

Schedule F. Agency Workforce Plan, and the Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan

I. AGENCY OVERVIEW

The agency was created in 1921 by the 37th Legislature under the name Texas State Board of Examiners in Optometry. The 61st Legislature in 1969 changed the agency's name to Texas Optometry Board. Sunset legislation in 2005 extended the agency until 2017.

The agency implements and enforces the Texas Optometry Act. This includes promulgating rules to interpret and clarify the provisions of the Act. The agency also provides and disseminates consumer information regarding the role of the agency.

Primary functions of the agency are the examination and determination of the fitness of applicants for licensure, the licensing of successful applicants, and the permanent monitoring of that license, including auditing the required yearly mandatory continuing education for renewal of licenses. In addition, the agency resolves complaints received against its licensees, conducts investigations, and issues remedial sanctions in accordance with the Act and promulgated rules.

As a state agency, the Texas Optometry Board must comply with all requirements of record keeping and reports required of a state agency.

A. Agency Mission

The mission of the agency is to promote, preserve, and protect the health, safety and economic welfare of the people of Texas through the regulation of the practice of optometry.

B. Strategic Goals and Objectives

The agency has one goal with two strategies:

<i>GOAL</i>	Manage Quality Program of Examination and Licensure, Enforce Optometry Act.
Objective	Licensure And Enforcement: To manage a quality program of examination and licensure to ensure the initial and continuing competency of optometrists, and to enforce the optometry statutes to ensure that the public is protected from incompetent services, fraud and misrepresentation.
Strategies	Participate in training, both in-house, state-wide and national in scope Develop additional methods of automation and on-line renewal and licensure Continue to resolve complaints in a short period of time
Objective	Peer Assistance: Through a Peer Assistance Program provide a path for treatment and supervised accountability of licensees who are subject to the effects of substance abuse or mental illness.
Strategies	Oversee operation of a Peer Assistance Program referring participants as required.

C. Anticipated Changes in Strategies

The agency does not anticipate changes in strategy. The agency will continue to search for organizational efficiencies, especially through greater use of information technology and Health Profession Council initiatives, such as the sharing of information technology systems and employees. Review by the Sunset Advisory Commission is scheduled for 2016.

II. CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE (SUPPLY ANALYSIS)

A. Critical Workforce Skills

Currently the agency requires these critical skills to adequately perform its mission:

- Investigation
- Customer service
- Interpretation of laws and rules
- Human resources and management
- Accounting
- Information technology
- Administration of programs

B. Workforce Demographics

The following tables depict the Agency's workforce demographics as of May 1, 2016. Since the agency has seven FTE's (two employees are part-time), each employee has a significant impact on any statistical analysis of the workforce. The "All State Agencies" entries reflect 2014 data. The agency's two half-time employees are counted as one-half each.

	Optometry Board	All State Agencies
Gender	Female: 36%	Female: 57%
Age	<40: 7%	< 40: 38%

Over the past few years, the gender distribution has varied from a majority female to now a majority male, all dependent on the best quality candidate available for the job. The agency will continue to work toward a gender and racial makeup that reflects the citizens of Texas, while hiring the best qualified candidate for each position.

	Hispanic	Anglo	African-American	Other
Optometry Board (2016)	29%	64%	7%	0%
All State Agencies (2014)	25%	49%	23%	3%

C. Employee Turnover

Of particular importance is the employee tenure at the agency. The agency was required to replace two long term employees in FY 2014. The tenure of employees at the agency as of May 2016 is similar to the 2014 numbers for all state agencies.

Employee Tenure (years)	Agency	All State Agencies
<2	21%	28%
2 to 4	14%	19%
5 to 9	36%	29%
10 to 14	14%	11%
15+	14%	13%

The death of an employee and the retirement of an employee with a significant tenure at the agency caused a spike in the turnover rate for FY 2014. There was no turnover in FY 2015 and no turnover in FY 2016 as of May 1, 2016. Turnover is a significant issue at an agency with seven FTE's, and is discussed in the Gap Analysis below.

D. Retirement Eligibility

Two employees are currently eligible for retirement. A half-time employee has retired and returned to work. Thus retirement may be an issue for the agency in the relative near future.

E. Essential Skills

Almost all positions have historically required excellent customer relations skills. Beginning about twenty years ago, computer skills became necessary, and today they are essential in order to efficiently operate the agency. This includes the ability to competently operate a complex database as well as word processing and spreadsheets. Most positions require additional knowledge of additional software, including web browsers, document storage and retrieval packages, and software used by other agencies to interface with that agency.

III. FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE (DEMAND ANALYSIS)

The Agency's future workforce profile should closely match the current profile, but perhaps with even more emphasis on the ability to use automated systems. The ability to share agency functions with other members of the Health Professions Council may allow the agency to more accurately employ the type of person needed by the agency the majority of the time. For example, the agency shares its System Analyst with all the smaller Health Professions Council agencies, none of which could afford to hire a full-time employee for this essential task. The agency has also shared employees with larger agencies on a short term basis when the larger agency was hiring and training new employees.

Future workforce skills required should match the current skills required by the agency. Increased health needs for an aging population, and a new optometry school in San Antonio will result in increased numbers of license applicants, with a corresponding increase in the number of licensees to regulate. This increased workload will require employees with high information technology skills and a strong dedication to the work of the agency. Although the increased efficiencies enjoyed by the increased use of technology will continue, at some point the continued growth of the licensee base will require additional employees. Those employees will need excellent computer skills and the ability to employ new systems whenever necessary.

Any significant budget reduction would require the agency to create vacancies or not fill vacancies that develop. Each and every employee is necessary to efficiently operate the agency, and the agency will have difficulty meeting its goals strategies without the necessary staff as the number of licensees regulated by the agency continue to increase. Compensation levels are also an issue as fewer applicants have come forward for recent postings of administrative technician positions.

IV. GAP ANALYSIS

A. Gaps Do Exist with Current Staffing or Future Staffing

The agency's current workforce is qualified and competent to undertake the tasks required by the agency. Employees will leave in the future, creating vacancies that make it difficult to timely accomplish needed tasks. Provided that employee salaries increase, the agency should be able to select well qualified individuals to fill the vacancies. Most current employees are not only experienced in the critical areas, but they also have either sufficient experience with information technology or the ability to acquire the necessary information technology skills. New employees will need to possess such skills in order for the agency to operate efficiently. As the job market in Austin becomes more competitive, the agency may face smaller applicant pools. Continued limiting of benefits and a continued falling behind on compensation may make state agency employment a less attractive option for applicants.

B. Gaps

At present the agency faces a time gap between the creation of a vacancy and the filling of the vacancy. This gap is a significant hardship as vacancies will occur in the future. A period of at least a month and a-half is required to replace an employee where the agency has only a two week notice of a vacancy creation, and no matter how qualified the new employee is, additional training is always required. Therefore the Agency's strategies will concentrate on reducing turnover, and recognizing the inevitable, coping with vacancies as they occur. Because many agencies operate similarly, the agency is able to quickly utilize their skills (training is still provided in the specific procedures and laws of the agency).

A gap also exists and may exist into the future regarding the information technology skills of future employees. Although almost all persons must have some knowledge in the area, proven knowledge with the ability to easily acquire additional knowledge is in limited supply, especially at the compensation level available to the agency.

V. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The agency has created the following plan to address gaps, including the time gap (the time between the creation of a vacancy and the filling of that vacancy) and to insure that valuable information possessed by long time employees is transmitted to the agency should that employee leave:

Gap	The time between the creation of a vacancy and the filling of that vacancy
Rationale	In a small agency, the time period that a job vacancy exists (and the training period after the job is filled) is a burden on the agency, since one or more employees must execute at least a substantial portion of the duties usually performed by the person in the vacant position. This creates almost a domino effect with other employees in-turn assisting the assisting employees with their regular duties.
Action Steps	Reduce turnover by making the agency a good place to work (recognizing contribution of employees, creating a team approach to accomplishing the tasks of the agency, etc.) Update procedure manuals for each division Cross train additional employees Be prepared to immediately seek replacements for every employee
Gap	Work deadlines more difficult to meet as more deadlines imposed without additional employees
Rationale	Additional work may not justify a new position, but will require each staff member to accomplish more tasks, made possible primarily by the expanding use of information technology
Action Steps	Continue to explore methods to accomplish work with less staff input
Gap	Information gap created by the retirement or leaving of a long time employee
Rationale	Unless procedures are in place to record the information possessed by long time employees, the agency will suffer great inefficiencies and possibly make costly mistakes
Action Steps	Update procedure manuals for each division Cross train additional employees Establish permanent lines of communication that survive termination Continue relationships with other agencies and Health Professions Council Establish organized record system