduced a collaborative decision-making approach to administration; hiring decisions are made in a collective manner, along with priority setting.

State of South Carolina: Broadbanding in which 50 pay grades were collapsed into 10, and 2200 classifications reduced to about 500.

Maricopa County, AZ: Broadbanding; all Employee Assistance Programs (EPA) and related activities are housed under one roof for “one stop shopping” and coordination purposes.

Maricopa County and Phoenix, AZ: Recognized national leaders in conducting regular employee attitude surveys to assess problems and engineer responses.

Both are also known for very sophisticated training programs designed both to improve skills of workers and to increase managerial competencies.

State of Wisconsin: Broadbanding, along with various forms of incentive pay, equity increases, and skill-based pay.

California Department of Motor Vehicles: Comprehensive system of flextime, telecommuting, and job sharing (in which two employees split one job between them.)

Sacramento County, CA: Employee involvement in identifying mission, objectives, and program initiatives. They also have a model exit interview format.

Rochester, NY: Permits employees to reengineer their own jobs instead of following rigid classifications; compensatory time is provided to those who pursue additional education or involvement with the community.

Santa Clara County, CA: Flattened organizational hierarchy created to foster quicker decision-making and make the organizational culture more open and supportive.

Fairfax County, VA: Sponsors Professional Development Training and partners with the Virginia Institute for Social Services. The county also has a pay for performance system.

Lansing, Michigan: Model mentoring program in police department and social service agencies.

North Carolina County DSS Agencies: Variety of programs aimed at “celebrating the staff.” Retreats, recognition programs, small cash bonuses, participative management.

Madison, WI: Specialized training for employees on ingrained biases and means to recognize and reduce them.

Minneapolis, MN: Generalized training requirements on all forms of bias and the appropriate response to bias.

Albuquerque, NM: Model program for gender sensitivity training.

Savannah, GA: Focused training programs for supervisors on the critical importance of organizational culture, the necessity for an open and accepting environment, and the behaviors that can accomplish these ends.

Illinois Department of Employment Security:

Training the trainers program in which employees participate in curriculum development.

State of New York: Use of a “Promotion Index” in which candidates for advancement are assessed according to a skills “battery” and assigned a “promotability index” that is reportedly objective and widely accepted.

City of Greensboro, NC: Recognized as one of the few locations in which merit pay has been successfully implemented and managed.

City of Memphis, TN: Home of an innovative Employee Assistance Program that has reportedly cut costs 25% while greatly improving the delivery of services to the employee group.

City of Pittsburgh, CA: Employee compensation is linked to efficiency and performance standards; financial savings are shared with the employees in the relevant departments.

Durham County DSS, NC: To cut the red tape associated with service delivery, some positions have been modified and reallocated to hire support staff back-up for social workers.

Functional Activity: Performance Appraisal/Assessment

Employee dissatisfaction with the appraisal process usually rates as one of the — if not the — major job irritants. Failure to conduct a relatively reliable evaluation can kill motivation, and destroys all the other HRM programs on which evaluation depends, such as compensation, reward, and promotion.

Most traditional performance evaluation strategies are based upon very simplistic forms that concentrate more on personality traits than on actual job performance. Trends in HRM reform often focus on the appraisal mechanism because of its critical role in job satisfaction and in validating the outcomes of other personnel decisions. The chief trends include evaluations that are 1) tailored to the job (rather than using one instrument for multiple jobs,) 2) involve participation of the employee and other observers of performance, and 3) concentrate on measurable objectives.

Reform Ideas/Programs

- Flexible appraisal instruments that are designed for the employee being evaluated.
- The use of a “coaching” style in which the evaluation focuses on employee development objectives rather than punitive goals.
- Goals for the review cycle are decided mutually between the manager and subordinate so as to reduce misunderstanding, clarify expectations, and focus the mission.
- Goals are flexible, and the managers’ role is more to coax improvements than to judge outcomes.
- Increasingly, public agencies are asking for input from individuals who have not traditionally been involved in the appraisal process, including PEER evaluation, SUBORDINATE evaluation, and even CLIENT evaluation. When used in combination, this is known as 360-degree evaluation.
- Performance management systems that “decouple” appraisals from salary decisions, promotional opportunities, and other job outcomes are regarded as the preferred method of making the process employee-centered and developmental rather than punitive.

Exemplary Locations of Best Practices - Employee Appraisal/Assessment

Madison, WI: Traditional appraisals have been eliminated for all but probationary employees. In their place a collaborative system has been installed. This is based on individual goal-setting, leadership training, and employee involvement that extends to permitting workers to choose their own supervisors (within limits.)

State of South Carolina Employee Performance Management System (EPMS): This strategy combines coaching and collaboration with the use of a form that is universally applied to workers. The manager and employee meet at the beginning of the review cycle, agree on critical job duties, job objectives, and special assignments for the next year. Ultimately, they are judged on the basis of these performance objectives that they helped to establish.

State of Washington: The most celebrated success with appraisal reform has occurred in Washington. Their approach incorporates almost all of the elements of the current wisdom, and is perceived as a model that others should emulate.

City of Austin, TX: Austin conducts a model program of strategic alignment between HRM

and other city goals. This program is apparent in the evaluation process, where objective performance criteria for each department and subdivision are broken down into Individual goals for each worker. These objectives then form the basis for appraisals.

State of Oklahoma: This state has merged its training objectives with employee evaluations by creating a competency-based employee development program. Workers who are provided with training are ultimately assessed according to the new competencies that they acquired during training and related activities.

State of Iowa: Iowa is a prime example of a progressive HRM system in which the authority to design evaluation strategies has been decentralized to agencies. Also, the state aggressively links evaluations to training and employee development, and has exempted the training budget from cuts in other areas.

City of Phoenix, AZ: The only documented case of 360-degree evaluation that is not voluntary (a voluntary program exists in the State of Washington.)

Functional Activity: Labor Management Cooperation

More than 30 states now recognize the right of civil servants to bargain collectively over managerial prerogatives. A smaller number permit negotiations over salary, fringe benefits, and other critical terms of employment. White-collar workers are the fastest growing group of union members, and a huge percentage of recent efforts to organize workers have focused on public agencies. To the extent that these forces can be harnessed to the mutual benefit of both management and labor, all public agencies will benefit.

The American labor force has traditionally co-existed with management in an adversarial posture. Our culture does not promote cooperation, yet current demands on public agencies require a more participative approach to problem solving. Labor-management cooperation that is engineered through formal unions is viewed not only as an asset, but an absolute necessity if we are going to resolve the daunting tasks that confront us. As such, unions are often viewed as a potential ally in the effort to upgrade government operations, to introduce change, and to conceptualize and implement needed innovations.

Reform Ideas/Programs

- **Productivity Bargaining** – One common suggestion is that unions should “trade” wage increases and other concessions for increased output. For instances, a union might agree to a 5% increase in productivity (e.g., cases resolved, garbage collected) at the same staffing level; in exchange, the managers might agree to substantial compensation enhancements.
- **Win-Win (Consensus) Bargaining** – A far more comprehensive approach to Labor-Management cooperation is for the two groups to collaborate in a committee structure in order to solve problems and forge agreements that promote the interests of both parties.

