

Schedule F: Board of Nursing Fiscal Year 2022-2026 Workforce Plan

I. AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Board of Nursing (BON) has one of the largest licensee databases in the State of Texas. The Board regulates over 410,000 nurses and over 200 schools of nursing. The Board of Nursing issues licenses to more than 27,000 nurses per year by examination to new graduates and by endorsement to licensees from other states seeking a Texas license. This is a unique challenge to investigate alleged violations of the Nurse Practice Act with the size of Texas and limited staff.

The Agency is mission-driven and has a strict governance code which spells out the duties of the Board as appointed by the Governor, the Executive Director, and the agency staff. All rules and policies are reviewed within the framework of protecting the public. The agency has streamlined, revised, and eliminated policies that did not fit this mission. The agency has the appropriations approval to hire 125.7 positions. The agency has 49 FTEs in the Enforcement Division, 40.7 FTES in the Operations Division, 20 FTEs in the Nursing Division and 16 FTEs in General Counsel and Administration. The majority of staff is located in the Austin area. The board has 13 members from throughout the State of Texas. Board members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

A. Agency Mission

The mission of the Texas Board of Nursing is to protect and promote the welfare of the people of Texas by ensuring that each person holding a license as a nurse in the State of Texas is competent to practice safely. The Board fulfills its mission through the regulation of the practice of nursing and the approval of schools of nursing. This mission, derived from **Chapters 301, 303, and 304 of the Occupations Code**, supersedes the interest of any individual, the nursing profession, or any special interest group.

B. Agency Strategic Goals and Objectives

Goal A	Licensing & Accreditation: To manage cost-effective, quality programs of accreditation, examination, licensure, and regulation that ensure standards for nursing education and practice, and which effectively serve the market demand for qualified nurses.
Objective A.1	Licensing & Examination: To ensure timely and cost-effective application processing and licensure/credentialing systems for 100 percent of all qualified applicants for each fiscal year.
Objective A.2	Accreditation: to ensure that 100 percent of nursing programs are in compliance with the Board of Nursing's rules.
Goal B	Enforcement: To ensure swift, fair, and effective enforcement of the Nursing Practice Act (NPA) so that consumers are protected from unsafe, incompetent and unethical nursing practice by nurses.
Objective B.1	Protect Public: To guarantee that 100 percent of written complaints received annually regarding nursing practice or non-compliance with the Board of Nursing's rules are investigated and resolved in accordance with the Nursing Practice Act (NPA) and Administrative Procedures Act (APTRA) or are appropriately referred to other regulatory agencies.

C. Business Functions

The Board of Nursing licenses Licensed Vocational Nurses, Registered Nurses, and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), approves schools of nursing, approves eligible students to take the national nursing exams, and investigates alleged violations of the Nursing Practice Act and the Board's Rules and Regulations.

D. Anticipated Changes to the Mission, Strategies and Goals over the Next Five Years

No changes to the agency mission are anticipated in the next five years. The Board continues to implement strategies to go paperless by using available technology. For example, the Board of Nursing migrated to the Optimal Regulatory Board System (ORBS) in 2020. Plans are being made to implement additional strategies in the future.

E. Additional Considerations

Key Economic and Environmental Factors

In FY 2017-2021, the Board experienced a steady annual increase of 3.5% for currently licensed RNs and 12% for APRNs. LVN licensure declined by 1.7%. The number of new Texas licensees from examination and endorsement has added to this increase due to the dramatic growth of students. The continued growth of licensees in Texas has resulted in higher revenue from license renewals. The BON attempts to maintain a balance of funds approved by the Texas Legislature, but the sustained growth of RNs and APRNs provides additional revenue beyond projections.

The agency was required to reduce the budget by 5% in FY 2020, of which the agency was able to receive about 60% back in the current biennium. To meet this reduction, the agency had to delay hiring staff. The Board of Nursing is now actively trying to fill vacant positions that were delayed in hiring due to the budget reduction.

