CENTER FOR STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE





Workforce of the Future: Strategies to Manage Change October 2018



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About the Center for State and Local Government Excellence

The Center for State and Local Government Excellence (SLGE) helps local and state governments become knowledgeable and competitive employers so they can attract and retain a talented and committed workforce. SLGE identifies leading practices and conducts research on public retirement plans, health care benefits, workforce demographics and skill set needs, and labor force development. SLGE brings state and local leaders together with respected researchers. Access all SLGE publications and sign up for its newsletter at slge.org and follow @4govtexcellence on Twitter.

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Executive Summary

Human resources (HR) leaders are shifting from a transactional to a strategic approach to support local and state governments in adapting to changing workforce demographics and the increased competition for talent. State and local governments are modernizing their operations, revamping their hiring practices, and developing a brand that appeals to a more diverse pool of applicants.

These leaders apply creativity to build a more robust pipeline for hard-to-fill positions and to offer a wide range of learning opportunities. Having an engaged workforce that is motivated to gain skills and knowledge is essential to an organization's success and well-being.

To learn more about the change management approaches that are most effective, the Center for State and Local Government Excellence (SLGE) undertook a literature review and interviewed leaders from seven local governments and one state government. SLGE conducted interviews with human resources and management leaders in the State of Michigan, the City of Centennial and the City and County of Denver, Colorado; Johnson County, Kansas; the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Montgomery County, Maryland; the City of San Antonio, Texas; and the City and County of San Francisco, California. The key findings are described in the following pages.

TRENDS AND INNOVATIONS

Some of the human resources leaders interviewed for this study had moved to the public sector after spending several years in the private sector. Their private sector background, coupled with public sector experience, reinforced their commitment to change management and leadership development, including the following practices:

- Taking the initiative to seek feedback from employees and elected officials
- Seeking candidates who have diverse experiences and backgrounds
- Focusing on how to get to "yes" with other agencies and departments
- Examining business processes to find efficiencies
- Developing great managers who are committed to their teams
- Developing greater cultural competence

• Providing supervisors and employees with the tools and resources they need to achieve goals and improve performance.

EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

As a greater number of younger and more diverse workers enter the job market, local and state governments are adapting their recruitment strategies to reach them. They participate in job fairs and use social media, YouTube videos, and infographics in their advertising.

Some organizations are offering more flexibility, including in their compensation and benefits package. San Antonio, Texas, for example, has amended its paid time-off policy to provide an additional twenty-four hours of leave specifically earmarked to encourage employees to participate in activities that help transform the workforce and the community. Employees can use this leave to volunteer for a nonprofit, go to their annual physical appointment, meet with someone regarding financial wellness, attend their child's parent-teacher conference or military swearing-in ceremony, take their pet to the vet, or adopt a pet from the city's animal shelter. In addition, parental leave is provided to all employees immediately upon hire. Parental leave allows for six weeks of paid time to bond with a child after birth, adoption, or placement from foster care.

The City and County of San Francisco, competing for talent in a highly competitive job market, has found

excellent job candidates by reaching out to individuals with disabilities. San Francisco also makes sure that candidates understand the value of the city's defined benefit pension plan.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Listening to employees and responding to their interests and concerns are key to effective employee engagement. Some organizations regularly survey their employees to gauge how engaged they are with the organization and its mission. The State of Michigan, for example, has conducted employee engagement surveys every eighteen months since 2002. In response to survey feedback, Michigan established a leadership development program and a new employee recognition program.

The response rate to the survey has continued to go up every year. Michigan credits its focus on taking actions on issues employees raise as the reason the rate has climbed.

Other ways of engaging employees can be more personal. The City of Minneapolis, for example, created Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) in response to feedback from employees. The city government has adopted aspirational workforce diversity goals for people of color and women. In response to workforce diversity goals, female employees expressed a desire to form an employee resource group with a focus on attracting and retaining women in the workplace—as well as provide feedback to leaders regarding policies and practices that impact women.



Additional ERGs include the Black Employee Network as well as a group for employees who have served in the military. ERGs are open to all city employees and must have an executive sponsor.

STREAMLINE HR PROCESSES WITH TECHNOLOGY

Examining a current process is the first step in considering a technology solution to improve a service. Managers can start by asking employees, department leaders, and elected officials for feedback. What is working well and what needs to change to improve HR services? That feedback will lead to the question, how can we leverage technology? Once the process issues are identified, the information technology experts can make recommendations on ways that automation can lead to improvements.

These are some of the issues that human resources leaders identify as priorities for technology solutions:

- Volume of employee questions and need for timely response
- Cumbersome application process
- Applicant assessments
- Onboarding activities
- Time-consuming work, including address changes and benefit enrollments
- Desire for a more consumer-oriented employee experience

Montgomery County, Maryland, has focused on improvements in its candidate gualification process and system. Rather than simply submitting a resume, the automated process requires job applicants to respond to online questions related to job requirements that assess their experience and skills. A benefit of the change is that human resources can work more closely with the hiring manager upfront to identify clearly what is needed in candidates for the department to succeed. The automated process saves time for both the recruiter and hiring departments by analyzing each candidate's proficiency level in the skills required for the job. The new system is more efficient, as it eliminates multiple manual touches, but the organization continues to work through implementation challenges.

GOVERNMENT'S BRAND ADVANTAGE

Social media, YouTube videos, and advertising help get the message out that local and state governments are a great choice for people who want to make a difference to society. Johnson County, Kansas, for example, features positions on the county's Facebook and Twitter accounts, and the Sheriff's Office has hosted an online career fair to recruit for hard-to-fill positions. Personal outreach is equally important, say many government leaders, as they participate in university career fairs and visit schools to raise their profiles.

