

# SCHEDULE F

## Workforce Plan



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# TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

## Workforce Plan

### Fiscal Years 2023-2027

Hunting and fishing have long been part of the fabric of Texas. Thousands of years ago, native hunters and gatherers settled in Texas to take advantage of its abundant fish and game. Today, people still flock to Texas to enjoy rich hunting and fishing traditions in the state's bountiful forests, prairies, and waters. However, the natural landscape is changing. The state faces many challenges in its efforts to protect, conserve and manage its vital natural resources. It is vitally essential that lands and waters are set aside and managed for fish, wildlife, and recreation. Texans' quality of life and sense of place depends on it. Throughout its history, the dedicated employees of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) have worked diligently to ensure that present and future generations can enjoy Texas' great cultural and natural heritage. In 2023, the Texas State Parks system will celebrate its centennial, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will celebrate its 60th anniversary.

The dedicated employees of TPWD work diligently in carrying out the agency's mission. The TPWD workforce must be supported throughout the employee life cycle in this role. This includes:

- effective recruitment and talent retention,
- development, implementation, and integration of effective Human Resources (HR) policies and systems that promote a culture of growth, leveraging TPWD's shared culture,
- promotion of an environment of continuous learning and development, and
- fostering an environment that welcomes diversity and inclusion.

In the past two years, workplaces have undergone some significant changes. The pandemic has influenced where and how job duties are performed, requiring employers to respond. This Workforce Plan aims to assess current and future workforce needs at all levels of the organization. TPWD seeks to provide a workforce with the tools and skillsets to be successful and create balance in their professional and personal life. The Human Resources Division is committed to supporting TPWD's mission and agency programs.

## I. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

The governing body of TPWD includes a nine-member governor-appointed commission and two former members holding the title of Chairman-Emeritus. The Commission is responsible for adopting policies and rules related to agency programs and activities.

Day-to-day oversight responsibilities rest with the Executive Director and the Chief Operating Officer. The agency is organized into 13 divisions: Executive Office, Coastal Fisheries, Communications, Financial Resources, Human Resources, Information Technology, Infrastructure, Inland Fisheries, Law Enforcement, Legal, State Parks, Support Resources, and Wildlife. Division directors provide leadership and oversight to their respective areas of responsibility.

In the General Appropriations Act, the Legislature categorizes agencies broadly by their function. This allows for information to be provided about the funding of each Article, or function, of government spending, as well as comparison between agencies under the same function. TPWD is categorized under Article VI, or Natural Resources, agencies. The comparisons of TPWD to Article VI agencies in the charts herein is intended to provide more specific points of comparison than TPWD to statewide averages.

### CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

The TPWD Headquarters is located in Austin, with regional and field offices located throughout the state. Approximately 74% of agency staff work at field locations. The agency has legislative authority for a Full-time Equivalent (FTE) cap limitation of

3,160.9 in FY2022. The workforce headcount during FY2021 averaged 2,996 regular full- and part-time employees. TPWD’s staffing increases significantly during the summer months with the addition of seasonal temporaries and interns. TPWD manages 89 state parks/historic sites, 50 wildlife management areas, and eight fish hatcheries, comprising over 1.4 million acres managed in the public trust for recreation and conservation.

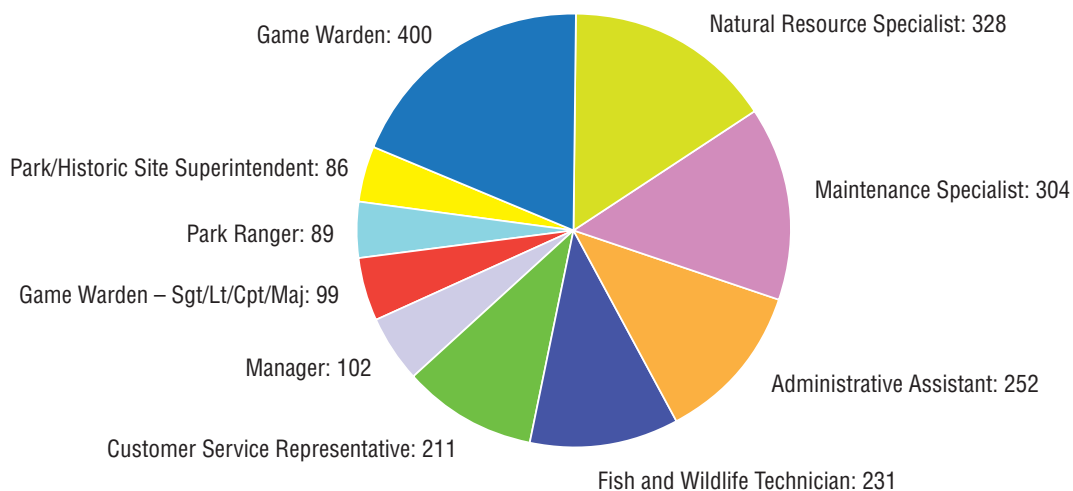
As of March 2022, TPWD’s workforce consisted of:

- 2,969 classified regular full-time (CRF) and part-time employees
- 134 classified temporary full-time (CTF) and classified temporary part-time (CTP) employees
- 17 contingent workers aiding on short-term projects and other temporary work assignments
- 320 veterans
- 12,341 active volunteers
- 122 interns

TPWD’s workforce has focused skills and abilities supporting the agency’s strategies and functions. Five of the top ten job classifications make up 49% of the agency’s total workforce, with 1,515 employees occupying these positions. Professionals make up the most significant percentage of the TPWD workforce in the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) categories together with the following:

- Professionals, 31%
- Protective Service Workers, 22%
- Administrative Support, 20%
- Service Maintenance, 14%
- Technicians, 10%
- Paraprofessionals, 2%
- Skilled Craft Workers, 0.84%
- Officials & Administrators, 0.64%.