Exemplary Locations of Best Practices - Labor Management Cooperation

State of Wisconsin: Wisconsin's approach to consensus bargaining is built on labor-management committees, and involves significant amounts of training for all parties that promote negotiating skills and a sense of their mutuality of interests. Through such measures, the State has been able to avoid labor strife in recent years, and to forge workable agreements in a variety of contentious areas such as: sick leave, disciplinary procedures, scheduling, Labor representation in hiring decisions, the use of self-directed work teams, and reductions in sick leave and absenteeism.

State of California: Various agencies such as the DMV and Public Safety. Some of the larger agencies in CA employ collaborative teams within the collective bargaining context. The stated goal is to “empower” everyone by making labor and management equal (more or less). Some of the stated benefits include the encouragement of innovation, the freedom to take risks, and far more attention to customer service objectives (clients are even included in employment selection decisions in some cases).

Marion County, Oregon: This county is known for its partnership between a large union and management representatives. In effect, the two parties have agreed to an absolute cap on labor costs while giving the union flexibility to bargain changes in salary, insurance, and other benefits. The current contract allows for a maximum of 6% increase in labor costs, thereby giving the employees incentives to keep their benefit costs (e.g., health insurance) low so as to maximize any raise that might be allowable under the cap.

State of New York: Due to its high level of union membership, New York has been one of the primary places of experimentation with varying approaches to consensus and productivity bargaining. The record to date has been spotty, but the ongoing effort continues. New York's experiences can be very useful to anyone wishing to explore the risks and rewards of labor-management participation.

Functional Activity: Altering the Role of the Human Resources Office

Almost any HRM reform will depend upon changes in the way that Offices of Human Resources (OHRs) approach their roles. Old emphases on control and procedures must be replaced with a more proactive focus.

The new approach to civil service reform is to transform the OHR into an ally of line management. This concept is based on the notion that HRM has never really had a “place at the table” with other managers because it has been dominated by its emphasis on procedures over outcomes and efficiency. Steps toward accomplishing this ambitious objective are evident in the reforms that have occurred in several areas.

Reform Ideas/Programs

- **The HRM Generalist** – Instead of staffing the OHR with narrow specialists, the new model calls for personnel practitioners who are generalists – “jacks-of-all trades” -able to serve line managers in the role of consultants. As such, they are assigned to various agencies and expected to provide an array of services that enhance the achievement of agency goals.
- **Decentralized HRM Functions** – Another component of the new administrative paradigm requires that centralized supervision of staffing functions be delegated to line agencies. The underlying premise is that those who are closest to the problem or situation are best able to fashion responses and solutions. Agencies are expected to assume responsibility over the functions – recruitment, evaluation, and classification – that once were strictly controlled by a central OHR.
- **Strategic Alignment of HRM with Other Agency Missions & Goals** – To maximize the utility of HRM services, recruitment and other activities must be integrated into the agency’s planning structure. Through a coordinated approach, the HRM function can reach its true potential as an ally/complement to line management.
- **Service and Planning Orientation** – Simply stated, HRM functions are expected to adopt a new conception that emphasizes service to line management. Sensitivity to the contribution to bottom-line objectives is implied. It also involves elimination of traditional emphases on rule enforcement.
- **The “IBM Model”** – The steps identified above are known as the IBM Model. IBM’s HRM function adopted a service orientation grounded in a generalist role for HRM practitioners. The company’s operations were decentralized long ago, before such measures were fashionable elsewhere.

Exemplary Locations of Best Practices - Altering the role of Human Resource Offices

State of South Carolina OHR: Of all the fifty states, South Carolina's HRM function most closely fits the new model. Its operations have been completely decentralized, the old specialists have been cross-trained and now serve as "consultants" to other agencies, and service to line management is the over-riding concern.

City of Austin, TX: Austin's approach to HRM reform is perhaps the most notable example of "strategic alignment" of HRM with other organizational goals. The HRM staff participates in an annual planning exercise (a "planning pyramid") that incorporates all phases of the HRM function. The resulting goals and missions are broken down at the departmental level through additional planning teams. Each department creates a "business plan" in which HRM objectives (staffing, reclassifications, personnel ceilings) are integrated.

State of Virginia: By reputation, this state operates a highly decentralized HRM function much like South Carolina's.

Federal Agencies: Under the auspices of the National Performance Review (NPR), HRM functions within most federal agencies have been empowered by the Office of Personnel Management to perform almost all of the tasks that had been centralized prior to the 1990s. Decentralization is a fact of life in most functional areas, such as recruitment, testing, classification, and the like.

Sacramento County, CA: This location is especially notable for the change process that is being marshaled and guided by the HRM function. By conducting research and examining programmatic options, the OHR has become an engine of reform for the entire county.

City of San Jose, CA: San Jose is one of a number of California jurisdictions that has adopted the IBM Model to more effectively deliver HRM services to agencies. Due to the City's high rate of unionization, it represents an interesting example of decentralization within an otherwise hostile context.

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TERMS AND CONCEPTS



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Action Learning A training technique by which management trainees are allowed to work full time analyzing and solving problems in other departments. This is a variant of job rotation, but applied to new hires with a more focused developmental objective.

Adverse Action Any action by an employer that results in a loss or disadvantageous change in work condition for the employee; typically, the legal definition of adverse action is confined to those personnel decisions (termination, demotion, significant change in job assignment) for which a grievance may be filed. The current trend under reinvention is to reduce the range of adverse actions so as to provide public managers with expanded flexibility in the use of human resources.

Adverse Impact In the context of workplace discrimination, “adverse impact” is the phenomenon in which a protected category under various employment rights laws (Title VII, EEOA, ADA, ADEA, etc.) suffers from a discriminatory employment practice; the actions on the part of the employer need not be intentional; an adverse impact exists if protected classes are not hired or otherwise rewarded at a rate at least 80% of the best-achieving group (“the 4/5ths rule”).

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) The use of less formal procedures to resolve conflicts. A widespread phenomenon in many legal areas (landlord/tenant disputes, child custody), ADR is also very popular in HRM as a means of expediting the handling of grievances. Many jurisdictions now require that grievances be mediated prior to the holding of a formal hearing.

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees The largest and most expansive public employee union in the United States

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) A 1990 statute that prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals in all phases of the HRM process who have physical or mental impairments that limit one or more major life activities; impaired individuals who can fulfill the essential requirements of the job cannot be denied simply because the employer would be required to alter the work environment, modify

work schedules, modify equipment, or provide special training or services. Employers must show an “undue hardship” in order to avoid the necessity to “reasonably accommodate” impaired applicants.

Appointment The hiring decision. Employees who are offered a position are said to be appointed. The term is also used to distinguish between elective and appointive positions; those who are appointed occupy civil service positions of one type or another, either classified or unclassified.

Assessment Center Test protocol in which a battery of job-related devices is used to mimic actual conditions that might exist in the workplace; applicants are evaluated by a group of trained assessors who monitor their performance during such exercises as leaderless groups, problem-solving exercises, in-basket simulations, etc. Especially useful in evaluating abstract qualities (leadership, interpersonal competence, ability to handle stress,) assessment centers enjoy extraordinarily high levels of reliability but are expensive to develop and utilize.

Attitude Surveys An increasingly popular means of probing the thoughts of citizens and/or employees by distributing questionnaires; the instruments solicit feedback on satisfaction levels with the work environment, modes of supervision, pay, employment policies, and any number of related topics. Attitude surveys are a highly effective means of taking the temperature of the labor force, and can be inexpensively designed and administered (e.g., distributed in pay envelopes on an annual or semi-annual basis.) Anonymity is essential for reliable results.