Having a reputation as a learning organization also enhances a government's brand. Johnson County is well known as an organization that is responsive to employees and that offers educational opportunities.

The City and County of Denver must compete in a marketplace that has 2-percent unemployment. With that level of competition, the city has to stand out as it publicizes its job openings. Denver uses an advertising agency that helps it to showcase employees as brand champions. Photographs are used on billboards, posters, and light rail trains with the message "Be a part of the city you love." These efforts have increased job applicants by 10 percent and led to a stronger talent pool. Applicants say they have seen the billboard, like the slogan, and want to do work that matters.

STATE AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND BENEFITS

SLGE analyzed data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to project employment trends over the next 10 years as well as identify the demand for skill sets, changes in benefit offerings, and other underlying drivers of change. The analysis projects that state government employment will grow by 3.8 percent and local government employment will grow by 7.4 percent. The increase in anticipated employment figures reflects both population growth and the ongoing catch-up in employment levels in the aftermath of the Great Recession.

Since 2009, the share of state and local government agencies identifying key positions as being hard to fill

has more than doubled. For skilled trades, for example, the percentage of agencies expressing difficulty in hiring has risen from 1 percent in 2009 to 21 percent in 2018.ⁱ

Leaders in human resources and other government departments are building a more robust pipeline for hard-to-fill positions and revamping their recruitment methods in order to address these competitive employment market challenges. They are responding to changing expectations of the workforce as they, for example, offer more flexibility and enhance some of their benefits, such as parental leave and paid time off.



Transforming Governments for the Future

TRENDS AND INNOVATIONS

As the competition for talent grows, human resources executives in state and local governments are demonstrating more leadership and innovation. Rather than simply managing staffing for their respective governments, they recognize the need to lead some of the change management required to ensure that their organizations have the talent they need for the future.

The need for HR professionals to take more of a leadership role in transforming their organizations and to help them adapt to change was a key recommendation in the 2016 IPMA-HR 2020 Task Force. The HR 2020 report examined why an effective HR function is critical to an organization's success.

The HR profession exists in a rapidly evolving world; volatile economies, environmental impacts, rapid changes in technology, and the changing needs of the workforce require HR professionals to think differently about how to shape the organizations that deliver services to citizens....it is critical that future-focused strategies are developed now...to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.ⁱⁱ Minneapolis offers an example of responding to changing dynamics. It has established an eighteenmonth pathway program, a career development initiative designed to increase the talent pool of police officer candidates. One goal of the program is to increase the number of women and people of color who go into policing. The individuals who complete the Community Service Officer pathway program meet the requirement of a two-year degree program.





Source: State and Local Government Workforce: 2018 Data and 10 Year Trends, Center for State and Local Government Excellence

The number of state and local responses for 2009-2018 were 142, 203, 267, and 307, respectively. The City of San Antonio identified the civil service exam as one barrier to boosting the number of applicants for the police force. In response, the city bargained with the police union in order to give the test to individual candidates in an online format rather than relying solely on a group exam.

Many governments devote attention to developing their current employees. Denver provides a development report for current employees who applied for a position but were not selected. These employees have an opportunity to work with an industrial psychologist who will go over their scores with them to identify any shortcomings that may need to be addressed.

Developing the human resources staff is a goal for many organizations. "Human resources departments are asked to do so much," observes Micki Callahan, who serves as the human resources director for the City and County of San Francisco. "We have to recruit, onboard, and separate employees. How can we expect one person to do everything?"

San Francisco requires all HR staff to take "HR Essentials." This course broadens staff's understanding of all HR responsibilities; in this way, a specialist who primarily works on exams will gain an understanding of leave management, Equal Employment Opportunity law, civil service regulations, fair hiring, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The learning activities help HR develop its own talent pool by providing the training an individual will need to pass a test to work in another HR specialty. The city also has programs to help interested clerical staff move into HR. Online learning and classroom training for all employees is offered through City University.

Implicit bias training is a current focus for San Francisco agencies and is required across all categories of employees. In-person training is delivered to all Police Academy recruits. For non-safety hiring, San Francisco is implementing changes to reduce the opportunity for implicit bias early in the hiring process: hiring managers will not see the names, addresses, or schools of job candidates until *after* deciding whom to interview.

With more hires now coming from the private sector, governments are giving attention to supervisory excellence training that includes public sector framing. Developing a culturally agile workforce is a performance expectation in the City of Minneapolis. Recognizing that unconscious bias can be a barrier in hiring top talent, a focus of training for hiring managers and supervisors is to discover, reduce, and minimize bias in the interview process. HR provides the tools and resources to address expectations about how to engage with employees, provide for two-way feedback, respect differences, and hold each other accountable. Leaders, managers, and individual supervisors all receive training and support.

Innovation is viewed as an integral part of the mission, vision, or values of government organizations,

according to 40 percent of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) members who responded to a Kronos-IPMA HR 2017 survey. This research study examined the role of human resources in fostering innovation in their organizations. Over 60 percent of respondents reported programming innovations in learning and development programs that emphasize leadership development with increased availability of online programs and materials.ⁱⁱⁱ

Johnson County, Kansas, has used the High Performance Organization (HPO) framework for much of its professional development over the last eight years. HPO emphasizes the importance of leadership at all levels, promoting systems, structures, and strategies that encourage and empower crossdepartment teams and continuous improvement efforts. Johnson County directors and employees teach Leadership Empowers All People (LEAP), a threeto five-day course based upon a program designed and taught by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia. LEAP focuses on leadership principles and practices and encompasses everything from the essence of public service and democracy to leadership philosophy, mission, vision, and values to strategic issues and culture change. Over 3,0000 employees have completed the LEAP program.