**Top Ten Classifications Used by TPWD**



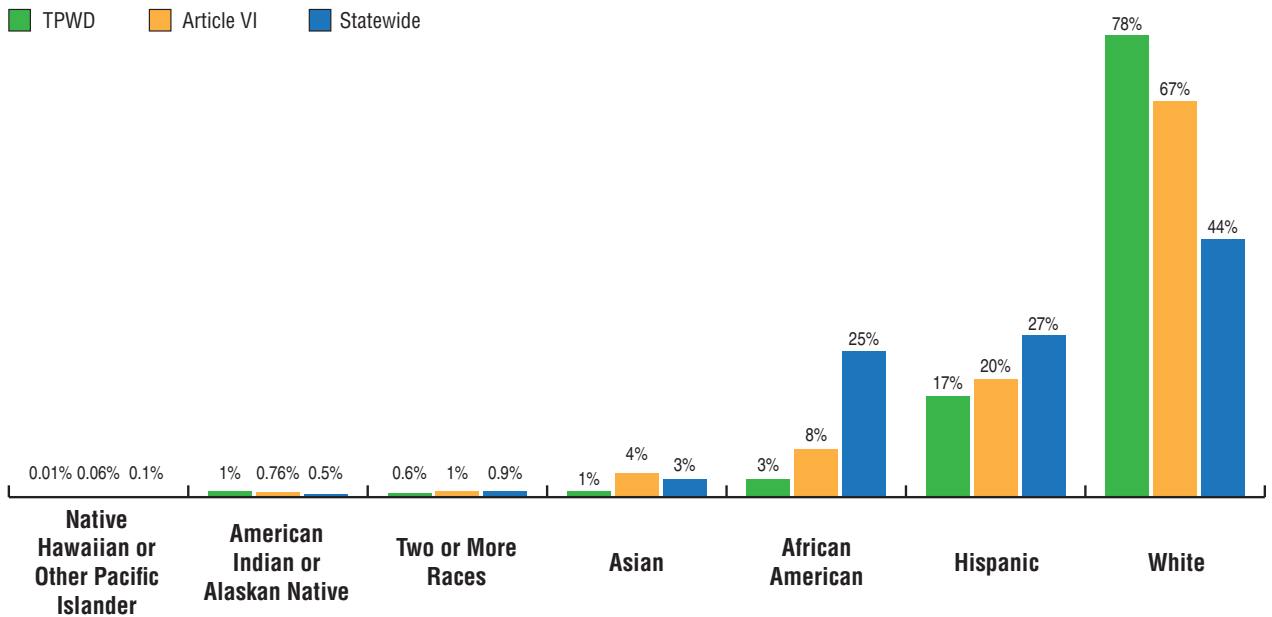
Most divisions supplement their workforce with TPWD-paid and externally paid interns. Externally paid internships are provided through programs such as the Al Henry program, funded by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation, and interns funded through the Coastal Conservation Association. The seasonal and temporary workforce is essential to the agency, due to increased activities and visitors to TPWD’s facilities. In addition, interns support ongoing programs, events, maintenance, and the agency’s overall operations.

**RACE/ETHNICITY**

TPWD’s workforce is:

- 78% White
- 17% Hispanic
- 3% African American, and
- 1% or less each: Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (NHPI), and identifying as Two or More Races

**Race/Ethnicity Comparison**



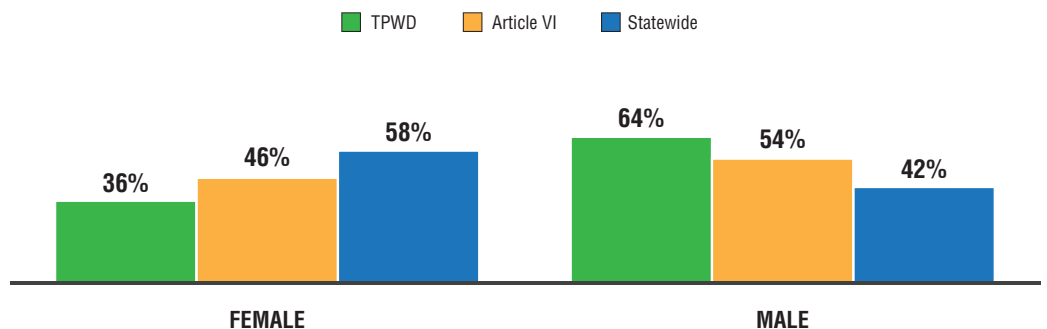
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Two or More Races	Asian	African American	Hispanic	White
TPWD	0.01%	1%	0.6%	1%	3%	17%	78%
ARTICLE VI	0.06%	0.76%	1%	4%	8%	20%	67%
STATEWIDE	0.1%	0.5%	0.9%	3%	25%	27%	44%

Within the last two years, the percentage of ethnic minorities in the TPWD workforce has remained the same. The agency’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion continues to develop new strategies to recruit, develop and retain a diverse workforce.

**GENDER**

TPWD’s workforce is 64% male and 36% female. In the first quarter of FY2022, TPWD has seen an increase in female hiring at many levels of the agency. However, an examination of turnover data for the first two quarters of FY2022 has also shown females leaving the agency at a higher rate than they are represented in the agency.

