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Workforce Development Peer Exchange

Key Learnings

Workforce Development Peer Exchange

- Tuesday, May 24th and Thursday, May 26th

- Approximately 75 total attendees

- Participants from: city, county, state DOT, consulting firms, universities, research centers, FHWA

- Success stories submitted prior to the Peer Exchange

NOCoE Workforce Development Peer Exchange

Tuesday, May 24th and Thursday, May 26th

The National Operations Center of Excellence is pleased to announce its upcoming Peer Exchange on Workforce Development. The Peer Exchange will take place virtually on **Tuesday, May 24th** and **Thursday, May 26th**.

This Peer Exchange follows last autumn's highly successful NOCoE TSMO Workforce Summit that brought together TSMO leaders from around the country representing the public and private sector, universities, and community colleges. The Summit proceedings capture the prioritization of actions to address TSMO's workforce needs and a first round of products coming out of the Summit are available on NOCoE's Workforce Development portal.

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Workforce Development Peer Exchange – Agenda

- The NOCoE Workforce Development Initiative

- Background, 2021 NOCoE WFD Summit Highlights, and the Focus, Approach, and Hoped-for Outcomes of this Peer Exchange

- Workforce Development Guidebook and Web Tool

- Plenary 1: Workforce Trends and Practices

- Plenary 2: Michigan DOT's Transportation Diversity Recruitment Program

- Plenary 3: Workforce Initiatives in Arizona

- Breakouts

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Breakouts

Small groups of participants engaging in facilitated dialogue/sharing of success stories

Four concurrent sets of breakouts voted on by the Peer Exchange registrants: recruitment, retention, DEI, training

What are the top 2 or 3 characteristics of your organization that make people stay?

Example:
1. Flexibility?
2. Pay?

Stability. Challenge. Ownership.

Advancement opportunities;mentorship program

Transparency

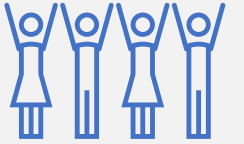Remote work flexibility including location (no need to live close to official reporting location)

Tuition remission (employee and dependents)

Professional development (training)

Non-profit status (public service)

Engagement and accessibility

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Recruitment – Success Stories

Professionals

- Graduate rotational programs
- Strong university partnerships for co-ops/interns
- Flexibility with remote work (and out-of-state/out-of-country allowances)
- Mentoring
- Employee recruiting campaigns/recruiting from within
- Pet insurance

Paraprofessionals

- Military, law enforcement, emergency management pipelines
- Standardizing/formalizing training programs and focusing on skills demonstration
- Apprenticeship programs and 'growing your own' talent

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Recruitment – Challenges

Professionals

- Departments becoming 'top heavy' or 'bottom heavy'
- Salaries
- Awareness

Paraprofessionals

- Finding candidate pools
- Military pipelines
- Pay scales

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Recruitment - Ideas

- Importance of consistency; including TSMO in onboarding

- Value-based metrics for hiring to match culture

- Quality of life

- Diversity of projects and opportunities within DOT

- Benefits and stability (particularly for mid-late career transitions)

- Leveraging remote work options (particularly as Amazon, Google, etc. are requiring return to office)

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Retention – Success Stories
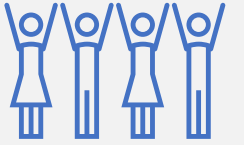
- Flexible schedule and working from home (no need to live close to official reporting location)

- Compensation strategies

- Improved performance review process to be more efficient – outcomes inform merit pay increases, promotions, performance improvement plans

- Mentoring and opportunity to work on different roles

- Tours to TMCs and organization tours to keep new employees engaged

- Being the "owner" and "making a difference"

- Tuition remission (employee and dependents)

Retention - Challenges

- Competition

- Pay rates

- Equitable pay

- Ceiling for technical employees that don't want to be a manager

- Not having adequate resources

- Retention of younger professionals is an issue

- Older generations: seeking retirement earlier

- The layers of approval

- Lack of transparency

- Not feeling part of a team

- Lack of personal connection

- Excessive workload

- Lack of engagement

- Lack of career path or growth opportunities

- People want to know their work is valued

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Retention - Ideas

- Compensation strategies
- Succession planning
- Mentoring
- How to create a positive culture
- More communication between administrative office and technical staff
- Employees want to be heard
- What are the best channels for HR to advertise jobs?
- Close coordination between TSMO and HR