Challenges to Providing Competitive Salaries

The BON regards the agency staff as the agency's most valuable resource. The BON strives to recruit and retain the best employees in the State of Texas. The Board has addressed turnover by consistently allowing for pay for performance via the merit raise system and implementing the compensation philosophy of exceeding the average mid-range in the state classification pay groups. The agency is experiencing increased competition for nursing staff. As with the entire state, employee pay remains the agency's lowest satisfaction category. The BON continues to look for extrinsic rewards for staff as agency salaries continue to slip behind the agency's counterparts in the private sector. The Board has implemented extrinsic reward strategies, including increasing availability of telework and flexible work schedules. The Board believes these strategies have contributed to our turnover rate being approximately half the average rate for all state agencies.

Agency Workload

The BON continues to receive numerous phone, written, and e-mail inquiries. Agency statistics show the following number of phone calls accessing our automated system:

Fiscal Year 2019- 130,775

Fiscal Year 2020- 126,601

Fiscal Year 2021- 99,118

Fiscal Year 2022- approximately 25,500 per quarter

The phone call numbers above do not include the number of direct calls that go to a staff member nor does it

include the number of e-mails. The BON has a customer service department and eleven staff members dedicated to the task of answering calls.

II. CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE (SUPPLY ANALYSIS)

A. Agency Demographics

Gender: Female 73.7%
Male 26.3%

Race: African-American 13.6%
Hispanic 22.0%
Asian 2.5%
Caucasian 61.9%

Percentage of Workforce Eligible to Retire in the Next Five Years: 20.3%

Job Categories	State Civilian Workforce					
	African American		Hispanic American		Female	
	BON %	State %	BON %	State %	BON %	State %
Officials, Administration	20.0	12.3	0.0	19.9	40.0	51.3
Professionals	2.1	13.0	21.3	18.1	72.3	48.7
Technicians	0.0	21.9	0.0	34.5	0.0	60.6
Administrative Support	19.0	20.2	28.6	33.2	85.7	85.0

B. Employee Turnover

Turnover decreased in FY 21 to the lowest rates the BON has experienced in five years. However, due to resignations and retirements, the Board has lost valuable institutional knowledge. To compensate for this loss, detailed policies and procedures are being created or revised.

Agency Turnover Percentages: 2017-2021

Fiscal Year	Headcount	Terminations Including Interagency Transfers	Turnover Rate Including Interagency Transfers	Terminations Excluding Interagency Transfers	Turnover Rate Excluding Interagency Transfers
2017	113.75	16	14.1%	13	11.4%
2018	116	14	12.1%	8	6.9%
2019	118.5	20	16.9%	16	13.5%
2020	115.25	17	15.6%	13	11.3%
2021	114.25	12	10.5%	9	7.9%

C. Workforce Skills Critical to the Mission and Goals of the Agency

Nurses - The agency requires a minimum of Associate Degree prepared nurses for Enforcement and Master's Degree prepared nurses for consulting. Both need critical thinking skills to apply their expertise in areas outside their particular training and education. All nurses need to be proficient in use of computer software programs since they will be processing their cases from receiving the complaint to filing formal charges, drafting orders, and writing reports on school survey visits.

All staff will have to become more proficient in various technologies as the BON will be moving to paperless functions within the next five years. Staff members will need the ability to manipulate programs for word processing, documenting, imaging, web-based services, and records retention.

All staff will need to advance their communication skills since the Board's focus is and will continue to be providing excellent customer service to the public.

Each staff member is required in some way to interact with internal and external customers which necessitates the ability to appreciate diversity and how it affects business processes.

D. Projected Employee Attrition Rate over the Next Five Years

Fiscal Year 2022 - 16%

Fiscal Year 2023 - 16%

Fiscal Year 2024 - 16%

Fiscal Year 2025 - 16%

Fiscal Year 2026 - 16%

The BON is continuing to feel the effect of baby boomer retirements, which have been ongoing since fiscal year 2015. Beginning in fiscal year 2023, there will be 18 staff members eligible for retirement.

III. FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE (DEMAND ANALYSIS)

A. Expected Workforce Changes Driven by Factors such as changing Mission, Technology, Work, Workloads and/or Work Processes

As the agency moves towards a paperless environment, it is anticipated that additional and ongoing training in the area of computer software and imaging processes will be needed.