The State of Michigan has relied on employee engagement, performance metrics, and strategic

planning initiatives to drive accountability, focus on improvements, and track progress on key goals. All agencies and all levels of employees put together an action agenda with three to five items they seek to improve or strengthen. Updates are posted every three months on the State of Michigan website. The plan gets attention. Michigan Governor Rick Snyder meets quarterly with each department head for an hour to go over the scorecard and the action plan.

Good data and feedback are essential to drive change. A service delivery model that responds to changing expectations of the workforce can create opportunities for major improvements. In Minneapolis, HR staff reached out to employees, department heads, unions, and elected officials to seek feedback on what the department did well, what opportunities there were to introduce change, and what promising practices could be adopted. Patience Ferguson, chief human resources officer, City of Minneapolis, notes that it is important to address employee expectations. "People want to grow, develop, and have different experiences," she said.

"The City of Minneapolis is viewed as innovative," Ferguson added. "While seeking to attract new people to the workforce, it is also important to ensure that employees who are currently working are valued and supported."

This year Minneapolis implemented internal career development fairs for current employees to help them find out about opportunities within the city and build

"People want to grow, develop, and have different experiences."

- Patience Ferguson Chief Human Resources Officer City of Minneapolis connections throughout the organization. Employees can sign up to have their resumes reviewed, learn about enterprise-wide developmental opportunities, and get a professional headshot for their LinkedIn page.

Some governments rely intensively on private sector or contract employees. The City of Centennial, Colorado, is a relatively new city with a population of 110,000. After filing a petition to incorporate in December 1998, voters approved the formation of the City of Centennial on September 12, 2000. As a new city, Centennial has been willing to try out different models to provide services. It currently has just 65 regular employees and relies heavily on contract employees. Jacobs Engineering has the contract to provide traditional city services. There are no interactions between the Centennial HR department and the contract employees.

Centennial prides itself on being efficient, lean, and organized. HR emphasizes the development of great managers—and of the 65 employees, 22 are managers. Centennial managers must oversee contracts as well as Centennial employees. Centennial received a Gallup Great Workplace Award in 2017 and 2018, based on Gallup's criteria for cultivating a workplace culture of engagement. It also has been named a Denver Best Place to Work in the small company category. Nominees for this *Denver Post* recognition must complete the Quantum Workplace employee engagement survey. A minimum level of employee participation is required to be named as a finalist. Like other high-performing organizations studied for this project, Centennial has a reputation for innovation as well as a strong workplace culture and commitment to professional development and learning.

EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

Governments are adapting their recruitment methods and making much greater use of social media in order to bring younger candidates into the applicant pool.

Figure 2. What recruitment practices are most successful in reaching qualified candidates? (n=311)



Source: State and Local Government Workforce: 2018 Data and 10 Year Trends, Center for State and Local Government Excellence "Millennials are more likely than earlier generations to find job opportunities using social media sites like LinkedIn and Facebook," Jonathan Wiersma of CivicHR wrote in *Government Technology*. "In fact, an Aberdeen [a market intelligence group] study reports that 73 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds found their last job through a social network."^{iv}

Local and state government employers look for ways to stand out and get the word out about their job openings. The State of Michigan uses infographics, photographs, and posters to get the attention of younger workers and job candidates. The City and County of Denver participates in career fairs, offers internships, and makes active use of social media. Denver uses an advertising agency and posts videos of employees doing their jobs and serving as brand champions. Photographs are included on billboards, posters, and light rail cars with the message, "Be a part of the city you love."

Building the pipeline of talent is another strategy. The San Francisco Fellows Program is geared toward recent college graduates and targets historically black colleges, among other places. Even after the Great Recession required the city to freeze much of its hiring, the Fellows Program continued in the airport, utility, and transit departments. This highly competitive program has brought dozens of diverse and qualified candidates into entry-level professional positions across the city. Candidates with disabilities are another source of talent that San Francisco has tapped. These individuals are often overlooked and have skills needed by many departments. The California State Department of Rehabilitation pays for any adaptive equipment needed for their jobs.

The City of San Antonio features a job of the week on Facebook and LinkedIn with hiring managers describing the job's unique aspects. The city uses social media to highlight individual employees and to share information about the city and the department with the job opening. Once a month, the city has a live "Chat with a Recruiter" opportunity on Facebook, <u>https://www.facebook.com/CitySanAntonio HR/</u>. Individuals can pose their questions and get answers on the spot.

Multiple approaches and methods of recruitment are needed to reach as wide an audience as possible. San Antonio held a virtual job fair through the National Forum for Black Public Administrators network. It also has outreach programs to connect with veterans who are transitioning from the military to civilian life. Blogs, e-mails, and traditional advertisements for certain positions are used as well.

HR recognizes that it is essential to work closely with hiring managers to support them and to develop their skills. San Antonio's Office of Innovation worked with HR to map and streamline the recruitment process from 2009 to 2010. A module of San Antonio's supervisory The City of San Antonio features a job of the week on Facebook and LinkedIn. training now addresses hiring. The module explains the do's and don't's involved with the hiring process and how to create good interview questions. As San Antonio finds more of its hires coming from the private sector, it is giving particular attention to incorporating public sector framing into its supervisor excellence training, helping these employees understand that public service work engages a broad range of stakeholders and often puts staff in the public eye.

While comparable private sector jobs generally offer higher wages, the public sector can have a competitive advantage with respect to employee benefits. San Antonio markets the advantages of its benefits and policies. After employees identified paid time off (PTO) as a high priority in the city's biannual employee engagement survey, San Antonio allocated an additional twenty-four hours of paid leave. Employees can use these absences for enrolling in school, attending wellness appointments, participating in their child's school activities, volunteering in the community, or engaging in responsible pet ownership.

