
Recruiting and Retaining Employees in Local Government Public Works

HECTOR MENDOZA, 28 FEBRUARY 2024

Presentation Objectives

- Provide information on workforce trends to assist managers to understand the hiring challenges ahead.
 - Brief review of generational differences and similarities, of the current workforce
 - Present a some recruitment strategies to better attract employees
 - Present a some retention strategies to better retain employees
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Workforce Trend Pre-2020

- Prior to 2020 employers, as a whole, were not experiencing any issues with getting applicants for open positions
 - The main issue for public employers pre-2019 was the wage disparity between private and public employers.
 - Many workers in the job market were actively seeking or had employment.
 - Unemployment was at
 - Inflation was at around 2%
 - Employers were not over actively seeking employees with bonuses and incentives.
 - “Silver Wave” starting to have an effect on workforce (Mostly Baby Boomers)
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Work Trend 2020 - 2021

- COVID strikes March 2020
 - Shut down of the economy via quarantines and store closures
 - If it was possible remote work was instituted and became the norm.
 - The term “essential worker” was coined.
 - Followed by lay-offs due to economic pressures related to COVID quarantines
 - Many small businesses fail and are forced to close.
 - 2020 begins to see what has been termed “The Great Resignation”
 - This period resulted in many Americans quitting their jobs to pursue jobs that align more with their needs and desires.
 - This period also marked by a period where employers could not attract employees. Many “Help Wanted” signs posted.
 - “Silver Wave” continues to remove experience and long tenured staff from the workforce
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Work Trend 2022

- Workforce is reeling from the COVID restrictions
 - Employers are still left to deal with quarantine requirements but employees no longer have federally required time off. Time off now comes from employee's leave.
 - Employer begin to bring back employees from remote work.
 - Some employees refuse and quit to look for remote work.
 - Employers, both public and private, have increased hiring activity to replace employees lost in the "Great Resignation".
 - This lead to more private employers offering higher salaries, and incentives.
 - Inflation steadily increasing
 - "Silver Wave" continues to affect the workforce.
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Work Trend 2023 - Present

- Competition for employees continue to occur (public vs. private)
 - Public employers are at a disadvantage due to the inability to budget constraints often experienced by public entities and reluctance to offer bonuses by public employers.
 - Certain positions have been more affected by others such as CDL drivers.
 - Some experts have noted the trend for employees longevity with an employer is now around 5 years and the likelihood of attracting cradle to grave employees has decreased significantly.
 - Inflation is at an all time high, which forces some employees to move to higher paying private employers.
 - “Silver Wave” starting to dwindle down but many of this group continue to work or return to place of employment, either as part-time or full-time.
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Special Class of Potential Workers

- There is a class of individuals that has been increasing steadily for decades.
 - This section of the population often are not reflected in traditional workforce statistics that are discussed.
 - This class is known as the “not actively seeking work”
 - In his book Men Without Work, Nicholas Eberstadt discusses the growing trend of working age men 18-55 who are not actively seeking work.
 - This trend has increased each year and was worsened by the effects of the pandemic.
 - As this section of the population continues to grow, more and more potential employees are removing themselves from the workforce.
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Workforce Predictions

- Economists predict hiring in 2024 will slow down; however, this same prediction was made in 2023. Hiring in 2023 remained at high levels.
 - if prediction holds true, local government employers will feel some relief when filling vacancies
 - Inflation is predicted to decrease, which will prove beneficial in attracting employees
 - Majority of workers nationwide are over 30 years old. Only 8% of the workforce is under 30.
 - Gen Z statistically has not made a big showing in the labor market.
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Workforce Trend Recap

- Workforce has gone through some dynamic changes in the last 4 years.
 - COVID
 - The Great Resignation
 - Silver Wave
 - Inflation
 - Hiring boom
 - But....it's looking better?
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Generational Differences and Similarities

Baby Boomers

- Baby boomers - most often individuals born between 1943 and 1965
 - This generation was the largest group of workers ever experienced in the United States.
 - Attributes:
 - Sacrifice and hard work will result in success
 - Paying dues
 - Step by step advancement
 - Competitive
 - Loyal
 - Process rather than result driven
 - Goal oriented
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Generation X

- Individuals born between 1968 - 1979, in some studies the range can go from 1963 to 1982.
 - This cohort is also known as the “baby bust” generation because of the small size, as compared to the previous baby boomers.
 - Attributes:
 - Worked a bit more to reach a work life balance than baby boomers
 - Extremely independent
 - Not as loyal to employers as their parents
 - Value continuous learning and skill development
 - Results focused
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Generation Y/Millennials

- Individuals born 1978 - 2002
 - Attributes:
 - Value team work
 - Embrace diversity
 - Seek flexibility
 - Knowledgeable in technology
 - Highly educated
 - Value training and skill development
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FOCUS ON THE SIMILARITIES

- EMPLOYEES WANTS TO HAVE A “WHY”
 - EMPLOYEES WANT TO FEEL APPRECIATED
 - EMPLOYEES WANTS TO PROVIDE INPUT
 - EMPLOYEES WANTS FAIR COMPENSATION
 - EMPLOYEES WANTS A BALANCE OF WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE
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Recruitment

Attracting the New Generation of Workers

- Advertise to reach them
 - Social Media
 - This may be a tricky endeavor, as some local governments may have restrictions on certain social media platforms.
 - Clear and concise social media policies are required to allow HR and Departments to reach the younger population of the workforce.
 - Convey how they will have an impact on their community
 - Many younger employees want to have a positive impact on their community.
 - Incorporate descriptions of how the posted job contributes to making the community strong and vibrant.
 - Create uncomplicated titles and job descriptions
 - Often time, especially in smaller local governments, titles often include a variety of duties.
 - However, this could lead to many applicants looking over your position.
 - For example, in my organization, we have had a time recruiting CDL
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Don't forget about older workers

- Remember more senior workers are a critical part of your workforce
 - Encourage these employees to mentor newer employees
 - Communicate their importance to the organization
 - Value the organizational history and experience they have.
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Retention

Hired...Now what?

- Some key components to employee retention include:
 - Communication
 - Praise
 - Development
 - Conflict Management
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Key Organizational Collaborations

- PIO
 - HR
 - IT
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Questions



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