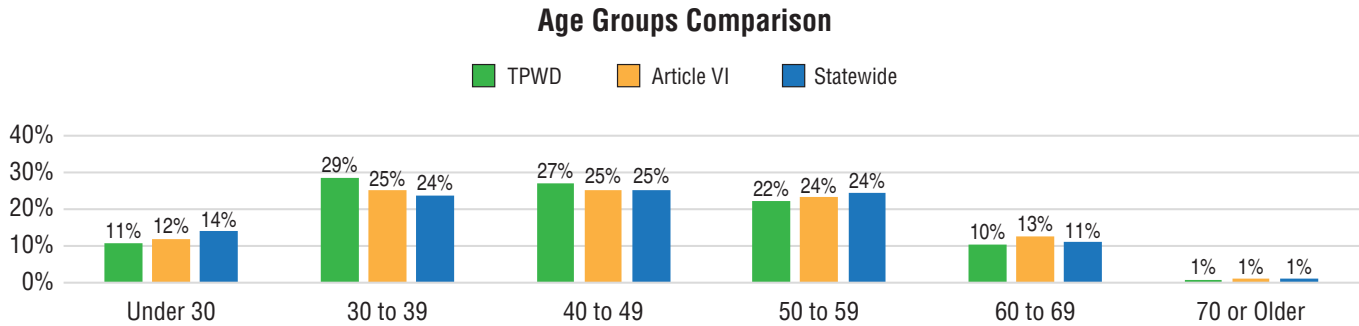
**Gender Comparison**



Females occupy significant leadership roles in the agency, serving as directors of Infrastructure, Internal Audit, Communications, Information Technology, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Human Resources. The agency has seen an increase of females appointed to executive and management positions, which could affect the ratio of males versus females in the agency workforce in years to come.

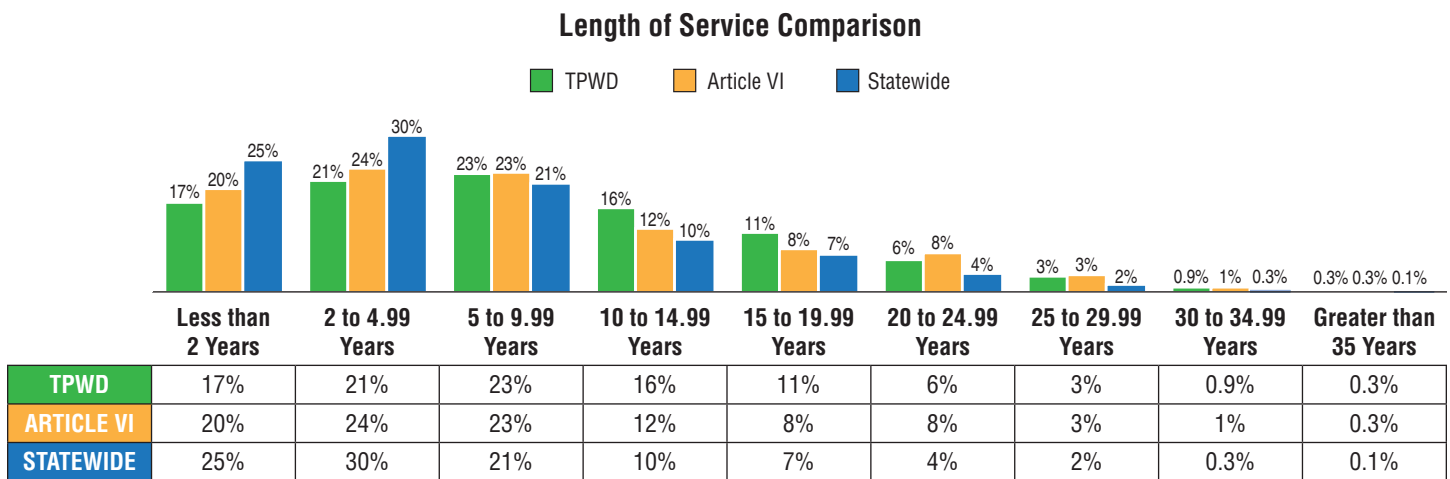
**AGE**

The graph below shows 78% of the agency is between the ages of 30 and 60; 33% are approaching or are already at retirement age. With more individuals choosing to work well past the typical retirement age, TPWD and other workplaces are experiencing a multi-generational workforce. TPWD employees range in age from 17 to 84 years old.



**LENGTH OF SERVICE**

As of March of 2022, approximately 39% of TPWD employees have five or fewer years of service, 28% have between ten and 20 years, and approximately 11% have 20 years or more. TPWD has a larger proportion of employees with 10-20 years of service than other state agencies in general.