Parental leave is another important benefit San Antonio and many other governments offer. Starting on the hire date, San Antonio employees receive six weeks of parental leave, which can be used for adoptions, foster parenting, or the birth of a baby. San Antonio also offers a bridge policy to encourage people to return to city government employment. If an employee returns to government service within five years of leaving, he or she can receive the same health insurance premium rates that others with their original date of hire are currently paying. This benefit has been useful to employees who have pursued a degree or served in the Peace Corps.

San Antonio's Management Fellowship Program, established in 2007, has helped that city develop its pipeline of leadership. Fellows, typically recent college graduates, are given rotating assignments in the city manager's office, budget office, and an operating department. Some of the program alumni now hold executive-level positions in San Antonio government agencies.

Johnson County, Kansas, has been attentive to position descriptions. Each job description includes background on the county's pillars of performance, which describe the county's leadership philosophy, mission, vision, and values. The county's public information officer has been enhancing the Johnson County career portal to better convey more about the organization. It is optimized for mobile users, highlights recent hires, and includes more social media communication.

"According to comScore Media Metrix, 21 percent of millennials almost exclusively use a mobile device to go online," Jonathan Wiersma wrote in *Government Technology*, "and according to a study by Jobvite, 37 percent of millennial job seekers expect career websites to be optimized for mobile." v Optimization for mobile means that employers need to create concise job postings and job descriptions that can be easily scanned from a mobile device. Online forms for job applications should be the norm and the mobile

experience should be easy to navigate with minimal drop-down menus.

Turnover is a reality in many governments. Denver estimates that 20 percent of its workforce may retire in the next five years, so it is working with managers to identify critical positions and who might have the interest and potential to develop the needed skills. Although not every employee is interested in developing the skills needed to advance, training is offered to everyone.

Effective onboarding, training, and professional development are essential retention strategies. The City and County of Denver now provides much of its training online, rather than through full-day, in-person training. The online training is more condensed and covers such subjects as using spreadsheets, word processing, the HR information system, ethics, performance reviews, and coaching conversations.

Karen Niparko, executive director, human resources, City and County of Denver, encourages HR employees to network and get engaged in the broader Denver community. She believes her employees need to know what is going on in the business community and with all aspects of the city/county government. "They need to have strong connections with public and private sector colleagues and to be open to doing things differently," she said. "Networking is important locally, nationally, and globally. Speaking and participating on panels is good for Denver."

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

There is substantial research to reinforce the importance of employee engagement in improving organizational performance. As Robert Lavigna writes in the June 2018 *PA Times*, "Results from two research studies on the public sector workforce have revealed perplexing and seemingly contradictory results. According to one study, government human resources leaders believe that focusing on employee engagement is a high priority. However, other research reveals that engagement among government employees is low. These results are not only contradictory, they're alarming. If engagement is important, why is it low?" vi

Lavigna cites the findings of a 2018 poll conducted by SLGE, the National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE), and the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) in which 79 percent of respondents selected employee engagement as a top workforce issue for their organizations. Yet in a national poll conducted by the Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement, respondents indicated that state and local government employee engagement is low and lags that of private sector employees.

Figure 3. Employee Engagement by Sector

State Government	28%
Local Government	31%
Private Sector	43%

Source: Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement online survey, June/July 2016

Workforce of the Future: Strategies to Manage Change

State and local government executives interviewed for this project have made a strong commitment to employee engagement initiatives. Some conduct regular employee engagement surveys and strive to implement programs that respond to employee interests and concerns. Others provide ongoing feedback and engagement opportunities for employees.

Michael Zingsheim, engagement specialist in the State of Michigan's Office of Performance and Transformation, reports that he and his team have worked with cabinet-level agencies on good government initiatives for the past five years, including employee engagement, performance metrics, and strategic planning. Over this period, the response rate to the employee engagement survey has increased from 69 percent to 76 percent and the percentage of highly engaged employees (champions) has grown from 40 percent to 54 percent. This level of responses exceeds the high performance benchmark among companies rated the "best of the best," he says.

Zingsheim notes that Michigan has champions in every agency who serve as change agents and advocates for good government. These individuals are highly engaged and help with the follow-through on key initiatives, such as leadership development.

In response to survey feedback from employees who sought more professional development opportunities, Michigan established a Leadership FIT program in 2013; 2,000 employees have now completed this program. Leadership development programs are structured over a four-month period. The program brings employees together once a month and has other activities scheduled in between meetings. The importance of developing leadership cannot be underestimated. As Zingsheim points out, "People leave leaders, not their positions."

Another Michigan initiative is a poster contest. Winning posters are hung in state buildings. Last year 2,400 employees voted for their favorite poster; so far 7,500 employees have voted this year.

A related program called COIN recognizes employees who exemplify Michigan's core values of teamwork, leadership, excellence, and customer service. Anyone from an agency can request that an employee be given recognition. Honorees receive one of the four coins created for the program and a letter signed by the Michigan governor.

Zingsheim observes that retention will be more challenging as the economy improves. There are fewer financial incentives the state government can offer, so it is important to demonstrate that state leaders care, that Michigan is a good place to work, and that it offers opportunities for growth. For example, Michigan has a college partnership that provides reduced tuition rates, making it more affordable for employees to finish degrees or to pursue an advanced degree. In addition, when employees feel empowered and are involved in the decision-making process, government agencies become more attractive places to work.

Johnson County, Kansas, has conducted an employee engagement survey since 2005. Based on research

"People leave leaders, not their positions."

- Michael Zingsheim Engagement Specialist State of Michigan's Office of Performance and Transformation





regarding the impact of a direct supervisor on an employee's engagement level, Johnson County implemented a new survey tool in 2015 that provides results for each supervisor. The survey process includes criteria to ensure participant confidentiality while still allowing most supervisors to get more specific feedback. The depth of the feedback allows each team to focus on the areas that are most significant to them. It has also helped to engage more employees and supervisors in the process. As a result of this change, Johnson County has incorporated additional employee engagement training for supervisors.