At-Will Doctrine Common law principle that workers are hired at-will and thus can be fired at will. That is, workers retain no property or liberty interests in employment and are therefore subject to termination or other sanctions without cause. While still a dominant legal principle in the private sector, the at will doctrine has been eroded by statutory and judicial initiatives over the years. Exceptions to the at-will doctrine include all anti-discrimination provisions, grievance rights extended by statute, and other job protections included within civil service systems and union collective bargaining agreements.

Behaviorally-Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) More advanced form of the classic rating scale used in performance evaluation; BARS include descriptive phrases of various levels of performance in order to provide the evaluator with “anchors” that focus judgments and improve the validity of the evaluation process. For example, if the trait “meeting deadlines” is being assessed, a behaviorally-anchored set of options might include “the employee can be counted on to always meet deadlines and even turn projects in early,” to “the employee fails to meet critical deadlines even when verbally warned by the supervisor.”

Biodata A means of screening applicants for hiring or promotions that collects information about hobbies, early life experiences, and other behavior patterns that might reflect on ultimate job performance. Candidates typically are asked to complete questionnaires concerning such topics as the age at which they obtained their first job, when they established their first savings account, what types of organized sports they participated in, etc. Biodata is widely used in the private sector and has been found to be very reliable. Its use in the public sector has been impeded somewhat by fears that it is too intrusive. One major exception is the military, which places great faith in biodata results for selection of candidates for flight training, OCS, etc.

Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ) A defense used by employers charged with discrimination. To pass judicial muster, the BFOQ must be grounded in a job-related necessity that might allow a protected category to be excluded from some jobs. There are no racial BFOQs, but some gender-based ones have been upheld. The trend is moving away from this concept, fewer and fewer BFOQs are permitted, and employers are being required to make reasonable accommodations.

Bonus A means of providing financial rewards to employees. Bonuses imply one-time payments; the salary “increase” does not become part of the worker’s base salary. For this reason, politicians are attracted to the use of bonuses, whereas insightful employees are not as enthusiastic. A relatively new phenomenon is the use of on-the-spot bonuses (\$50, \$100, \$500) that supervisors can grant to employees who perform above and beyond the call of duty. These are popular among employees, largely because of the psychological impact rather than the instrumental reward.

Bounties The payment of financial rewards to incumbent employees who recommend candidates for jobs in high-need fields, such as nursing and information technology. A form of job referral that is growing within government, a typical bounty system will pay the referring employee \$500 or \$1000 after the new worker is hired and placed in a position, and then an additional amount when that person completes the probationary period. Long used as an essential means of recruitment in the private sector, worker referrals are just now becoming common in public agencies.

Broadbanding Probably the most significant innovation in job classification and pay, broadbanding has two facets. First, the number of narrow job classifications is reduced in order to define positions more broadly (e.g., instead of Accounting Technicians 1-5, and Accountants 1-5, the only job description would be “Accountant”.) Second, the old system of multiple pay grades is collapsed into broad bands that contain enormous salary ranges. With the creation of a broadband system, managers have much greater flexibility in hiring new workers at higher salaries, in changing the job assignments of employees, and in granting significant pay increases to meritorious workers.

Bumping The process by which employees with greater seniority and/or higher numbers of retention points take the jobs of those with fewer retention rights in Reduction In Force (RIF) situations or other forms of staff cutback.

Cafeteria Plan A popular approach to benefits management in which employees are permitted to select from among a menu of benefit options. The employer generally sets an outer limit (usually a predetermined percentage of the employee's salary, such as 30%), and then the worker is free to allocate that amount among such options as life insurance, medical insurance, retirement contributions, daycare, and the like. This approach to benefits management is extraordinarily popular because it eliminates the "one size fits all" approach and permits employees with differing objectives and responsibilities to take control over their own finances.

Career System A generic means of referring to any personnel system that contains an identifiable career ladder and visible promotional opportunities. Implicit in the concept is that employees are pursuing careers, meaning that they enjoy some form of job protection and are provided (ideally) with enrichment opportunities (training, job rotation, etc.)

Certification The process by which an applicant for a civil service job is judged to be qualified to perform the functions of the targeted position. Candidates may be certified through any number of screening mechanisms, ranging from formal merit system examinations to simple evaluations of an application form.

Full-List Certification To increase managerial discretion over selection decisions, full-list certification is a growing practice. Instead of permitting the appointing authority to interview and select from among only a small slice of the most highly qualified applicants (see "Rule of 3"), managers are provided with the entire list of applicants who have been deemed qualified.

Selective Certification For some jobs, the number of qualified applicants is very limited. To aid recruitment, managers are occasionally permitted to engage in selective certification, which means that the hiring authority can directly select from among those who have the requisite credentials. This might also be termed "targeted" certification.

Civic Duty Leave Employees are granted paid time off to engage in activities that are philanthropic or otherwise advance charitable and/or public causes. Maricopa County (AZ), for instance, has a highly developed program that enables workers to volunteer for such diverse causes as Habitat for Humanity, voter registration drives, and United Way.

Civil Rights Act of 1991 A law that was specifically intended to negate the effect of a series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions that had effectively killed much of the equal opportunity agenda in public policy; the Act places the

burden of proof back on employers in discrimination lawsuits, and permits compensatory and punitive damages.

Civil Service A general term used to connote the public personnel system. Also referred to as merit systems. To some, the concept implies public employees generally, whereas others interpret it to mean the single-point-of-entry format in which applicants are screened through highly elaborate entry systems and then provided with high levels of career protections once hired.

Civil Service Commission A bi-partisan commission appointed to oversee and police the operations of merit systems. Once a familiar component of the personnel systems in most states and large cities, commissions have been in steep decline for many decades. Their disappearance is largely attributable to the fact that they often became much too protective of public workers, thereby making civil service systems overly bureaucratic. The U.S. Civil Service Commission was abolished in 1978 and replaced by the Office of Personnel Management. Similar fates have befallen almost every state civil service commission, and most of the urban ones. In their place, executive personnel systems have emerged.

Civil Service Reform (CSR) Act of 1978 President Jimmy Carter's most significant domestic achievement (according to him), the CSR of 1978 was intended to restore managerial accountability and flexibility to the federal personnel system. It abolished the Civil Service Commission, created the Senior Executive Service, reduced job protections for employees, and was intended to introduce pay-for-performance. The Act set off a flurry of similar reforms in state and local governments, and signaled the beginning of the reinvention movement within HRM.

Classification The fundamental building block of classical HRM systems in government, job classification is a vestige of the Scientific Management School (Frederick Taylor). It involves a job analysis to assess the essential character and value of the job being performed, the creation of a job description to delineate job duties, the arrangement of similar jobs into classes, and the assignment of pay scales based on the goal of "equal pay for equal work." Job classification ultimately came to be viewed as highly restrictive on managerial discretion, and an impediment to reassignments and to rewarding good performers. Although still very common, they are being reconfigured through broadbanding, senior executive service systems, and related strategies.

Classification Series Levels within a position classification that indicate increasing difficulty and responsibility (e.g., Administrative Assistant I, II, III, and IV - each new level carries greater responsibility and compensation.)