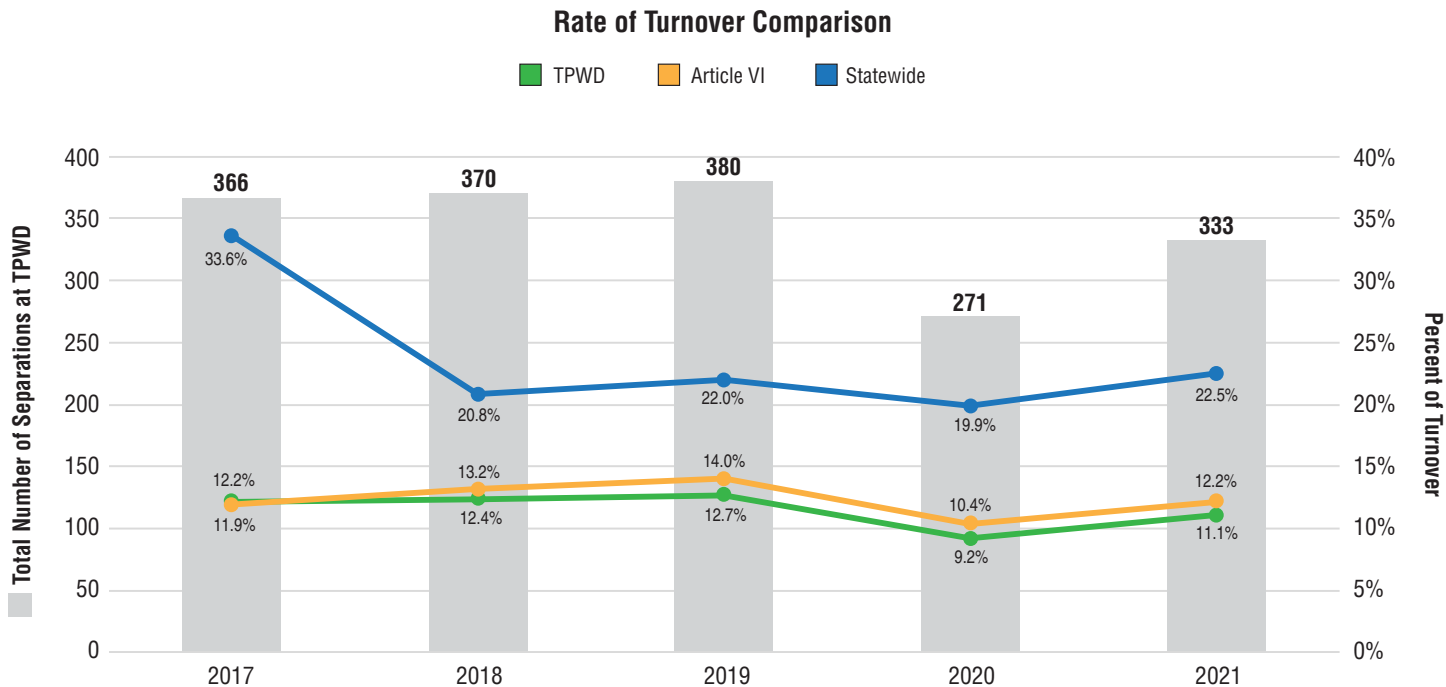


**VETERANS**

TPWD recognizes the strength in leadership, teamwork, strong work ethics, core values, and many more skills veterans bring to the workforce. The current percentage of veterans reported in the Veteran Workforce Summary for the second quarter of FY2022 was 8.56%, a decrease from 9.6% at the end of FY2021. This decrease is a result of the “great resignation,” with veterans separating from TPWD.

**TURNOVER**

TPWD is known for recruiting and retaining quality employees dedicated to the agency. This dedication is reflected in a consistent, relatively low turnover rate the agency has experienced compared to statewide and Article VI agencies. In FY2021, TPWD experienced a turnover rate of 11.1%, less than half of the average turnover rate for state agencies. Despite consistently low turnover and a stable supply of qualified applicants, the agency’s key challenge is the loss of institutional knowledge and expertise resulting from retirements and resignations. Currently, the agency employs 42 return-to-work retirees and has 495 employees who are eligible to retire at the end of FY2022.



Through FY2021 and into the first two quarters of FY2022, the agency has experienced the impacts of the “great resignation,” a trend in higher turnover that many employers have reported. Employees moving to other jobs are not quitting the workforce; they see themselves as “free agents.” They are leaving in large part to take other jobs, and they cite the following as the top reasons:

- To find something more meaningful
- “Work from anywhere” culture
- Work-life balance
- Better pay

At TPWD during FY2021 and thus far into 2022, the top five reasons reported for voluntary separations from the agency were:

1. Better pay/benefits
2. Retirement
3. Issues with my supervisor/issues with employees supervised
4. No or little career advancement opportunities
5. Relocation of self or spouse

**RETIREMENT ELIGIBILITY**

The agency estimates that 19% of agency staff will be eligible for retirement at the end of FY2022. TPWD’s Executive Office, Legal Division, Law Enforcement Division, and Support Resources Division are among those with the highest percentages of employees eligible for retirement. Looking ahead to the next five years, the percentage of employees eligible to retire by 2027 increases to 35% (1,046 employees). By FY2027, Communications, Human Resources, and Infrastructure divisions will also have a high number of employees eligible for retirement. As employees retire, establishing knowledge transfer or knowledge sharing best practices will be key to continuity of operations.

**EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION**

TPWD pay lags behind Article VI agency salaries on average. State salaries have always lagged behind private-sector salaries for comparable work; however, the gap continues to widen without cost of living raises for many years. With pay identified as top reason employees are separating from the agency, TPWD continues to examine pay in the following areas:

- Comparison of classifications within TPWD to the labor market
- Comparison of classifications within TPWD to other state agencies
- Comparison of average salaries by division
- Comparison of agency average salaries to other state agencies
- Pay as it relates to turnover