Because employees indicated they wanted more options in how they receive their annual merit increase, Johnson County is implementing a new total rewards compensation program this year. It will offer employees more choices, such as receiving their merit increase in the form of additional paid time off or as a contribution into their supplemental deferred compensation program. Employees may also choose a lump sum payout of their merit increase. To ensure that the employee's salary base is retained for future years, HR keeps track of the data in a separate field, allowing the compounding effect from the traditional merit increase to remain intact.

The Minneapolis HR department publishes dashboards that detail its ambitious goals for hiring and retaining employees, including specific goals related to women and people of color. The city's aspirational goal is to have 41 percent employees of color and 45 percent women in the workforce by 2022—goals that more closely reflect the diversity in the Minneapolis community.

When employees heard elected officials talk about these diversity goals, groups of employees, including women, said they wanted to do research and do something about the concerns. City leaders supported these requests and HR now meets monthly with employee groups that include the 29 percent club (which anyone can join), the Black Employee Resource Group, and military employees. Keeping an open mind about employee initiatives and creating opportunities for two-way communication is part of the Minneapolis strategy for employee engagement.

A women's leadership program in San Antonio, started in 2014, offers both employee engagement as well as mentoring and professional development opportunities. The program pairs a senior San Antonio leader with an emerging leader, with mentors and interested mentees going through a "speed matching" exercise to pair up with each other. Mentees sometimes choose a mentor outside of their primary career area in order to broaden their exposure and learn more about processes in other departments.

Many who have gone through the leadership program have been promoted to manager and executive positions. As San Antonio City Manager Sheryl Sculley explains, "Local government is one of the places where one can experience a variety of careers with the same employer."

STREAMLINE HR PROCESSES WITH TECHNOLOGY

When local and state government managers consider using technology for process improvements, they say that it's more about change management than the technology itself. As Minneapolis Chief Human Resources Officer Patience Ferguson explains, the questions have become, "How can we leverage technology? What do the data tell us? How can we help department leaders and elected officials get the data they need to make good business decisions?"

Sometimes the organization already has an HR information system (HRIS); in other cases, HR may be looking for a new HRIS to help achieve its goals. It's critical to identify the processes most in need of change.

For example, when Montgomery County, Maryland, looked at its job application process, it identified several time-consuming elements. The county receives in excess of 40,000 applications a year, and it previously relied on a manual screening process. The recruiter would review each resume that had been uploaded to determine if minimal qualifications had been met. The resumes that met the qualifications were then sent to raters in the hiring department who would assess whether or not the candidates met the required qualifications and then would rate them based on the preferred criteria. Based on the ratings, candidates were placed within a categorical ranking with applicants in the highest categorical ranking placed on the eligible list. The hiring manager would then review the eligible list to determine which candidates to interview.

Ultimately, the County's goal was to reduce the time it takes to fill a vacant position. HR considered which steps in this process could be automated and subsequently put out a request for proposals. The county selected a vendor with experience doing assessments through an online candidate qualification tool. Using this tool, a candidate fills out an online application, indicating relevant years of experience, degrees, types of jobs held, and time periods working in relevant areas. Then the system relies on the information the applicant provides and the job's predefined minimum requirements to identify qualified candidates for HR to review. HR looks at the system results to ensure that the minimum qualifications and preferred criteria match the candidate resumes.

In a highly competitive job market, the streamlined process allows HR to more quickly generate an eligibility list and deliver it to hiring managers. It also reduces the redundant work of processing, printing, copying, and/or distributing paper applications and resumes.

HR sees other advantages to the new approach. HR now works more closely with the hiring manager at the outset to find out what knowledge and skills are needed in the candidates. The automated system also eliminated the need for department raters to review and rate applications—previously, two raters may have been required to review as many as a few hundred applications. "How can we help department leaders and elected officials get the data they need to make good business decisions?"

Patience Ferguson
 Chief Human Resources Officer
 City of Minneapolis

While staff had consistently expressed dissatisfaction with the time-consuming manual process for hiring, shifting to the enhanced candidate qualification process and system brought new challenges. Making greater use of automation often requires helping people adapt to change. Montgomery County addressed these types of concerns by first bringing various hiring departments and HR staff to the table to talk about recruitment and selection issues and concerns. The county continues to manage change through regular department feedback mechanisms and ongoing education, training, and process updates to departments.

Going forward, Montgomery County HR Strategy and Innovation Officer Kimberly Williams sees these areas as potential targets for improvement:

- Better data and analysis of the recruitment and selection process, such as applicant and hiring demographics that may assist HR and departments with recruitment strategies
- Creation of pathway programs for hard-to-recruit positions (e.g., permitting jobs)
- Onboarding process for new employees from the time the individual accepts the offer to the completion of the probationary period.

Continuous feedback from new hires, hiring managers, and HR is needed to identify changes that may create a better experience for new employees. The goal, says Williams, is to free up time so that HR can collaborate with departments, rather than be consumed by transactional processing.

Minneapolis HR leaders also describe their relationship with the Information Technology (IT) Department as a partnership. Before automating some of its transactional services, HR received up to 50 calls a day with basic questions, particularly about benefits. Using a digital platform selected by IT, the HR Service Center operates more like an internal 311 system. The platform gives callers a quick response, and also provides HR with real-time data to highlight how requests can be handled more efficiently and other areas for improvement. Since its inception in October of 2017, the HR department has fielded over 4,000 inquiries, resulting in a more positive and productive employee experience.

The bottom line for state and local governments is to leverage technology to provide more efficient service for internal as well as external customers.

