

## **SCHEDULE F: AGENCY WORKFORCE PLAN**

### **FORWARD**

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection Workforce Plan provides an overview of agency staffing information. In addition to meeting its mission and goals, the agency has successfully provided high-quality service with a highly trained and skilled staff. The agency has been able to work smarter and leverage technology to address a significant increase in the demand for the Texas fire service while navigating staff turnover due to salary restrictions and retiring staff. The Workforce Plan forecasts staffing goals, workforce skills, demographics, and trends required to continue to ensure a high standard of agency operations and services.

### **OVERVIEW**

The agency currently employs thirty-two full-time individuals. To continuously meet our high standards of performance, most staff members are required to work multiple job functions. The Commission has seen a significant increase in workload in the last five years. This is due to an increasing population with a rising need for fire services throughout the state. Advances in internal technology and staff training have allowed the agency to provide quality customer service to its stakeholders with moderate changes in staffing.

Since continuing the agency's work-from-home model that was implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency has been able to increase employee retention and increase the candidate pool to fill open positions. The current strategic goal is aligned to support the agency workforce, including training, communications, agency environment, and succession and retention planning.

Based on the current workload, there is a need to expand the workforce in several areas. The compliance division handles mandated bi-annual compliance inspections for over 1700 regulated entities, firefighter injury investigations, training facility audits, and complaints. Our annual Injury report has revealed an increase in Firefighter injuries, specifically, burn injuries.

2020 – 6,406 total injuries with 96 being burns.

2023 – 4,613 total injuries with 142 being burns.

To effectively handle all of this, the need exists to create an investigations division, under the direct supervision of the compliance division chief. Creating this split in responsibility would include adding three FTEs for investigations and two supervisor positions to ensure an efficient span of control for both compliance and investigations. Both division supervisors would report to the compliance division chief.

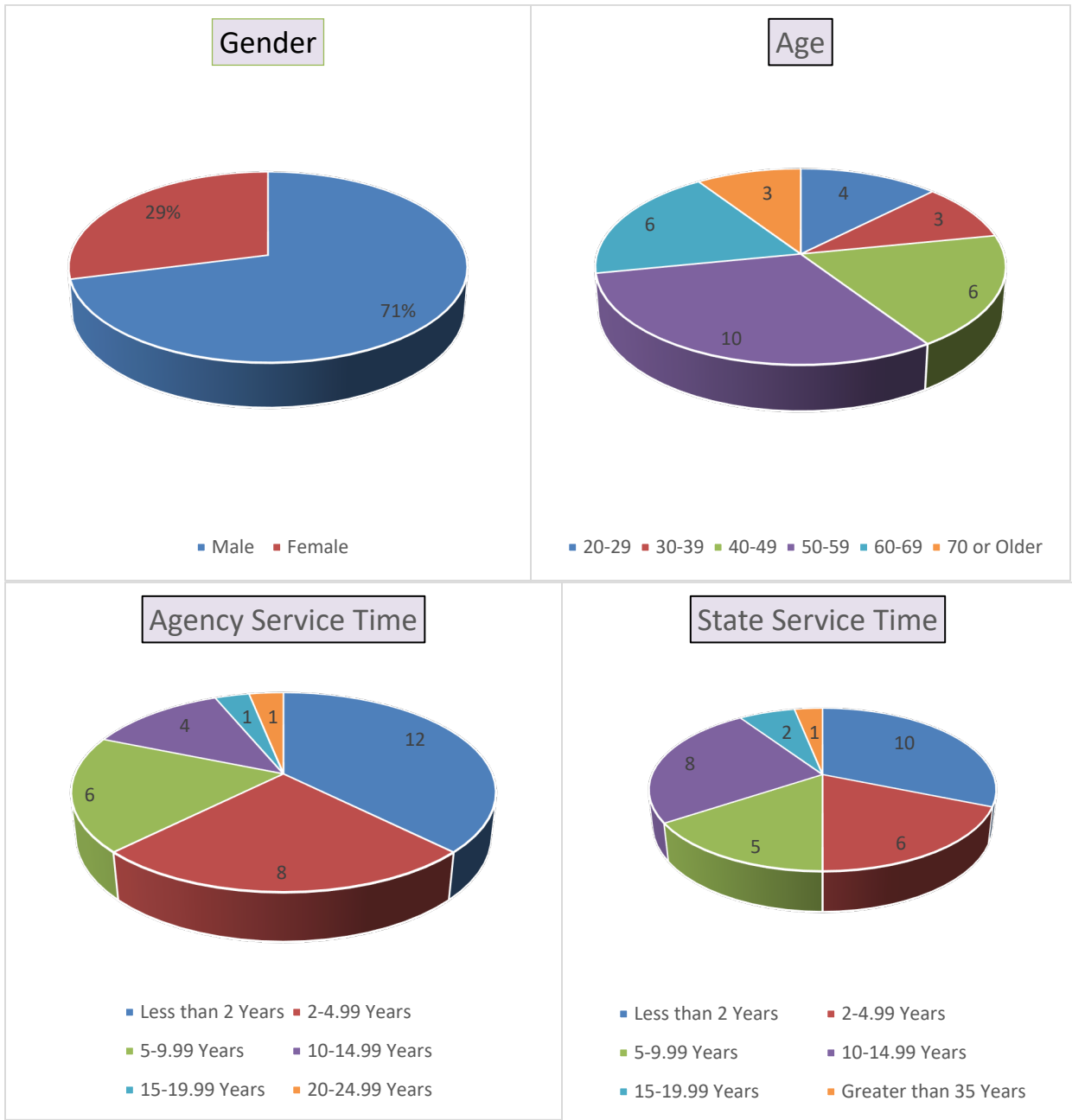
The division chief also needs an administrative support FTE to assist with all record-keeping, fleet management documentation, and clerical work. Currently, 31% of the Compliance Division Chief's workload is contributed to clerical duties such as approving trips, reviewing vouchers, reviewing injury reports, determining criteria for investigations, assigning to field staff, reviewing complaints, and assigning investigations to field staff. Maintaining data related to activities such as what is used for quarterly reports, reviewing for accuracy, and adding new FDID requests and HODs into FARM.