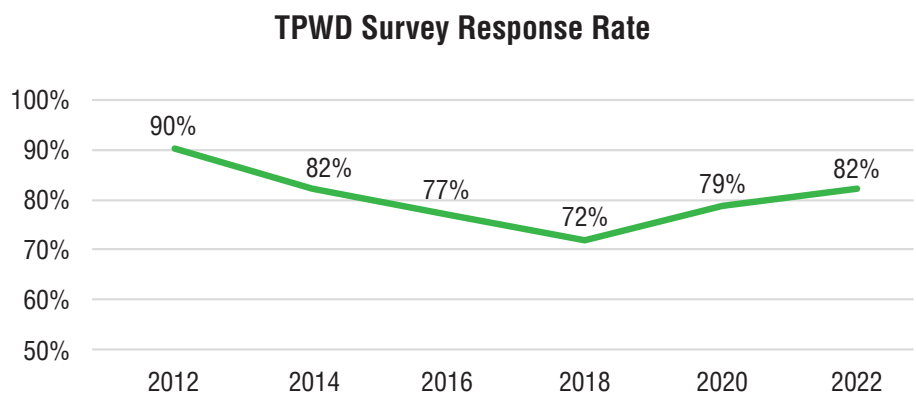
**VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

TPWD’s workforce is augmented by its volunteer program. Volunteers play a crucial role in the agency’s mission and provide a wide variety of services across almost every division. State Parks volunteers serve as ambassadors to the public and support staff in day-to-day operations at the parks and providing interpretive programs. Texas Master Naturalists provide education, outreach, and service to manage natural resources and natural areas within all communities. Hunter, angler, and boater education instructors teach outdoor enthusiasts how to hunt, fish, and boat safely, responsibly, lawfully, and ethically.

In FY2021, TPWD had over 12,340 active volunteers working within the agency. These volunteers provided over 838,350 hours of service for the agency. These services are equivalent to 403 FTEs, valued at over \$23.9 million based upon the dollar value of volunteer time at \$28.54 hour (Independent Sector). Volunteer numbers decreased during COVID, but are beginning to trend back to pre-pandemic levels. TPWD continues to seek opportunities to expand its volunteer program and increase the diversity of its volunteers.

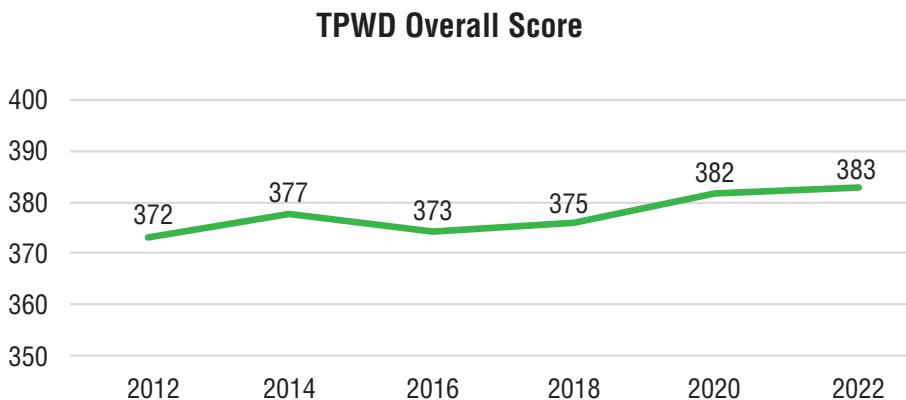
**SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

The Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) is an assessment administered biennially to employees throughout state government by the Institute of Organizational Excellence at the University of Texas at Austin. Employees are asked to anonymously share feedback on their agency’s multiple topics through the SEE, including internal communication, pay, supervision, and strategic vision. Generally, the agency has high response rates and high scores on the survey constructs.





Employees are asked to respond to over 70 statements using a Likert scale that ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The results of the responses are calculated into corresponding scores that span 100 to 500 points. Generally, scores between 350 and 500 points are considered very strong to excellent results and are interpreted to be a strength for the agency.



Over the past several SEE iterations, TPWD’s scores have had some minor fluctuations. However, the agency’s strongest and weakest constructs have remained fairly consistent. For the 2022 survey, the highest scoring constructs for the agency (in order from highest score to third highest) are: Strategic, Supervision, and Employee Engagement. TPWD’s lowest-scoring constructs (in order from lowest score to third lowest) are: Pay, Internal Communication and Benefits. To provide context, the only score below 350 points that the agency consistently receives is on the construct of pay.

TPWD will continue to utilize the SEE results to address employee concerns, strategically plan for the future of our workforce, and develop appropriate actions that boost engagement and retention throughout the agency. It is vital that the agency utilize organizational tools, like the SEE, to protect one of our most valued resources – our human resources.

## II. FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE (DEMAND ANALYSIS)

As the general population copes with the pandemic, the need for outdoor recreation has increased. Studies have shown that spending time in nature can improve mental health and supports social distancing measures, as one of the few ways that people can safely interact. As the pandemic continued, more and more people found their way to outdoor activities and the spaces created, maintained, and managed by TPWD. The demand for TPWD resources requires a workforce that can deliver needed services.

The pool of available workers may be the most pressing concern about the future of the United States labor market, based on newly released federal government data. The labor force participation rate is projected to continue to trend down, declining from 61.7% in 2020 to 60.4% by 2030, with retiring Baby Boomers and a declining population rate reducing the number of people available to work, according to a new analysis from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The youngest Boomers will reach traditional retirement age by 2030.