Classification Specifications A formal summary statement of the duties required of a position, and the qualifications necessary to perform those duties; these specifications are identified through a position analysis.

Classified Employee A worker who is covered by whatever classification scheme (usually one that is statutory in origin) exists in the jurisdiction. Typically, classified workers are part of a uniform salary system, and they share all the other terms of employment that apply (the same holiday schedule, benefits choices, and the like). One important distinction between classified and unclassified workers is that those who are classified almost always have explicit grievance rights that are delineated in law; the situation for unclassified workers varies from location to location.

Collective Bargaining Unlike their counterparts in the private sector, public workers are not covered by the Wagner or Taft-Hartley Acts (National Labor Relations Acts). The choice as to whether or not they are empowered to engage in collective bargaining with their employers rests with federal, state, and local political authorities. Unless their political leaders proactively grant collective bargaining privileges, public employees have no right to demand that management engage in discussions over working conditions, salaries, etc. Thus, the range of topics that public employees can bargain over in unionized settings ranges from almost nothing, to the full panoply of issues that arise in business and industry. Many states grant no collective bargaining rights at all, which essentially means that public employee unions are nonexistent in those settings.

Competency-Based A growing emphasis in several areas within HRM, the idea is to ground important personnel functions in measurable job-related outcomes. Testing and evaluation have long been sensitive to the need for job-relatedness, whereas training is the new hotbed of competency-based experimentation. The objective is to ensure that money spent on training and employee development is truly focused on content that enhances relevant employee competencies. Measurement activities are therefore a major analog to any competency-based program.

Compressed Workweek A form of flextime that permits employees to work more than an eight hour day in order to reduce the total number of days worked each week.

Computer-Assisted Testing Entry examinations that are given to applicants, often on a walk-in basis, that are automatically scored. Some of these tests are designed to evaluate a candidate's qualifications very quickly by monitoring responses to "easy" and "difficult" questions and then patterning the rest of the exam to the appropriate skill level of the individual. In addition to saving the applicants much time, the tests are much more accessible, non-threatening, and reliable than most of the older paper-and-pencil exams.

Confidential Employee Within unionized settings, an employee who may not be included in a collective bargaining agreement or belong to the union because he or she exercises responsibilities that involve working with managers involved in contract negotiations; in other contexts, the appointive employees who serve at the pleasure of high-level elected officials and judges; the secretaries and personal assistants of judges, politicians, and the like are unclassified employees without any specific job protections.

Consensus Bargaining Where any form of collective bargaining exists, consensus bargaining offers the potential to create a win-win relationship for both management and labor. The idea is to establish labor-management partnerships through the bargaining process. In so doing, a collaborative problem-solving approach is used instead of the adversarial model that typifies labor-management relations elsewhere.

Consultative Model As it applies to HRM, the role of the office of human resources is being transformed from one of control to that of service to line managers. This goal is accomplished in part by establishing a consultative approach to the delivery of HRM services. Personnel within the OHR serve as consultants to client agencies, providing an array of advice and technical support (instead of looking over the line managers' shoulders and trying to enforce volumes of strict rules and regulations.)

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Automatic pay increases that are tied to some measure of economic activity, such as the Consumer Price Index. A traditional fixture in public pay systems, COLAs are becoming less common as the pressures for merit-based pay increases build.

Critical Incidents Usually applied to performance appraisal, the identification of important successes and failures in a job. An employee's performance is compared against these critical incidents in order to provide the worker with behaviorally produced (observable) feedback. For instance, critical incidents for police officers might include citizen complaints, response time to calls, case clearance rates, and similar measures.

Decentralization In the HRM context, decentralization is the antidote to old merit systems that were unduly centralized and bureaucratic. Decentralization is the current rage. It involves the empowerment of line managers to make most operational decisions concerning HRM, and not requiring such actions (promotions, pay adjustments, reclassifications, reassignments) to be processed through a central office. The obvious goals are increased flexibility and responsiveness.

Defined Benefit Plan A form of pension, defined benefit plans exist primarily in government (their use in the private sector has almost

ended, and there is a likelihood that they will come under increasing fire in public agencies.) A worker's pension is guaranteed, and fixed to a formula that is usually driven by the number of years worked, a given percentage multiplier (e.g., 2% is common), and the highest salary earned as computed in many ways (highest year, highest twelve consecutive quarters, etc.) Compared to defined contribution plans, these are considered to be unduly generous, expensive to the public, and the source of a huge amount of unfunded liability (i.e., insufficient funds exist in the pension program to pay off promised benefits, a difference that will be made up by taxpayers.) Although expensive, they represent one of (if not the) most powerful inducements for individuals to pursue a public service career.

Defined Contribution Plan The increasingly popular option to defined benefit plans, employees in a defined contribution pension system make their own choices about how their retirement contributions will be invested. Employers provide matching funds, but take no active role in investment decisions. The employers' liability is thereby limited to whatever matching funds have been promised. Once the employee severs service, the employer's obligation to that worker ceases.

Discipline The process by which employee shortcomings are confronted and potentially punished. Most public agencies follow a progressive discipline procedure that specifies the appropriate sanctions for each offense. Such policies are usually intended to foster consistency in the treatment of employees, as well as to encourage improvement before serious punishment is invoked.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) A relatively recent fixture in large jurisdictions, EAPs provide an outlet to workers who need help dealing with personal and/or professional problems. One of the personnel functions that is most likely to be outsourced, EAPs are usually targeted at substance abuse, mental difficulties, marital and family discord, and behavioral problems (anger management). Most research shows that they pay for themselves by returning troubled workers to a productive status.

Executive Personnel System The antithesis of civil service commissions, the executive personnel system places direct responsibility for HRM in the hands of the chief executive of the jurisdiction (President, Governor, Mayor, City Manager.) That person is empowered to hire and fire the personnel director at will, thereby giving him or her much greater control over HRM policy.

Exempt Employee Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), a worker who is not considered to be "hourly." That is, a "salaried" employee who can be obligated to work schedules that conflict with the require-

ments of the FLSA. Workers who are professional, managerial, and technical are almost always exempt.

Exit Interview Interviews, usually conducted by the Office of Human Resource (OHR), with any and all employees who are leaving the agency for any reason; their purpose is to elicit information about the job or related matters that might give the employer better insight into what is right or wrong about the organization.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Federal legislation that, by virtue of a 1985 U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Garcia v. San Antonio Metropolitan Authority*), applies to state and local government. The law sets minimum wage requirements, maximum hour ceilings, compensatory time policy, and other conditions of employment. It is a serious challenge for public managers because so many civil service jobs require odd schedules that do not fit nicely into the 8-hour day, five-day week format (police, fire, EMS, social workers, etc.)

Flextime Work schedules that grant employees some flexibility in determining their hours of work. Highly advantageous for workers with children or other family obligations, flextime has been found to be one of the most expedient means of promoting worker satisfaction at almost no cost.

Flexplace Allowing employees to work at home or some other off-site setting. This is becoming far more common thanks to computer technology, the travails of commuting in large cities, and the simple fact that one's presence in a central office is no longer a necessity for many organizations.

Forced Distribution A means of evaluating workers that requires the assessor to distribute the employee according to a pre-established formula. "Grading on the curve," in which workers may be allocated to four quartiles, or even according to more draconian systems (10% in the top category, 20% in the next category, and so on.) This approach is used often due to the tendency of managers to inflate their subordinates' evaluations to the point that the process becomes meaningless. The dilemma is that forced distribution destroys the morale of almost all the workers.