GOVERNMENT'S BRAND ADVANTAGE

The idea that a government employer has a brand was a novel concept just a few years ago. Today, it is not unusual for government leaders to pay much more attention to their government's brand and how to improve it.

Local and state governments have certain advantages over most private sector employers when it comes to mission and purpose. They also have complex problems to solve that can be appealing to impassioned workers who want to make a difference. Tech-savvy workers will find it appealing to make sense of the massive amount of data that is now available to state and local governments.

The following are some insights from the government leaders interviewed for this project:

- 1. "People who come to Minneapolis to work are drawn to public service," says Patience Ferguson.
- "The city has a newly created employment brand tagline: 'Serving Community. Building Careers.' The employment brand strategies associated with the tagline are designed to communicate a set of offerings, associations, and values that sum up the unique employer offerings of the City of Minneapolis."
- 2. In a highly competitive job market, the City of Denver has to stand out and get the word out about its job openings. The city's slogan, "Be a part of the city you love," is cited by many job applicants who say they wanted to do work that matters.
- 3. Michigan's branding efforts are working. People are embracing the message that "we're all trying to make a difference"
- 4. San Francisco's brand message is, "'Choose purpose," says Micki Callahan. "The City/County of San Francisco is more diverse and is merit-based."
- 5. San Antonio received approximately125,000 job applications in 2017 and sees itself as an employer of choice. City officials market their benefit offerings

and flexible work practices to job candidates.

6. "Our successful candidates are those who understand that it is our responsibility to leave this community better than we found it, and who are committed to doing the right thing for the right reason, for the public good," says Mary Biere, Johnson County human resources manager. ^{vii}

In the Metropolitan Kansas City area, Johnson County is well-known as an organization that is responsive to employees and that offers educational opportunities. Compensation is competitive—but the county has limited flexibility to compete on salary so good benefit offerings are important.

In the race to attract and retain talented employees, local and state government leaders are focused on developing a culture for excellence and a place where people can make a difference in the lives of others. They do this by the following means, among others:

- Engaging employees in meaningful ways
- Being open to change
- Leveraging technology to streamline services
- Taking initiative to increase employee satisfaction
- Offering career development and learning opportunities
- Making time for what's most important.



State and Local Employment and Benefits

State and local employment is poised for significant change over the next decade, with growth projected in total staffing. Technology will drive some revolutionary changes in particular career fields.

Since 2006, the leading growth areas for local and state employment have been in transportation (local: increased by 11.1 percent), and education (state: increased by 5.2 percent).^{viii}

What is on the horizon for the next ten years? From media reports, one would expect autonomous vehicles, Uber, and similar developments to cut into staff levels needed for government fleets and related jobs. Through 2026, some positions are indeed projected to decline precipitously, such as drivers of light-duty vehicles (-16.5 percent among local staffing, -20.7 percent among state staffing). Nevertheless, together, those account for under 10,000 jobs. Most other positions in transportation or fleets are projected to increase along with the rest of the local and state employment base, with exceptions being local automotive service technicians and mechanics (-14.1 percent). Bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists are expected to grow by 14.9 percent. From 2016 to 2026, overall local government employment is projected to increase by 7.4 percent, with state government employment projected to increase by 3.8 percent. These totals include the larger segments of the workforce, such as public safety, education, and health care.

Figure 4. Projected Employment Growth through 2026

State Government	+3.8%
Local Government	+7.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Current Employment Statistics

Such changes do not necessarily reflect a historic high, as many of the affected governments had significantly lower employment in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Of the four sectors shown in Figure 5 for 2006-2016, only state education did not experience a decline in this period, increasing from 2.3 to 2.4 million employees.

In many cases, these prior declines in staffing were the result of layoffs, hiring freezes, or other efforts to reduce the number of staff or cut personnel costs. As

Figure 5. Local and State Employment, 2006-2016

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT:



Source: Employment data: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment, Hours, and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics survey (National). Figures are not seasonally adjusted. December 2016 data based on preliminary data release as of February 15, 2017.

the recession has passed, the share of agencies pursuing such strategies has decreased. For example, layoffs were reported by 42 percent of jurisdictions in 2009, but only 8 percent in 2018.^{ix}





Source: State and Local Government Workforce: 2018 Data and 10 Year Trends, Center for State and Local Government Excellence

At the same time, while the total number of those laid off or otherwise discharged spiked in 2009, the number who chose to quit state and local employment declined. Even though the number of other separations remained somewhat consistent, in 2009, 44 percent reported that their retirement-eligible employees were postponing retirement—a figure that has since fallen to 21 percent in 2018.

STATE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT:





Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey. Figures are not seasonally adjusted. December 2016 data based on preliminary data release as of February 15, 2017. In local employment, the greatest gains from 2016 to 2026 are expected to be in heavy vehicle maintenance (14.9 percent), planning (12.7 percent), subway and streetcar operations (4.4 percent), and human resources (4.1 percent). Information technology positions for network administrators and systems analysts will also be increasing (2 percent), which may be a challenge, considering that they are among the positions human resources staff identify as being hardto-fill (see discussion accompanying Figure 8 below).

Areas of decline in local government employment may reflect changes with clerical, administrative, or corrections staffing, or expected automation impacting positions such as cashier (-0.7 percent) or meter reader (-3.4 percent). Areas of greatest decline include light vehicle mechanics (-14.1 percent), and various clerk, secretary, and support positions (led by word processors and typists, -35.6 percent).

While overall state government employment is anticipated to increase by 3.8 percent, there are declines projected in customer service (-6.6 percent), firstline supervisors of administrative staff (-7.6 percent), correctional officers (-9.8 percent), and support staff (ranging from -6.6 percent to -37.7 percent).