B. Future Workforce Skills Needed

To facilitate the ongoing business processes, the agency must be able to become better knowledge agents. This will require staff to be able to use critical thinking skills, become change agents, anticipate the future, use technology wisely, and manage time.

Board staff must be able to enforce the NPA by conducting timely investigations of alleged violations of the law and rules since this directly affects the protection of the public. Staff must also be able to collect fees, process license applications and license nurses as quickly as possible for the public to have adequate access to healthcare.

IV. GAP ANALYSIS

The Board does not anticipate a shortage of the pool of administrative staff over the next five years due to the available workforce in the Central Texas area. However, it is anticipated that a shortage of RNs to fill Enforcement and Nursing Consultant duties due to the public and private demand for the limited number of RNs in the workforce.

Currently, 30 positions require registered nurses. The agency anticipates the need for additional RNs by the end of the next five-year cycle. They will be needed in the Practice Department to testify on alleged violations of the law and rules and will be used in a consultant capacity to interpret complex practice issues and serve as expert witnesses on cases.

Supply and demand projections published by the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies predict that the deficit of available RNs will increase steadily through the year 2030. They anticipate that through 2030, RNs will experience a larger growth in the deficit between supply and demand than any other nurse type. By 2030, they predict a statewide deficit of 59,970 RNs, and a shortage of 7,459 RNs in Central Texas. These deficits of available RNs will make recruitment and retention of RNs more competitive in the future.

The agency anticipates ongoing difficulty in filling Nurse Investigator and Nurse Consultant positions at least until fiscal year 2030 due to competition for nursing faculty and staff at schools and hospitals. If unable to secure sufficient operating funds, the agency will look for new ways to apply the merit raise system, which is the most effective tool in the recruitment and retention of staff.

The agency anticipates increased competition in recruitment and hiring of Information Technology professionals. Several tech companies are either moving into Austin or expanding their existing operations in this area. These companies include Tesla, Google, Amazon, SpaceX, Apple, Facebook, Canva and Oracle. This increased competition will likely increase the difficulty of recruiting and retaining IT staff.

The BON believes staff have the fundamental skills to complete tasks but need additional training to enhance their skills to perform more efficiently and effectively. Since there is movement towards more technology-based business processes, there will no longer be a need for microfilming skills.

V. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

In order for the agency to recruit and retain some of the most critical skills such as nursing knowledge, the agency will have to leave unfilled positions open longer to have the funds to hire and retain nurses at the mid-range of the pay scale. To bring the Nurse Investigators along faster in the enforcement area, they will be paired with mentors within the agency. Use of the Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR) organization will facilitate investigator training. Leaders will be identified within the organization to provide internal and external training opportunities to enhance skills and help the agency in succession planning.

Goal 1	Recruit and retain a competent workforce
Rationale:	To establish a consistent, productive business atmosphere, the BON needs a well-trained and stable workforce to protect the public. This includes the ongoing internal training of current staff to fill open positions and possibly consolidate some work processes to enhance staff compensation with current or available funds.
Action Steps:	1. Request additional operating funds in the next legislative session to enhance employee compensation especially in the recruitment and retention of nurses. 2. Develop and revise agency policy and procedures to be consistent and detailed.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Develop mandatory training components for recognized agency sub-par skill sets. 4. Establish a mentorship program with current staff and those from other small state agencies to demonstrate best practices in needed skill sets. 5. Complete a succession plan which incorporates time lines and minimal skill sets. 6. Conduct a risk assessment to the agency due to potential knowledge loss of key staff. 7. Establish and implement a career ladder for all staff.
Goal 2	Establish an agency culture of change enhancements to business processes
Rationale:	Resources will always be limited. At best, funding will remain constant but staff will be required to do more. This necessitates doing business more efficiently and effectively. To do this, staff will need to accept change as a way of life and not be afraid to try new ideas. It doesn't always have to be done the way it's always been done before.
Action Steps:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an ongoing mandatory training module on change enhancements. 2. Add the skill of change enhancements and change management to the minimal core of essential job functions. 3. Reorganize agency structure around processes. 4. Develop a pay system that rewards constructive change management.