Fringe Benefits Those components of an employee's compensation package that are not formally counted as "salary." On average, different kinds of insurance, pensions, and other benefits cost public agencies about 35% of every employee's total salary.

Gain Sharing Bonuses given as rewards to each member of a work team or group when they meet or exceed a performance objective; an alternative approach in some agencies is to cannibalize positions that become

vacant in order to distribute the resulting funds in salary increases among the remaining workers (this is possible only in “lump sum” agencies in which salary and civil service restrictions don’t preclude such flexibility.)

Grade Creep A negative consequence of narrow job classifications, the tendency of jobs to undergo a continuing process of upgrading or reclassification upwards because this is the primary way that competent employees can receive substantial pay increases. The ultimate effect is that most jobs are classified at a higher level than is warranted by the actual duties being performed.

Grievance A formal complaint lodged by an employee concerning any adverse action as defined in the jurisdiction’s enabling legislation and/or personnel manual. Grievances ordinarily are first heard by a group of employees assembled for that purpose, who then make a recommendation to the governing body of the jurisdiction (or to the city manager, county manager, etc.) The array of grievable matters varies greatly, but the trend is toward narrowing the number. For example, reinvention has resulted in transfers and reassignments being removed from the list of potential trouble spots. In contrast, unions persistently seek to expand the number of grievable concerns, extending even into areas such as office assignments and supervisory demeanor.

Griggs v. Duke Power Company The 1971 Supreme Court case that revolutionized HRM by requiring that testing devices be job-related. Ultimately the impact touched every component of the personnel function, including performance appraisals, interviews, application forms, and any other procedure intended to screen candidates for jobs or promotions.

Hatch Acts Legislation intended to forbid public employees from engaging in partisan political conduct; the federal Hatch Act has been enormously liberalized in recent years, whereas many states continue to enforce “little Hatch Acts” that preclude such behavior as running for partisan office, actively campaigning for candidates, and (at the extreme) parking a car with a partisan bumper sticker in an agency parking lot.

Hiring The process by which employees are recruited and selected into the organization. Sometimes referred to as “staffing,” this function is often one of the most serious obstacles to public agency performance. Due to excessive civil service restrictions covering such processes as job notification, waiting times, authorization cycles, and the like, the hiring process can take so long that it drives away good applicants.

Incentives Any strategy or benefit that is used to encourage improved performance from employees. Extrinsic incentives, such as raises and bonuses, are the standard methods of boosting morale and output. The current trend is toward greater use of intrinsic incentives (various forms of recognition, or developmental incentives like tuition assistance.)

“IBM Model” Also referred to as the consultative model, IBM is thought to have introduced the decentralized approach to HRM that is now ascendant. Under this format, the OHR serves as a resource for line managers, providing consultative and technical assistance and not emphasizing control functions.

International Personnel Management Association (IPMA) The largest organization of public sector personnel managers. IPMA is centered in Alexandria VA, publishes a journal (Public Personnel Management,) and maintains both a web site and a research program focusing on HRM Best Practices.

Interview The oral component of a selection process. Because they legally constitute tests, interviews should follow a regularized set of questions (the patterned interview) and be scored as objectively as possible. Despite efforts to improve their validity, research shows that they are effective at only one thing: determining a candidate’s “likeability.”

Panel Interview To heighten their poor validity and reliability, many organizations have begun to employ group interviews in which several employees – preferably, those who will work most closely with the person hired – sit in on the interviews and are asked to provide feedback.

Job Announcement An advertisement to attract applicants for a vacant position. Merit systems commonly enforce strict rules concerning the number and duration of job announcement postings. To the extent that these requirements are eased, the position can theoretically be filled more quickly.

Job Classification [See Classification] The process by which jobs are evaluated and organized into classes and pay grades.

Job Design Another term for job classification, or the initial process in which positions are dissected in order to establish their basic components and relative importance to the organization. The term has also been used more recently to imply a proactive effort to alter the content of jobs in order to make them more challenging and interesting for their occupants [See Job Enlargement and Job Enrichment].

Job Enlargement Also called “horizontal job loading,” job enlargement involves the expansion of an employee’s responsibilities within the same level of the organization. It most likely involves job rotation (see below), or other efforts to increase the variety of tasks performed by a position incumbent. It is thought to increase motivation and job satisfaction.

Job Enrichment Also called “vertical job loading,” job enlargement calls for increasing the responsibility and authority of the employee. By being given the opportunity to make a wider range of decisions concern-

ing the work being done, the employee's job is theoretically enriched. Job enrichment is an essential component of almost all contemporary approaches to organizational behavior and motivation.

Job Evaluation The process by which jobs are analyzed in order to rank them within an organization; a fundamental component of the classification process in which the jobs are categorized according to their characteristics and relative importance. Related to position analysis, in which the individual job is scrutinized in order to identify its most important duties, responsibilities, and Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA).

Job Instruction Training (JIT) Listing of each of a job's basic tasks, along with key points for each that is used to provide step-by-step training for employees.

Job Register The list of applicants for civil service jobs that have been judged to be qualified and eligible for appointment. Depending upon limiting factors - such as the Rule of 3 - the register may contain only a few names or the names of every applicant who meets basic qualifications.

Job Rotation The planned movement of a worker among different jobs at a similar level in the organization in order to expand his or her experience. In addition to providing a helpful motivational edge, job rotation is highly regarded because it makes more workers interchangeable (in the event of illness or turnover), and it aids in the development of employee skills.

Job Satisfaction The extent to which employees are happy or satisfied with their current working conditions. This construct is usually measured through attitude surveys in an effort to pinpoint problem areas. There is no proven link between job satisfaction and performance (productivity,) although one would logically expect such a relationship to exist. The link between job satisfaction and turnover has been proven. Unsatisfied workers are far more likely to seek alternative employment.

Job Sharing Dividing one full-time position between two or more part-time employees. This strategy is often prompted by cost-savings, since part-time employees rarely earn benefits. Also, those who share jobs are almost always more productive than one full-time employee because they are relatively "fresh" (a typical schedule calls for one employee to work mornings, and the other afternoons).

Labor-Management Committees Special cooperative groups assembled in unionized settings to work out mutually agreeable solutions to common problems. A normal fixture in settings in which consensus bargaining exists, but not as common where more adversarial labor relations predominate.

Lateral Entry The practice of permitting outsiders (non-employees) to enter a public organization at any level instead of starting at the bottom and working one's way up; a major contributor to the openness of civil service systems. Lateral entry clashes with promotion-from-within, which is favored by unions and almost all incumbent employees.

Longevity Pay Pay based on the length of one's service. This can be a somewhat confusing topic currently because longevity pay has several dimensions. Most "merit systems" are in actuality seniority systems in that one's salary goes up incrementally (and automatically, thanks to COLAs) each year. Performance has little or nothing to do with the increase. Recently, however, longevity pay has resurfaced in a more positive light in some areas in which worker retention is problematic. Where high turnover exists, significant pay increases are granted on (e.g.) an employee's first, third, and fifth anniversary in order to encourage him or her to stay in the organization over a longer period of time.