The predictions are that the labor market for employers will be difficult to navigate going forward. The pandemic ending will not provide immediate improvements to the labor market. In February 2020, the United States had the lowest unemployment rate in history. Since then, many more Baby Boomers have left the labor force, without significant numbers of new labor market entrants. Over the next several years, the challenge will be replenishing the labor force. Employers will need to make improvements/efficiencies in utilizing their workforce. (Maurer, 2021)

The BLS is forecasting 11.9 million new jobs, but only 8.9 million new entrants to the labor force. Changes ushered in by the pandemic, such as the explosion of remote work, will expand the demand for jobs in information technology services and other knowledge worker categories. Retail positions are expected to decrease in the customer-facing side of retail, while logistics, driving, and virtual customer service are growing. Since many retail jobs are held by women, this will have a gender impact on the labor force. (Maurer, 2021)

The Texas Workforce Commission shows that Texas continued to add record numbers of new jobs in 20 of the past 21 months through January 2022. The seasonally adjusted Texas unemployment rate for January 2022 was 4.8% (Woellner, 2022).

The Texas population has substantially increased over the past several years, and this growth is predicted to continue into the foreseeable future. Demographic trends indicate that the population of the urban areas of Texas are growing while rural populations are declining, creating an increasingly urbanized and diverse state. With a total population of over 29.5 million, Texas has four cities with over 1 million people. These cities are becoming increasingly diverse, and the face of Texas continues to change. Demographers predict that by 2042, those who identify as Hispanics and other minority groups will become the majority population group surpassing non-Hispanic whites. (Roberts, 2008)

## **CRITICAL JOB COMPETENCIES**

As previously mentioned, TPWD employs a variety of positions to carry out its mission. Human Resources Division follows the guidelines provided by the State of Texas Classifications Plan of the State Auditor’s Office and works closely with the agency supervisors/managers to identify the basic and advanced technical skills and competencies of each job classification. TPWD will continue to identify critical positions and competencies that significantly impact the agency and the execution of its mission. There is a continuing need for TPWD employees with:

### **Technical & Job Specific Skills**

- Strong information technology skills (including legacy tools and systems)
- Water and wastewater licenses
- Toxicology expertise
- Experience in specialty programs like ADA compliance, sustainability, safety and risk management, and emergency management
- Fabrication

### **Soft Skills**

- Problem-solving
- Communication skills
- Public speaking
- Analytical skills

Several high-level cross-divisional competencies were identified and deemed critical for agency-wide success. These competencies included:

- |                       |                           |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| • change management   | • influencing/negotiating | • Spanish language skills |
| • coaching/mentoring  | • information management  | • technology management   |
| • conflict management | • project management      |                           |
| • fiscal management   | • public speaking         |                           |

Although approximately 74% of agency staff work at field locations outside of Austin, TPWD faces challenges in acquiring critical competencies due to the inability to compete in job markets with the recent increase in private sector salary rates and salaries paid by other state agencies. Several of our divisions – primarily those housed in the Austin area (Information Technology, Infrastructure, and Financial Resources) – struggle to attract and retain qualified candidates due to compensation challenges. These divisions require advanced technical skills, expertise, and experience. The divisions’ demanding workloads and work pace necessitate hiring well-qualified and experienced professionals.

## **PAY**

For many years, pay has been the lowest-scoring construct in the TPWD SEE. Employees express that pay is not keeping pace with the rising cost of living or other similar jobs outside of state employment. TPWD employees drive significant distances to perform their job duties in many cases. This is due to a lack of affordable housing close to designated worksites and/or remote worksite locations requiring significant travel. State Auditor’s Office (SAO) exit surveys reveal:

- In FY2021, pay was second to retirement as the highest reason for leaving.
- So far in FY2022, pay is the number one reason for leaving employment with TPWD.

With predictions of increasing inflation, concerns that pay will not keep pace with rising costs are real. After being a non-issue in wage determination for several decades, strong inflation in 2021-2022 could lead to greater demand from workers and unions for a cost-of-living adjustment in 2022. Another consideration is the private job market has increased minimum entry-level salaries (Miller, 2022). TPWD now has some positions paying less than entry-level retail positions.

### III. GAP ANALYSIS

#### AGING WORKFORCE AND ATTRITION

With approximately 61% of TPWD employees at or above age 40 and 33% of employees at or above age 50, experience is undoubtedly an asset for day-to-day operations and provides continuity. However, the fact that approximately 35% of agency employees in leadership positions are at/or nearing retirement eligibility over the next five years raises significant concern. Special attention to recruitment, succession planning, and training will be necessary to fill potential gaps in the workforce. This potential loss of valued experience and institutional knowledge from pending retirements must be managed through targeted recruitment, mentoring, technical training, leadership programs, and succession planning efforts.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, 39% of employees under 40 bring a wealth of diverse thinking and newer ways of doing business. This younger demographic is a crucial component of diversity and outreach efforts. They tend to seek continuous challenges and better salaries with upward mobility more rapidly than older employees, so they may change employers frequently due to the scarcity of opportunities to increase their income. They also value non-traditional work arrangements such as teleworking, pay by project, and flex-time schedules that may not fit the paradigm of many traditional positions in the agency. This requires different management techniques, training, and increased flexibility with benefits, morale, and retention programs.