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Success Stories
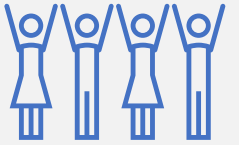
- Include DEI in agency strategic planning – make DEI a core value
- Organizational commitment in new positions focused on DEI – e.g. Chief Culture, Equity and Inclusion Officer
- Internship program for underrepresented groups
- High school summer camps for diverse students

- Formal hiring equity guidelines
- Employee newsletter includes profiles on women, minority, and other employees
- Celebrate and highlight cultural events
- Collecting data on recruitment and retention across diverse groups
- 504(e) federal workforce development funding used for DEI training

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Challenges

- Remote work can make inclusion more difficult

- Historically less diverse states or regions make it difficult to attract diversity

- Lack of understanding of what DEI means and why it is important

- Barriers and inherent biases in hiring practice

- Need data to analyze and assess agency inequities – gender, race, age, other

- Employee representation groups/unions that negotiate salaries add complexity to salary and benefit equity discussions

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Ideas

- Build talking points and business case for the benefits of diversity
- Review hiring practices for implicit biases (blind auditions, skills-based hiring)
- Establish diverse hiring panels
- Recruit from underserved or underrepresented populations
- Review HR policies for implicit bias – pay, benefits, hiring, etc.
- It is not just about the numbers, we must support the success of all employees
- Leadership training and development for underrepresented employee groups

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Training – Success Stories
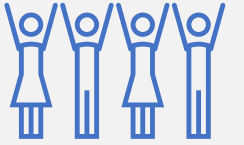
- Partnerships with universities

- Support for employees to pursue certifications

- Use 504(e) funds to support training and workforce development activities

- Development of Operations Academy training

- High School Internship Program

- Certified Public Manager (CPM) certification and other leadership training leads to upward mobility

- On-demand online training for data analyst technicians

- Fiber optics training, approved for certification by the Fiber Optics Association and US Dept. of Labor

- Autonomous cybersecurity and network classes

- Expansion of training and certification of Safety Service Patrol program

- Training program for TMC operators

- ITS Technician Training Program

Training - Challenges

- Need to define how transportation agencies offer reimbursement for pursuit of next degree and how much time employees need to stay at the organization before having to repay the investment

- Retirements and the growing compensation gap seem to be the two most significant issues related to sustaining public sector workforce

- Need to establish career paths for all positions: allow existing employees to understand how they can advance through the organization

- Very limited awareness of TSMO shared across most transportation agencies

Training - Ideas

- Growth in apprenticeships including at professional levels
- Systematically capture Institutional knowledge as people retire
- TMC Pooled Fund Study has several upcoming workforce related projects starting
- Connect with Young Professionals of Transportation (YPT) local chapters to enhance formal and informal mentoring
- Increased academic connections at 2-year, 4-year and advanced degree levels
- Connect with LTAPs to increase National Highway Institute Training
- Leverage FHWA Resource Centers for technical transfer

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Workforce Development Resources

- Workforce Overview

- Student Education

- Workforce Training

- TSMO Paraprofessional Workforce White Paper

- Career Pathways

- Industry Assessments

- HR Resources

- Resources from Other Industries

- Webinar Series

- Events, Contests, and Success Stories

https://transportationops.org/workforce

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2nd Transportation Systems Management And Operations (TSMO) Summit

Technical Memorandum: Workforce Trends And Practices Applicable To TSMO

AUTHOR
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January 2022

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TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS (TSMO) WORKFORCE GUIDEBOOK
FINAL GUIDEBOOK

Prepared for

National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Project 20-07

Transportation Research Board

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2nd Transportation Systems Management And Operations (TSMO) Summit

White Paper: Attracting Non-Traditional Workers Into The TSMO Workforce

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January 2022

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