Management by Objectives (MBO) A type of performance management developed by Peter Drucker in the 1950s and wildly popular for many years; still evident in the teachings of TQM, worker empowerment, and employee motivation. The process involves joint goal-setting by the supervisor and subordinate, the identification of explicit objectives, and the assessment of worker performance solely on the extent to which those objectives have been achieved at the end of the review cycle (six months or one year.)

Mediation An alternative dispute resolution process whereby a mediator who is an impartial third party acts to encourage and facilitate the resolution of a dispute without prescribing what it should be. The process is informal and non-adversarial, with the objective of helping the disputing parties reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

Mediation-Arbitration An alternative dispute resolution process that provides for the submission of an appeal to an impartial third party who conducts conferences intended to resolve the grievance, but who can also render a decision that is final and binding on the parties if the dispute cannot be mediated.

Mentoring Process by which an experienced employee provides guidance and advice to younger or less seasoned subordinates or peers. Proactive systems of mentoring - in which willing mentors are expressly assigned to targeted subordinates - are effective means of developing employees for future promotions and easing their transition into the workplace.

Merit Pay Basing salary increases on performance instead of other factors, especially job tenure. Although widely acclaimed, merit pay has

been notoriously difficult to implement in many public settings for a variety of reasons (inadequate performance appraisal systems, insufficient resources for meaningful raises, inability to measure the ambiguous work product of many civil servants, etc.)

Merit Principle The assumption that “the best shall serve.” Hiring, promotion, salary, and other HRM decisions should be based upon competition and the premise that the most deserving workers should receive the rewards.

Merit System In stark contrast to the merit principle, the merit system has evolved into a creature that rarely resembles what one might expect from reading the definition of merit principle. Due to many historical and political factors, merit systems are often very bureaucratic and overly protective of undeserving workers. As such, merit systems have acquired a very bad reputation among line managers, and are seen as an impediment to effective public administration. Most of the reforms currently taking place within the HRM field are intended to ameliorate the worst traits of contemporary merit systems. Merit systems are also known referred to a civil service.

Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) The federal agency that retained the adjudicatory responsibilities of the old Civil Service Commission when it was abolished by the CSRA of 1978. In addition to hearing employee appeals from adverse actions in the federal civil service, the MSPB is charged with protecting whistleblowers from retaliation.

Motivation That quality or construct that propels any individual to undertake an action. Within management, motivation is regarded as being essential to productivity, although the connection has never been demonstrated empirically (at least not to the satisfaction of most scholars.) Motivation is related to, but not the same as, morale and job satisfaction. For example, a worker might be highly motivated by his or her job, but only because it provides an opportunity to socialize with other employees. Figuring out the correct formula for how to motivate - and more important, how to direct that motivation to productive ends - is one of the primary challenges of the management profession.

National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE) An organization consisting of the fifty (plus or minus one or two) state directors of personnel administration from each state capital. The secretariat is located at the Council of State Governments, and the organization is known for its efforts to identify and disseminate needed HRM reforms.

National Commission on the Public Service Also known as the Volcker Commission (Paul Volcker), this group issued a famous report in 1989

that summarized the problems within the civil service and identified a reform agenda. The report - Leadership for America: Rebuilding the Public Service - pinpoints the primary maladies of the public service (poor pay, bad image, slow and unresponsive procedures,) and delineates what needs to be done to improve the situation in the federal government.

National Commission on State and Local Public Service The state and local equivalent of the Volcker Commission report, this group arrived at essentially the same conclusions. The document is also referred to as the Winter Commission Report, Hard Truths and Tough Choices: An Agenda for State and Local Reform. The study was based at the State University of New York-Albany, and was spearheaded by Dr. Frank Thompson, Dean of the School of Public Administration.

National Performance Review (NPR) Former Vice-President Gore's initiative to reinvent the federal government by making it more business-like and efficient. The basic report, Creating a Government That Works Better and Costs Less, contains many recommendations that relate directly to the HRM function. Many authorities consider the NPR reports to be some of the better statements of the reform agenda for public sector HRM.

Needs Assessment The identification of the training and development programs that would be useful to an organization, a group of employees, or a specific individual.

Nonexempt Employee An employee who is covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act and who is, therefore, subject to both the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the law.

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) The federal agency that assumed responsibility for the HRM function once the Civil Service Commission was abolished in 1978. The creation of OPM represented the move to an executive personnel system in which the President enjoys a direct line of authority over the civil service. The OPM director serves at his pleasure.

Office of Human Resources (OHR) A general term applied to the "personnel department" in any jurisdiction. With few exceptions, the OHR is located within the office of the chief executive. Current wisdom holds that the OHR should become less involved in rule enforcement and more helpful in assisting line managers to perform their HRM responsibilities.

On-the-Spot Hiring The ability of a recruiter to offer a job applicant a position at the conclusion of an interview. This contrasts dramatically with the slow and cumbersome recruitment process that often exists in government, and is used most extensively for a small number of high-

need jobs. The federal government permits some on-the-spot hiring, provided that the applicants' grade point averages are 3.0 or above.

On-Site Interviewing To enhance recruitment efforts, some interviews are conducted at work sites or job fairs rather than requiring applicants to travel or to make other accommodations. This approach is representative of a large number of aggressive outreach efforts mounted by some public agencies to counteract recruitment difficulties.

Organizational Development (OD) A vast array of theories and strategies aimed at changing the attitudes, values, and beliefs of employees; focuses on altering the organizational "culture," in order to make it more trusting and open; uses "action research" in which data are collected from the organization's members and fed back systematically in order to promote problem-solving and self-awareness.

Orientation The process of introducing new employees into the organization and socializing them to prevailing norms and expectations. Public agencies typically do a very poor job of this, while private corporations often invest far more energy into the enterprise. Research clearly demonstrates that effective orientation programs reduce turnover, lower the anxiety levels of new workers, and reduce their tendency to acquire bad work habits from co-workers.

Outsourcing Turning some functions over to private organizations through contractual agreements rather than delivering the services through public agencies. HRM functions are especially ripe for outsourcing, since some large corporations have proven that a centralized OHRs are not a necessity. The functions that are most amenable to outsourcing include benefits administration, payroll, and records management.

Participatory Management An approach to management that assumes workers can and will assist in making their organizations run better; the involvement of employees in decision-making that was once reserved to managers; a major explicit goal of reinvention ("empowerment"), and a precursor to motivation in the minds of many theorists.

Part-Time Employee An employee who may or may not fill an approved position, but who does not work the legally recognized number of hours per week to qualify for full-time status (37.5 to 40 hours, generally). Part-time workers rarely receive fringe benefits, although a few states (Nebraska, e.g.) have recently extended some benefits to these individuals. Part-time employees are hired and fired outside of the normal civil service requirements, usually enjoy few if any career protections, but are increasingly popular because they fill a need cheaply.

Patronage A personnel system in which employment, benefits, promotions and rewards are distributed on the basis of personal favoritism or

partisan loyalty. The opposite of a merit system, in that patronage places greater value on responsiveness and accountability, not on professionalism and job qualifications.

Pay Band A broad range of salaries that applies to significant numbers of job classification (or categories). Pay bands exist within broadbanding systems. They are often used to replace a step pay system in which employees automatically move up one step for each year of service. The existence of broad pay bands provides managers with greater discretion over salary increases.