Information compiled by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) reveals that Millennials account for approximately 50% of the workforce. Meanwhile, the population of people older than 65 is larger than ever, and is expected to double in the next 20 to 30 years. While these younger and older employees overlap in the workforce, research reveals they typically want significantly different things from their careers. Younger workers tend to prioritize purpose and personal development while the latter seek security and stability. Challenges can also arise due to differences in communication styles, general work practices, collaboration, and expectations from employers. (umassglobal.edu, 2019)

#### NON-COMPETITIVE SALARY STRUCTURE

TPWD performs salary comparisons of classifications against other state agencies and within internal divisions to compare and reduce compression issues between divisions. For over 20 years, the SEE results have confirmed that salary remains the number one issue related to job satisfaction. The agency turnover rate increased to 11.1% in 2021, and this upward trend continues into 2022 with the “great resignation.” Other noted staffing challenges with recent external changes and competition for talent are:

- The competition for talent with other state agencies and the private sector has affected all divisions significantly, especially Communications, Information Technology, and Infrastructure. TPWD is not able to offer competitive pay for its employees.
- Entry-level positions, particularly at state parks, are challenging to fill, and the department is seeing current staff take on more responsibilities with small pay increases when increases are available. Entry-level salaries in other job markets are paying increasingly more.
- State Park Police Officers (SPPOs) serve as commissioned peace officers but are currently classified under Salary Schedule B with 4.41% to 23.88% less salary than their game warden counterparts in Salary Schedule C. SPPOs train side by side with game wardens at the Game Warden Training Center. The current duties of a SPPO no longer align with Salary Schedule B and consideration should be given to moving SPPOs to Salary Schedule C along with other commissioned law enforcement officers within TPWD and in the state of Texas.
- TPWD has experienced recruiting and retention difficulties for many mid-level and senior positions in the areas of natural resources, maintenance, and administrative support due to below-market salary and experience requirements.

## MINORITIES AND WOMEN

In an effort to increase the diversity of the professional workforce at TPWD, the agency has initiated a non-traditional university partnership. This partnership engages both Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in Texas to create a more diverse and inclusive TPWD talent pipeline. This partnership provides guidance to the universities on securing additional funds for projects that will give the students practical experience related to work done by TPWD. The department expects graduate students from these partner universities to be better prepared to compete for TPWD jobs.

Additionally, there is a concerted effort to target the recruitment of women and minority candidates within our cadet classes for Law Enforcement Division game wardens and State Parks Division park police officers. As women and minorities comprise an increasing number of college graduates in the natural sciences across Texas universities, TPWD will continue to use this opportunity to leverage new talent with future recruitment efforts.

## VETERANS

Texas Government Code, Section 657.004, specifies that veterans should comprise 20% of an agency workforce. TPWD has made concerted efforts to meet this standard by dedicating a position within the Human Resources Division to focus on veteran hiring. The agency's current percentage of veterans in the workforce stands at 8.56%. During the first and second quarters of FY2022, the agency experienced an exodus due to a reshuffle in the workforce that has been seen at the state and national levels. TPWD actively participates in the SkillBridge Program to create a pipeline of veteran candidates for TPWD vacancies.

## IV. HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

TPWD utilizes a "values-based" Human Resources strategy in an effort to attract and retain a diverse, quality staff and to ensure effective human resources management (HRM) across the agency. TPWD's core values of stewardship, service, excellence, integrity, and teamwork serve as the foundation for designing the agency's policies and practices. These fundamental values are embedded into the organization's culture. This strategy is based on research that demonstrates people want to work for an organization they trust and respect, where they feel valued and welcomed, where they are enriched and connected to the community, and where they can make a difference. All HR policies and programs are developed in coordination with other support divisions.

The Human Resources Division supports the divisions in the execution of the agency's mission and works to achieve excellent customer service based on five human resource-specific strategic goals:

**Goal 1:** Recruitment and Talent Management – Attract, employ, develop and retain a qualified, diverse employee workforce that includes veterans and volunteers to meet current and future business needs.

**Goal 2:** Personnel Administration – Develop, implement, and integrate effective HR policies, business processes, and data systems by leveraging industry best practices.

**Goal 3:** Shared Culture – Leverage the agency's shared culture and core values to distinguish TPWD as an employer of choice.

**Goal 4:** Learning and Development – Ensure mission success by providing TPWD employees with access to learning and development programs geared toward promoting competencies related to teamwork, supervision, and leadership.

**Goal 5:** Diversity and Inclusion – Foster a welcoming environment within our employee base and the citizens served.

TPWD is committed to addressing the gaps identified in its workforce. These efforts include increasing outreach and recruitment to non-traditional populations and veterans to increase workforce diversity, address pay inequities, and continue employee leadership development.

The agency is known for providing employees with training and developmental opportunities and must continue to do so to maintain a high-quality workforce. As TPWD's current workforce retires and years of valuable knowledge and experience are lost, the agency must implement a succession plan and develop a more diverse workforce to avoid losing the competencies needed to accomplish the TPWD mission.

### **KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER BEST PRACTICES**

The following are active strategies for divisions to consider in order to retain institutional knowledge that can occur with resignations and retirements:

- Documenting internal procedures
- Cross-training
- Mentoring programs
- Training programs
- Developing leaders
- Succession planning

### **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Leadership development is critical at all levels of the agency to provide professional development and support succession planning. Having capable leaders at all levels of the organization will help ensure that the agency can complete its mission and take care of its most valuable resource, its people. TPWD recognizes the need to consider multiple generations when developing and delivering training and leadership programs due to potential differences in learning styles and preferences. TPWD will continue to develop leaders across all levels of the organization through:

- Participation in executive leadership programs including the Governor's Executive Development Program, the National Conservation Leadership Institute, and TPWD's Senior Leadership Development Program (SLDP).
- Continuing to develop first-line managers and team leaders through the Successful First Line Management program (SFLM) that covers self-reflection, nature of management, nature of teams, diversity of teams, conflict management and coaching.
- The Mentoring for Growth Program that targets employees in their first three to six years of tenure to be mentored by seasoned employees for knowledge management/knowledge transfer and career development.
- Various statewide training programs, including individual mentoring and coaching offered by the Training and Organization Development Team. This includes programs covering public-facing service, conflict management, communication, dealing with difficult people, high-performing teams, coaching, diversity, managing up, personality differences, multigenerational workforce, organizational skills, and time management, along with other topics requested.