The next area of concern is the certifications division. Currently, this division functions with one division chief and four FTEs. With the increased workload of additional certified firefighters and the management of the Emergency Manager Certification program, there is a need for three new FTE positions.

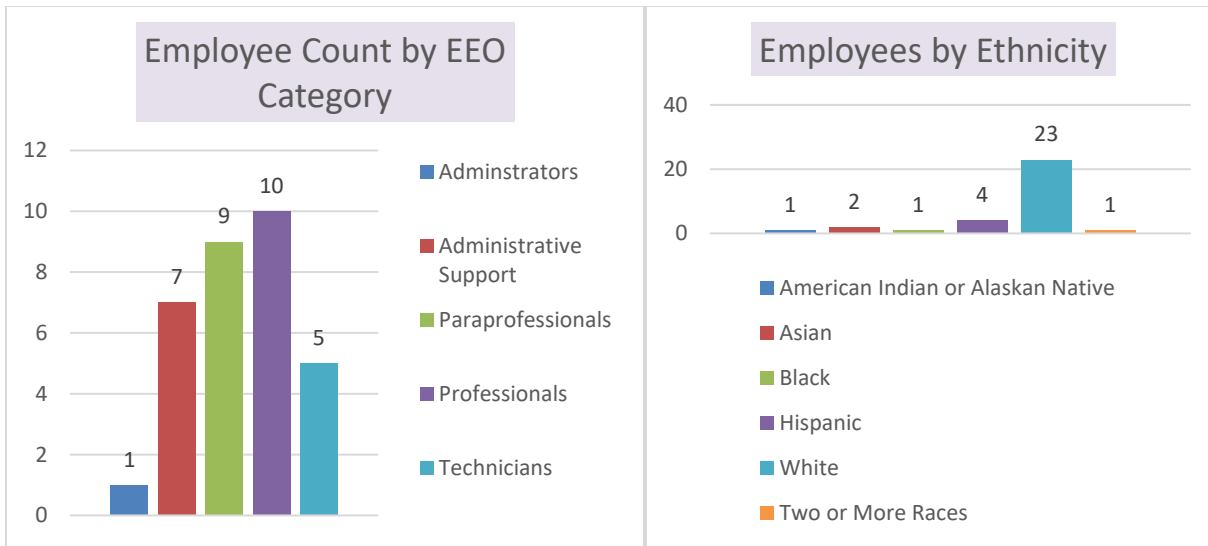
The final area of concern is the HR/executive assistant role. Currently, these duties are handled by one person who is responsible for Commission meeting agendas, scheduling, travel expense documentation, clerical support for the agency chief, deputy chief, legal counsel, and all HR documentation. One additional FTE functions solely as the executive assistant allowing one FTE to function solely in HR.

**CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE**

The following charts reflect the agency’s workforce as of April 2024. The agency’s workforce comprises 29% females and 71% males. The agency’s staff consists of 61% aged 50 years or higher while 29% are at or past retirement eligibility age. About 61% of employees have less than five years of agency service. This warrants training programs to ensure our employees maintain professional growth and development.



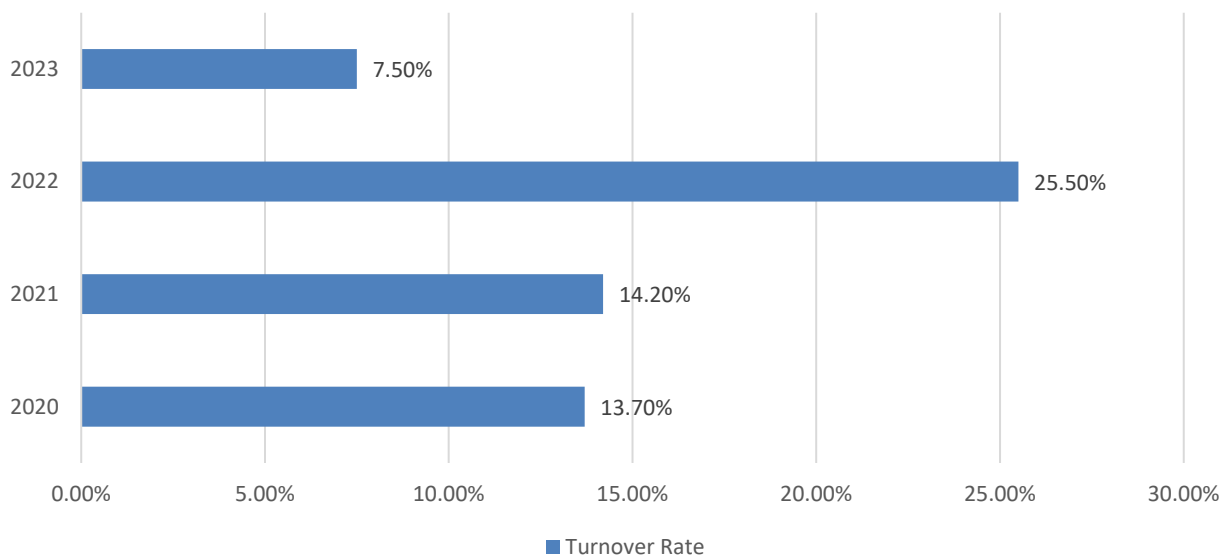
A total of thirty-two full-time positions are allowed by legislative rule. Due to budgetary restraints, only thirty-one of these positions are filled. Using EEO definitions, currently, there is one administrator, ten professionals, nine paraprofessionals, seven administrative support staff members, and five technicians. Fire Service experience and expertise are crucial to the agency’s mission; therefore, the agency must employ professional firefighters to cover fire departments’ compliance inspections. Due to the increasing demand for fire service throughout the state and increased investigations, the agency added an extra region and an additional FTE in the compliance division to help with investigations to alleviate the added strain on current staff. The ethnic distribution of the staff is 71% White, 13% Hispanic, 6% Asian, 3% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 3% two or more races, and 3% Black.



**Employee Turnover**

After several years of significant turnover, the agency has been able to reduce the turnover rate by 18% from Fiscal Years 2022 to 2023. Continuing the agency’s work-from-home model and increasing work flexibility, the agency has been able to increase employee retention, which is reflected in the reduction of turnover.

Four-year Turnover Trend



**Retirement Eligibility**

According to agency projections, an estimated 45% of agency employees will be eligible to retire within the next five years. The agency has implemented a career ladder program and is working on retention and succession programs.

**Critical Workforce Skills**

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection values its human capital as its most important asset. Commission employees possess highly desirable skill sets that are critical to accomplishing the mission of the agency. These skills include written and oral communication skills, interpersonal skills, expertise related to fire service standards, technical skills related to state systems, and information technology skills.

## **FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE: DEMAND ANALYSIS**

### **Expected Workforce Changes**

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection will experience many of the workforce changes seen across the country impacted by an aging population. The agency expects that these factors may shrink the pool of qualified employees requiring greater recruiting efforts and more job skills training for new and current employees. Due to the consistent increase in the population of Texas, the agency also expects continued growth in testing, certifications, and overall need for the Texas Fire Service which would greatly impact the agency's ability to deliver on its mission with current staffing levels.