Pay for Performance [See Merit Pay]

Pendleton Act The seminal piece of civil service legislation in the United States; passed in 1883, the statute created the first significant federal merit system and provided for open competition for public jobs, selection on the basis of job-relevant knowledge, lateral entry, and the creation of a bi-partisan Civil Service Commission to protect against politicization of the civil service.

Performance Appraisal (Evaluation) The performance of employees is rated on an annual or semi-annual basis. Usually the responsibility of the employee's supervisor, evaluation instruments are notoriously inadequate. One of the most common strategies is the rating scale, which essentially consists of a checklist of traits that the supervisor assesses on a Likert-type scale (1-5; 1-7.) As the most common source of employee frustration and claims of "favoritism," there has long been widespread experimentation with performance appraisal methodologies.

Personnel Ceiling As part of their role in controlling appropriations, many legislative bodies impose caps on the number of employees that can be hired in the jurisdiction. These may be aggregate caps (ceilings,) or they may be broken down by agency. Once an agency has capped out, it must either stop hiring or find alternative means of accomplishing tasks if more workers are needed. Two strategies that are often used to bypass personnel ceilings include the hiring of temporary and part-time workers. Neither of these groups is usually included under the ceiling, and both categories of workers are exempt from civil service restrictions.

Personnel Generalist The increasingly popular model for employees within OHRs, the generalist perspective is based on the premise that HRM workers ought to be "jacks of all trades." By being schooled in the entire array of personnel functions, they are not likely to get bogged down in bureaucratic minutiae. Moreover, their ability to provide one-stop-shopping assistance to line managers is thereby enhanced. The path to implementing the IBM Model (consultative role) is through the creation of a core of personnel generalists.

Personnel Specialist At one time, employees in OHRs might spend their entire careers confined to one functional area (classification, pay, evaluation, training, benefits administration, etc.) Not only did this situation narrow their perspectives, but it required line managers to solicit the assistance of several different specialists to resolve most problems. Over-specialization was thus one of the chief problems within the HRM profession, and created a large number of pathologies that still plague some jurisdictions.

Privatization [See Outsourcing]

Probationary Employee A newly hired worker who has not yet completed the probationary period and therefore has acquired no right or expectation of continued employment. Probationary employees can be fired at will and have no grievance rights (unless they allege discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, sex, and other protected categories.) As a means to avoid making too many hiring mistakes, the current trend is to extend the probationary period. Six month probationary periods have almost all been doubled to one year, while two year probationary periods are becoming increasingly common.

Productivity Bargaining As a means of labor-management cooperation, this occurs when the union offers to exchange heightened output for wage concessions or other demands. In effect, the union seeks to purchase improved working conditions or benefits by promising to reduce staffing ratios, accomplishing more work, or even giving back old prerogatives to management. This strategy works best in areas that involve easily measured outputs (such as garbage collection.)

Progressive Discipline Disciplinary procedures that specify the exact consequences of each possible employee misdeed. Usually, the procedure delineates a large number of potential offenses (tardiness, theft, insubordination,) each one of which is accompanied by the appropriate sanction (written warning for first offense, suspension without pay for second offense.) These procedures are intended to provide a consistent and uniform system of punishment in order to insulate the organization from allegations of favoritism.

Quality Oriented Position Management System (QOPMS) An approach to HRM that focuses on quality improvement through the targeted applications of training and professional development opportunities; improvement plans are carefully crafted for each position, and these are typically based upon a careful job analysis that identifies critical tasks and Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA)s for each job.

Rating Scale The cheapest, easiest, and yet most flawed of all performance appraisal strategies. A form that lists various traits or work characteristics and requires the manager to check boxes or record a

number beside each trait. Highly subjective, often not at all job-related, and a very poor basis on which to counsel employees on how to improve their performance.

Realistic Job Preview A film, tour, or other form of introduction to prospective employees that provides them with a clear understanding of both positive and negative aspects of the job applied for; intended to save time and money by running off those who may quit after going through expensive screening and/or training processes.

Reasonable Accommodation The legal necessity for an employer to try to make necessary adjustments in work processes, schedules, equipment, and the like in order to accommodate individuals with handicaps, or even those who practice a certain religion [See ADA]. Problem areas surface with great regularity in regard to religious practice, especially among groups whose Sabbath is not Sunday or whose religion precludes any kind of contact with unmarried women. Such individuals might demand preferential schedules (e.g., getting off every weekend due to religious reasons) when such treatment represents an affront to other workers who must gain seniority before earning free weekends (as one tiny example.)

Recruitment The organization's intake function by which new employees are identified and screened. Public agencies once approached this task from the perspective that a huge reservoir of eager talent exists in society, while the reality of contemporary America has proven that only aggressive recruitment strategies are likely to pay dividends.

Reduction-in-Force (RIF) The elimination of positions due to financial exigencies or reorganization. Most civil service systems follow a rigid RIF protocol in which retention points are calculated and then employees compete against one another on the basis of their total score (usually a person earns one point for each year of service, perhaps with some measure of performance added in.) Although not widely advertised, targeted RIFs are an effective way of eliminating workers and/or programs that are no longer valued or which are otherwise unpopular with upper management.

Reengineering In the HRM context, two definitions apply to reengineering. The first is concerned with the reorganization of work so as to make it more motivating to workers and to contribute to other desired objectives. This is also known as job design, and includes such phenomena as job rotation and job enrichment. Some scholars refer to it as "working smarter". The other definition is confined to the HRM function. To reengineer an OHR is to decentralize operations to line units, to shed specialized functions, and to change the office's role to a service and consultative model.

Reinvention The broad and influential reinvention movement in Public Administration impacts HRM most directly. Almost all Best Practices emanate from the reinvention agenda. The most common themes are decentralization, empowerment of line managers, managing for results, strengthening accountability, and eliminating government's obsession with control functions. These translate into much greater flexibilities within recruitment, selection, evaluation, salary administration, and all other areas of the field.

Resume Database On-line posting of job credentials to promote both recruitment by employers and job hunting by applicants. It is estimated that about 80% of all managerial-level employees will find their jobs through Internet strategies within ten years.

Residency Requirement Rules enforced by many government jurisdictions that employees live within the boundaries of the state, city, or county; the legality of such requirements has consistently been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court on several grounds (proximity in the case of emergency, providing support to the tax base that pays one's salary, and maintenance of an ethnic mix in central cities.)

Retention An organization's ability to hold onto its workers. Many public agencies face a retention crisis because of poor working conditions, non-competitive salaries, and a strong economy that increases their employees' external job opportunities. Finding ways to retain valued employees—such as longevity bonuses, re-"enlistment" incentives, and appealing to intrinsic motives - is a major preoccupation of most public managers.

Rank-in-Job An approach to career management that places a huge emphasis on job classifications and narrow position descriptions. The primary concerns of such a career system are to control the employees, to ensure that they have the appropriate credentials to perform the required duties, and to guarantee salary equity to the extent feasible. One's job classification defines the person, limits his or her ability to engage in other activities, and spells out the career ladder in excruciating detail. This approach to public sector careers is regarded as one of the major impediments to motivation, flexibility, and other desired outcomes.

Rank-in-Person Under a rank-in-person format, the worker is not bound to a narrow job classification or position description. Instead, the organization is free to assign and reassign employees where their talents best fit. The employees are viewed as a fluid pool of resources. Examples include university faculty and military officers. One's rank does not say much about that person's responsibilities or job duties. The relevant job description or rank does not preclude transfers to different assignments, or the assumption of greater responsibilities. All senior executive services are based on the rank-in-person approach to career management.