### **EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES**

The agency will continue to use a variety of strategies to influence retention, including:

- Encouraging the use of performance-based merit pay, one-time merits, and paid administrative leave to recognize employees' significant contributions to the agency's mission.
- Developing and executing recruitment strategies to reach broader segments of the population.

- Encouraging participative management strategies that allow individual contributors to take an active role in decision-making, which increases employee value.
- Improving retention across the agency through individual development and training.
- Providing tuition assistance to supplement student-employee educational endeavors.
- Leveraging flexible work arrangements.
- Utilizing the employee wellness program to enhance employee engagement and productivity.
- Continuing participation in the biennial Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) and executive commitment to appropriately address areas of concern.
- Continuing commitment to a comprehensive employee recognition program that honors the best, brightest individuals and team accomplishments.
- Providing an affirming culture for nursing mothers as a designated Mother-Friendly Worksite.
- Creating a more welcoming environment that fosters job satisfaction and retention through diversity and inclusion initiatives.

### **COMPETITIVE SALARY STRUCTURE**

TPWD will continue to address the issue of competitive compensation, particularly the pay gap compared internally within TPWD, to other state agencies, the private sector, and the labor market. The agency's long-term goal is to develop a competitive compensation package to attract, motivate and retain quality employees. This effort includes pay and benefit comparisons of similar positions internally and externally.

While the agency will not be able to directly compete with many private entities, TPWD will emphasize the total rewards strategy to include non-monetary compensation such as retirement plans, health benefits, 401K/457 plans, wellness/fitness programs, tuition reimbursement, telecommuting, flexible working arrangements, and employee assistance programs.

### **COMPREHENSIVE RECRUITMENT PROGRAMS**

Recruitment programs are a top priority for TPWD, as these are key for workforce development and diversity efforts. Recruitment programs are crucial as the agency endeavors to be more inclusive of minorities, women, veterans, and people with disabilities, reflecting the demographics of the state.

Given the number of employees that are currently eligible to retire and those that will be eligible within the next five years, a strong recruitment effort will help the agency secure the talent needed to continue operations. Specific opportunities for future agency recruitment include the following components:

- Partner with the TPWD Employee Diversity Inclusion Advisory Committee (EDIAC) Recruitment Committee and Recruitment Representatives to formulate a comprehensive recruitment strategy and plan.
- Review job prerequisites, especially degree and quantifiable experience requirements, to ensure as large and diverse an applicant pool as possible.
- Utilize recruitment platforms that serve diverse markets.
- Solicit, train, and support agency employees to represent TPWD at events virtually, across the state, and in their local communities through the Recruitment Representatives Program.
- Increase recruiting efforts at HBCUs and HSIs.
- Work with HBCUs and HSIs to match required academic backgrounds with majors and certificate degrees offered, specifically in the natural sciences, to make these students as competitive as possible for positions in the agency.
- Target recruitment efforts for students and veterans in areas where positions exist, including seminars on becoming a successful applicant.
- Increase emphasis on high school students by conducting visits and contacts with guidance counselors and coaches to promote TPWD employment and professional growth opportunities to interested students.
- Create collaborative learning outcomes for all interns, highlighting the agency's mission and key themes to prepare students for a future in conservation.

- Increase outreach to veterans by expanding existing partnerships with the United States Department of Defense (USDOD) to include all Texas military facilities and extend to surrounding states, including the SkillBridge Program.
- Continue relationships with national, statewide, regional, and local diverse student and professional organizations:
  - Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS)
  - Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)
  - Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) Minorities in Natural Resources Careers subcommittee (MINRC).

## VETERANS

With the agency's goal to bring veterans to 20% of the workforce, a new position in the HR Division dedicates its services to veterans. It has taken advantage of the USDOD SkillBridge Program. SkillBridge is an opportunity for service members to gain valuable civilian work experience in government positions during their last 180 days of service and at no cost to the agency. The current incumbent Veteran Liaison for TPWD came from this program. The position focuses on providing outreach to veterans through events at military installations across the state and recruiting and retaining veterans.

## V. VALUE PROPOSITION FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT TPWD

TPWD has a rich history of serving the state of Texas with excellence. The agency has developed multiple initiatives to manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of the state and provide outdoor recreation opportunities for present and future generations. State demographics are shifting to majority-minority, requiring increased attention to recruiting, hiring, and career development. The agency aims to recruit and retain the best and the brightest from the state and across the nation, including multiple ethnicities, genders, ages, and backgrounds.

TPWD considers its efforts to address constituent and workforce diversity challenges a business imperative. The agency is focusing efforts to identify how best to serve a population whose demographics are rapidly changing.

### TPWD DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PILLARS

TPWD will become an employer of choice by focusing on the following diversity and inclusion pillars:

- **Recruiting:** Recruit from a diverse, highly skilled group of potential applicants to secure a high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of American society.
- **Retention:** Cultivate a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable individuals to contribute to their full potential and further retention and development.
- **Education and Outreach:** Develop structures and strategies to equip leaders with the ability to manage diversity, be accountable, measure results, refine approaches based on such data, and institutionalize a culture of inclusion.

The three pillars listed above are necessary for integrating diversity and inclusion into the culture at TPWD. The diversity and inclusions goals for the current biennium align under the aforementioned pillars.



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