### **Future Workforce Skills Needed**

To meet increased demands, the agency will use employee teams to boost productivity through streamlined processes and increased use of automation. Communication and interpersonal skills will be critical to the team approach. Technical and critical thinking skills will be necessary for balancing priorities and finding more innovative ways to meet productive demands. In addition to the competencies listed before, additional skills will be essential for future positions:

- Process analysis and improvement.
- Project management.
- Performance management.
- Strategic planning.
- Business process creation and revision.

Key to maintaining a motivated, vibrant, and professional workforce is the development of a comprehensive personnel development plan. This plan will be comprised of:

- A cross-training program to address the changing needs of the agency.
- A professional improvement component targeting work skills and workplace enhancements.
- Educational and skills training.
- Overall employee performance improvement.
- Creating a career trajectory plan for each staff member.

In the case of employees who must have and maintain certifications issued by the agency to perform their assigned duties, continuing education will be included in this plan and will be compliant with the rules and regulations the agency enforces on its stakeholders. The plan will also address other continuing education requirements of non-certified personnel.

The plan will become a part of the agency's Employee Guide. Participation will be available to all employees. Funding for this plan will be included in the biennial budget process.

### **Anticipated Impact on Workforce**

Due to the increase in statewide population and lack of funding, the agency has reclassified and reassigned some positions within the organization following the implementation of technology and productivity improvements adopted by the agency over the last couple of years. The agency will continue to monitor these shifts in the organization for efficacy.

To better prepare its workforce for both anticipated and unexpected changes, the agency recently implemented an employee succession plan wherein personnel learn to perform the duties of their co-workers in the same workgroup and general classification. In addition to cross-training employees, the agency plans to adopt a career ladder plan to sustain customer service with the anticipated retirements within the next 5-6 years. The goal of this plan is to provide a smooth transition and continuation of essential agency functions when an employee's service is interrupted, regardless of the

reason. Cross-training of personnel will expand across agency sections as the workload and position classifications allow. This will provide even more organizational flexibility in the agency and more professional development opportunities for employees. This plan is especially important considering the small workforce utilized by the agency, where the loss of a single employee can have a significant impact on productivity and work quality.

Additional employees are needed to separate the compliance and investigation duties, enhance the certification division operations, and separate and enhance the administrative and HR duties. In total an additional ten FTEs are needed to address the demand placed on the agency due to the population and subsequent professional growth. Likewise, funding for the 32<sup>nd</sup> authorized FTE that is unfilled, needs to be added. This will enhance professionalism and the ability to meet the needs of the communities the fire service protects. With population growth, the demand for the fire service will certainly result in more personnel being added to existing fire departments, and in the creation of new entities regulated by the commission. The fire service also continues to aggressively press ahead to advance the education, training, and expertise of its personnel. As such, it is incumbent upon the commission to help lead in this trend by offering as many credentialing opportunities as possible.

Finally, some changes occurring in the recent past through legislative action have contributed to the workload of the agency. Until now, the agency has been able to absorb the increased work with existing staff. However, with any new legislative action that increases the workload, consideration must be given to increasing the number of FTEs appropriated for the agency's mission.

### **Critical Functions That Must Be Performed to Achieve the Strategic Plan**

All current functions of the agency are critical to the achievement of the strategic plan. As business processes are redesigned, the agency expects essential job functions to change or shift in importance for some positions. As discussed in other areas of this plan, as the agency matures, adapts, and grows to meet the demands of the stakeholders, the overall needs of the agency will lead to adjustments in the workforce and functional groups. Through partnerships with other state agencies and stakeholders, the agency will continue to realign its structure to reflect expanding and expected needs resulting from greater levels of cooperation.

### **Gap Analysis**

Current employees do not lack the skills necessary to perform their essential job functions. However, as the agency redesigns business processes and loses employees through attrition, some positions could change significantly, requiring targeted recruiting and/or skills training.

### **Strategy Development**

To meet workforce needs brought about by increased customer demands, business process redesigns, and employee attrition, the agency will:

- Ensure its organizational structure reflects the efficient use of its personnel resources.
- Update position descriptions as necessary.
- Provide individualized job skill training that targets essential job functions.
- Provide individualized professional training to meet anticipated skill requirements.
- Utilize a rigorous recruiting and selection process to fill vacant or newly created positions with highly qualified candidates.
- Involve employees in the design and improvement of business processes.
  
- Increase employee satisfaction and performance through ethical, fair, and performance-oriented employment practices.
- Instill a strategy to increase response to the annual customer satisfaction survey.