Right to Work Laws Legislation that outlaws labor contracts that make union membership a condition of employment; states enforcing stringent right to work laws are least likely to contain unionized labor forces.

Rule of Three Alternatively, the rule of one, five, ten, or even twenty. A restriction on appointing authorities that precludes them from considering any qualified applicants except those top few whose candidacy is authorized. Typically, the rule of three means that only the top three finishers on a civil service exam (or screening of resumes) can be interviewed and subsequently appointed. This is now viewed as an inexcusable restriction on managerial flexibility and discretion.

Schedule C A set of positions originally established by President Eisenhower that were explicitly available to the president for political appointment; the intent was to provide the executive branch with greater control over federal policy in the agencies, most of which were (at the time) staffed by civil servants with Democratic leanings. The Senior Executive Service, created in 1978 by the CSRA, further extended the president's ability to place political appointees in high-level posts that once were filled by career employees.

Self-Directed Teams Highly trained work groups that use consensus decision-making and broad authority to make most of the decisions concerning their goals, priorities, work processes, and timetables.

Selection The identification of those applicants who will be offered positions after the initial recruitment effort has been completed. Selection typically involves one or more examination protocols. A distinct trend is toward either unassembled exams (resume evaluation and interview), or some type of performance-based exam. Legal challenges to many other types of tests have reduced managers' enthusiasm for civil service tests and paper-and-pencil exams of all types.

Senior Executive Service (SES) The federal SES was created by the CSRA of 1978 when the supergrades (GS 16-18) were collapsed into a pool of managerial talent without their old position descriptions and job classifications. The idea was (is) to provide managers with much greater flexibility in the use of government executives. Workers can be transferred and reassigned with relative impunity, leading to greater efficiencies (perhaps) but also the increased chance of politically motivated abuse. Like it or not, the idea has caught on and has been copied by many states and localities. If not referred to as a SES, the alternative name is usually "Senior Career Service."

Shift Differential The amount of inconvenience pay that can be awarded to certain employees who are regularly assigned to shift-type work (evening, night, rotating, or split-shift,) provided that a majority of the hours worked are other than 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Single Point of Entry A centralized recruitment, testing, and selection system operated by a federal, state, or local merit system. This used to be the norm, at the time that civil service examinations were given in mass settings to fill the halls of bureaucracy. Successful applicants would then be placed on the eligibility list (or job register) and referred to agencies looking for workers. Almost all of these centralized intake systems have been abolished (e.g., the federal PACE) and replaced with multiple points of entry. Currently, most recruitment and selection takes place at the agency or department level.

Skill-Based Pay One's salary is tied to the number of different tasks or skills known to the incumbent. This approach to pay administration encourages workers to continually develop and refine their skills, and thereby serves as a useful spur to motivation and employee development.

Skip-Level Interview Sometimes known as the executive interview, this strategy started at IBM; it involves a program in which employees are periodically invited to speak to a manager one or more levels above that of their own manager for the purpose of ensuring more fair and open communications throughout the organization.

Succession Planning The proactive process by which agencies anticipate vacancies and begin far in advance to prepare candidates to fill those positions. Careful planning allows the organization to design training programs, job rotation opportunities, and other developmental programs for individuals who exhibit promotion potential.

Taft-Hartley Act One of two major pieces of legislation that bestow unionization and collective bargaining rights on private sector workers. Does not apply to the public sector.

Temporary Employee A worker who is hired into a position that is not full-time (or perhaps even authorized within the personnel ceiling) and thereby exempt from civil service requirements. This means that the appointing authority exercises enormous discretion over who is hired and on what terms. Most civil service procedures restrict the employment of temporary workers beyond fifty weeks in any given year, but this condition is widely overlooked or circumvented.

Tenure The point at which an employee acquires a liberty and/or property interest in his or her position. Although usually discussed in terms of faculty, non-probationary employees in many civil service systems effectively have "tenure" because their jobs are protected from anything other than a "for cause" removal (or, perhaps, a declaration of financial exigency.)

Test An expansive concept that means any device that is used to screen or evaluate applicants in a competitive context. Thus, it includes

performance appraisals, interviews, application forms, promotional exams, etc. According to the EEOC, any test must be validated and cannot have a demonstrably adverse effect on protected categories.

Test Validation The process by which tests are evaluated empirically to assess their job-relatedness and to ensure that they do not systematically disadvantage any protected group. Content validation is the most common method. This involves the identification of a job's critical Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs), the preparation of test items that reflect these KSAs, and the review of these items by Job Knowledge Experts (JKEs) to confirm that the test instrument is fair, accurate, and job-related.

360 Degree Evaluation An approach to performance evaluation that collects feedback from the employee's supervisor, co-workers, subordinates, and perhaps even clients. The resulting "360-degree" look at the employee's overall job behavior is perceived as more complete and reliable than uni-dimensional approaches.

Title VII A provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin with respect to all facets of employment; the Title did not originally apply to state and local governments, a situation that was reversed in 1972 by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act.

Total Quality Management (TQM) Approach to management that relies on customers and clients for definitions of quality, on workers to provide information about how work should be done and might be improved, and on managers for implementing a program of "continuous improvement" as they refine and improve work processes.

Turnover Attrition from the workforce, often due to job dissatisfaction and other factors that might be responsive to managerial initiatives.

Unassembled Examination Employee screening through relatively informal means, such as the evaluation of a resume (or application form) and a subsequent interview. No formal examination is included. This has become the primary means of filling mid- and top-level jobs, and is also ascendant in lower level categories because of continuing dilemmas in the area of test validity. Obviously, as this trend continues, the critical importance of interview skills is compounded.

Unclassified Employee A worker who is not encompassed within the relevant classification plan. As a result, the worker is likely to lack a detailed job description, and his or her grievance rights will be different from those individuals inside the classified service. Unclassified employees often enjoy fewer job protections than other workers because they are grouped in such categories as Schedule C, political appointees, seasonal workers, and temporary workers. University faculty are also unclassified

because they operate in a rank-in-person career system and also have a separate means of bestowing job protections (the tenure system.)

Uniform Guidelines for Employee Selection Issued in 1978, these guidelines were a cooperative effort of the EEOC, the Departments of Labor and Justice, and the Civil Rights Commission. They spell out, in detail, the procedures that employers should use to ensure the fair and impartial treatment of all applicants.

Validation [See Test Validation]

Veterans Preferences The granting of additional points on testing results to individuals with military service. This is a highly controversial practice in some quarters because it works to the disadvantage of many women. It is especially problematic in the area of promotions within the federal — and some state - governments. Because many individuals might score 100 on the relevant exams, only veterans can receive the promotions because their scores are elevated by the preference points. Non-veterans are effectively excluded from consideration.

Volcker Commission [See National Commission on the Public Service]

Whistleblowing The practice of turning one's employer (or other) organization "in" for its misdeeds. The CSRA of 1978 expressly attempted to encourage a more ethical approach to government by virtually begging whistleblowers to approach relevant authorities with their stories. In exchange, the MSPB was empowered to protect the individuals from retaliation. To date, the law has been a disaster. Almost all of those who have blown the whistle since 1978 have been subjected to serious personal and professional repercussions.