Clerical jobs are expected to decline significantly. Just a few years ago, the 2014-2024 projections anticipated local and state clerical employment to change by -0.8 percent and -6.8 percent, respectively. The 2016-2026 projections now show much steeper decreases of -5.9 percent and -12.1 percent, respectively. If the most significant impacts of the recession have passed, one lingering issue jurisdictions face is how to recruit the staff they need during a time of low unemployment. Police and fire vacancies have traditionally drawn a wealth of applicants, but those positions and others that directly compete with the private sector, such as engineering, nursing, and skilled trades, are becoming harder to fill. Information technology positions are also reported as hard to fill (by 16 percent in 2015, with as many as 22 percent reporting the same for various IT specialty areas in 2018).[×]





As hiring for some positions proves difficult, some government agencies are opting to fill their staffing needs via short-term contracting in the gig economy. While this approach is not practical for public safety, 20 percent of jurisdictions reported using it for office/ administrative support, 12 percent for maintenance work, 9 percent for accounting, 7 percent for IT support, and 5 percent for engineering, among others.^{xi}



PROJECTIONS: 2016 TO 2026

Figures in this section are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics National Employment Matrix.

Projections by Industry

Before looking at how employment is expected to change in various fields, it is important to consider how sizeable those fields are compared to overall employment. Thus, even where there may be dramatic percentage changes in some fields, if they do not represent a significant share of total employment, they are excluded from this analysis. The same is true when looking at individual job descriptions; if the number of such local government or state government jobs nationwide is less than 10,000 individuals, it is not discussed here.

Overall local and state employment is projected to increase by 7.4 percent and 3.8 percent, respectively, but many industries are expected to vary from that average. Figures shown are for all state and local government employment except education and hospitals.

As a share of total workforce, the most significant change for local government will be in administration, which is projected to decrease from 13.1 percent of total employment to 12.1 percent. This represents a drop from 751,000 jobs to 724,400—a decrease of 3.5 percent. By contrast, utilities employment is also projected to decline (from 131,000 to 128,700 jobs—a decrease of 1.8 percent), but this represents a much smaller portion of overall local government employment (dropping from 2.3 percent to 2.1 percent of the total).









Growth industries include mapping and surveying (expected to see +14.2 percent more employees), marketing (+9.5 percent), and neighborhood services (+8.7 percent), with slower growth in information technology (+4.9 percent), finance (+3.0 percent), and recreation (+2.0 percent), and a decline in corrections (-5.8 percent) and parking (-17.0 percent).

As with local government, there is projected to be a steep decline in state government administration (from 417,400 jobs to 390,100, or -6.5 percent), but also in corrections (from 271,400 jobs to 244,900, or -9.8 percent). This would decrease their shares of total state employment, but they would remain the largest industries, surpassed only by "all other."

Growth industries in state government include fleet maintenance (+5.7 percent), scientific fields (+5.4 percent), and neighborhood services (+4.4 percent), with slower growth in legal/judicial (+2.3 percent), finance (+2.1 percent), and transportation (+1.4 percent), and a decline in food services (-3.2 percent).

Some of the industries projected to decline would be particularly impacted by automation. For example, in a 2013 study, library and traffic technicians were identified as facing 90 percent or higher probability of computerization, with bus drivers, highway maintenance workers, and parking enforcement workers close behind.^{xii} Other changes in employment may relate to private sector competition (e.g., food services) or a combination of technological, political, and financial factors (e.g., administration).

Projections by Category

Another way to consider employment changes is to look across the organization at various categories of workers—including technical, professional, supervisory, management, and support staff. In both the local and state sectors, the greatest decline is predicted in clerical staffing, although at the state level, public safety and supervisory staffing are also projected to decline.





Figure 12. State Government Employment Change by Category, 2016-2026



Delving into the public safety segment in more depth, one can see that local police, fire/EMS, and other public safety staff will remain in demand, but corrections employment is projected to decline for both state and local agencies. This may be a function of crime rates, shifts to private prisons, decriminalization of some drug offenses, changes in policies regarding alternative sentencing, or other factors.

Figure 13. Public Safety Employment Change, 2016-2026



***NOTE:** Employment in state fire/EMS and other state public safety is less than 50,000 individuals each, and as such, does not contribute significantly to total state public safety employment.

As opposed to the decreases seen here, just two years ago, the Bureau of Labor Statistics was projecting that by 2024, state corrections staffing would increase by 1.6 percent and local corrections staffing would increase by 5.7 percent. Given the uncertainty about local, state, and federal crime and incarceration policies, these corrections figures may remain somewhat fluid.

Projections by Position

Considering the increasing reliance on technology, it is striking that state information technology staffing is only projected to increase by 0.5 percent. Breaking that total down further, most state IT staffing is projected to increase by 3.8 percent, but a few categories are projected to decline. The greatest decline is in computer operators, which may be more tied to legacy systems. However, in neither state nor local government is there a large number of jobs for this position description (2016: 1,600 state jobs and 2,000 local jobs).

Figure 14. State Government Information Technology Employment Change, 2016-2026



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics National Employment Matrix. Breaking down the administration figures further, several specific positions are identified as decreasing:

Figure 15. Staffing, selected positions 2016-2026

	Local Employment	State Employment
Chief executive	-8.7%	-11.8%
Executive secretaries	-19.5%	-22.2%
Customer service representatives	-3.4%	-6.6%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics National Employment Matrix.

The BLS defines chief executives as those providing the highest level of management direction within their organizations, including a governor, mayor, city manager, county administrator, county commissioner, chief operating officer, commissioner of internal revenue, or "government service executive."

They attribute the projected decline among chief executives to increased efficiency through office technology and a shift toward a less hierarchical organizational structure, within which a single chief executive officer (CEO) might provide direct oversight for a wider array of services. It is difficult to say exactly where the decline would be most likely to manifest itself.

Looking at the local government sphere, for example, there are more than 20,600 cities, counties, villages, and towns, 3,600 townships, plus another 24,000 special districts (for utilities, fire protection, parks, or other services). According to the BLS, the projected decline in local chief executives is from 17,500 to 16,000 (a decline of 1,500 positions). This decrease could come from internal efficiencies (e.g., where a large entity might currently have a chief administrative officer (CAO) and multiple commissioners, external consolidations (e.g., where a city/county/township/ special district might work together under a single CAO), or some combination of the two.

State CEOs currently total 7,300, with a decline of 900 positions projected by 2026 (roughly 18 per state).

STATE AND LOCAL BENEFITS

Retirement

Traditionally, state and local governments have provided defined benefit (DB) pension plans to their employees, while private industry has either provided a defined contribution (DC) plan or no retirement benefits. Ninetysix percent of state employees are eligible for a plan, along with 90 percent of local government employees and 48 percent of private sector employees. The percentage of state and local employees participating in those plans is shown in Figure 16.



Figure 16. Retirement plans: Percentage eligible

Source: BLS National Compensation Survey, March 2017.

Note: In some cases, a jurisdiction may provide both a DB and a DC plan.

For DC plans, just under half of eligible state and local employees choose to take part (yielding participation rates of 21 percent and 15 percent, respectively, of all employees).^{xiii} The lower participation for DC plans may reflect employee reliance on defined benefit plans or a reticence to participate in the employee contribution that may be required under the DC plan. Some governing bodies have begun authorizing automatic enrollment provisions, which can serve to encourage DC participation and help employees save for retirement.^{xiv}

Health Care

Health care benefits are also fairly common, with 96 percent of state employees and 87 percent of local government employees eligible for medical care benefits. In addition to health care benefits being more prevalent than in private industry, the share of medical premiums paid by state and local government employers is also higher than among private employers.

Paid Leave Benefits

Whereas other benefits can be tracked by both the percentage of workers eligible and the percentage participating, it is impractical to track actual participation in leave benefits, as some may be taken only sporadically (e.g., family leave, funeral leave). Figure 18 shows those shares of state and local government employees who are eligible to receive such benefits.

Sick leave is the most common form of paid leave available to 95 percent of state government employees



Figure 17. Medical care benefits: Share of premiums paid by employer

Source: BLS National Compensation Survey, March 2017.



Source: BLS National Compensation Survey, March 2017.

and 90 percent of local government employees. By comparison, paid sick leave is only provided to 67 percent of private industry workers, up from just 50 percent in the 1992 to 1993 period.^{xv} Paid holidays and vacation in private industry are somewhat more common, provided to 77 and 76 percent of workers, respectively—ahead of the rates for local government, but not as high as those for state government.

The average amount of paid sick leave accrued per year for state and local government workers is twelve days for full-time workers employed at least five years.^{xvi} For private industry, the average is 8 days, not rising to 9 days until employees have been on staff for at least 20 years.^{xvii}

Paid family leave is by far the least common leave benefit, but it has been cited by 34 percent of state and local human resource managers as an offering used to assist in employee recruitment and retention.^{xviii} There is some regional variation in its spread, ranging from 37 percent in parts of the South and Midwest to 19 percent in New England and the Mountain West. By contrast, in private industry only 13 percent of employees are eligible for paid family leave, up from 11 percent in 2012.^{xix}

Other Benefits

An array of other benefits may be offered, either as an additional tool for recruitment and retention or as a way to assist with employees' quality of life. Across all categories of other benefits, the percentage of state employees eligible is higher than the percentage of local employees eligible. For example, employee assistance programs are available to 93 percent of state employees and 73 percent of local employees. Childcare benefits are available to 30 percent of state employees and 9 percent of local employees.^{xx} By comparison, looking at all private and public sector employees, those benefits are available to 54 percent and 11 percent, respectively. Childcare benefits include full or partial subsidy, either on or off the employer's premises.

Flexible work practices may vary in type and scope. According to a recent SLGE survey of state and local human resource professionals, 50 percent of employers offered at least some flexible scheduling (e.g., 4 days at 10 hours each), 47 percent offered flexible work hours (e.g., starting earlier or later to adjust for rush hour travel times), and 21 percent offered teleworking. Whereas BLS data show 7 percent of state employees are eligible for some form of flexible work practices and 4 percent of local employees are eligible, there are often restrictions put in place based on the type of work involved (e.g., excluding public safety, public works, health care, or education).

Experts Interviewed

CITY OF CENTENNIAL, COLORADO

Paula Gibson Human Resources Director

CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER, COLORADO

Karen Niparko Executive Director, Human Resources

JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS

Mary Biere Human Resources Manager

Penny Postoak Ferguson County Manager

Leslie Fortney Principal Human Resources Partner

Tambra RodriguezHR Manager focusing on Compensation and HRIS

Joe Waters Assistant County Manager

STATE OF MICHIGAN

James Williams Employee Engagement Manager

Michael Zingsheim Engagement Specialist, Office of Performance and Transformation

CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Patience Ferguson Chief Human Resources Officer

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Kimberly Williams Human Resources Strategy and Innovation Officer

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Renee Frieda Assistant Director, Human Resources

Krystal Strong Assistant Director, Human Resources

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Micki Callahan Human Resources Director

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- Among state governments, 49 percent of employees are eligible for a defined contribution plan, with 21 percent participating, for a take-up rate of 43 percent. Among local governments, 33 percent of employees are eligible for a defined contribution plan, with 15 percent participating, for a take-up rate of 44 percent. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey.
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