

## Schedule F: Board of Nursing Fiscal Year 2024-2028 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 540,000 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.

The Agency is mission-driven and has a strict governance code which spells out the duties of the Board, the Executive Director, and the agency staff. All rules and policies are reviewed within the framework of protecting the public. The agency has the appropriations approval to hire 141.7 full time equivalents (FTEs) in FY24, and 138.7 FTEs in FY25. The agency has 50 FTEs in the Enforcement Division, 51.5 FTEs in the Operations Division, 23 FTEs in the Nursing Division and 17 FTEs in General Counsel and Administration. The majority of staff are located in the Austin area. The Board has 15 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 (APA) or are appropriately referred to other regulatory agencies.

## **C. Business Functions**

The Board of Nursing licenses Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs), Registered Nurses (RNs), and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), approves schools of nursing, approves eligible students to take the national nursing licensure exams, and investigates alleged violations of the Nursing Practice Act (NPA) 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's mission are anticipated in the next five years.

## **E. Additional Considerations**

### ***Key Economic and Environmental Factors***

#### **Per the Texas Comptroller's Capital Region 2024 Regional Report:**

From 2012 to 2022, regional employment increased by 46 percent, which is double the statewide growth rate and three times the national rate. The rapid growth of the Capital Region leads to a highly competitive hiring environment.

According to the Texas Housing Affordability Index, the family median income earned in the Capital Region is not enough to afford the median-priced home in the region. This problem has gotten progressively worse since 2017, which puts pressure on employees to afford housing near work. To afford housing, workers often must either limit other spending, or move to less expensive communities to afford housing. Living in these less-expensive communities often requires employees to accept long commutes to work.

### **Challenges to Providing Competitive Salaries**

The Texas Board of Nursing recently received the results of its 2023 Survey of Employee Engagement. Two key areas of concern identified are pay and benefits. Scores on the pay and benefits constructs indicate that BON staff perceive their salaries and benefits as not comparable to that offered by other employers.

The BON regards agency staff as its 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. We have implemented extrinsic reward strategies, including increasing availability of telework and flexible work schedules. We believe these strategies have contributed to our turnover rate being below the average rate for all state agencies.

## Agency Workload

Several factors have contributed to an increased workload for the Board of Nursing agency staff. These include:

**Increase In Number of Licensees** - The number of nurses holding current licenses in the State of Texas has been steadily increasing. For Fiscal Years 2019-2023, the average annual growth in RN Licensure was 5.69%. At the same time, APRN licensure average annual growth was 14%, and LVN licensure declined slightly, with an average annual decline of 0.53%. From FY 19 to FY 23, the total number of nurses holding licenses in the State of Texas increased by 77,387. The additional licensees create additional work demand for our Licensing teams in both the Operations and Nursing Departments.

**Increasing Cases for Investigations** - In Fiscal Year 21, the Board of Nursing closed 16,120 cases. This increased to 19,269 cases closed in FY 22, and 19,930 cases closed in FY 23. Despite this increase in the number of cases closed per year, the percentage of cases closed within six months has declined. In FY 21, 89.9% of cases were closed within six months. By FY 23, this had declined to 74.9%.

This decline in the percentage of cases closed within six months can be attributed to the increasing caseload of our investigators. In FY 19, our agency had an average of 91 cases open per investigator. By FY 23, the average number of cases open per investigator had increased to 158.

## II. CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE (SUPPLY ANALYSIS)

### A. Agency Demographics

Gender: Female 72.8%  
Male 27.2%

Race: African American 11.2%  
Hispanic 24.8%  
Asian 3.2%  
Caucasian 60.8%

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	12.8	0.0	20.9	40.0	54.5
Professionals	0.0	16.7	18.0	25.3	72.2	61.3
Paraprofessionals	36.6	34.0	22.5	31.2	83.1	72.5
Technicians	0.0	19.2	0.0	35.6	0.0	51.5
Administrative Support	15.0	20.2	28.6	34.2	80.7	83.2

## B. Employee Turnover

Turnover decreased in FY 21 to the lowest rates we have 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: 2019-2023

Fiscal Year	Headcount	Terminations Including Interagency Transfers	Turnover Rate Including Interagency Transfers	Terminations Excluding Interagency Transfers	Turnover Rate Excluding Interagency Transfers
2019	118.5	20	16.9%	16	13.5%
2020	115.25	17	15.6%	13	11.3%
2021	115.25	12	10.4%	9	7.8%
2022	119.75	15	12.5%	14	11.7%
2023	121	20	16.5%	17	14.0%

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

Nurses - The agency requires associate degree prepared nurses for Enforcement and master's prepared nurses for consulting. All nurses need to be proficient in using 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 continues to implement more 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 more toward 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 a registered nurse license. The agency anticipates the need for additional RNs by the end of the next five-year cycle. They will be needed in the Enforcement Department to investigate alleged violations of the law and rules, and will be needed in the Nursing Department to interpret complex practice issues and serve as an expert witness on cases.

Recently updated 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 2036. They anticipate that through 2036, RNs will experience a larger growth in the deficit between supply and demand than any other nurse type. By 2036, they predict a statewide deficit of 56,370 RNs. 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 orient Nurse Investigators more efficiently 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:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Request additional operating funds in the next legislative session to enhance employee compensation especially in the recruitment and retention of nurses.</li> <li>2. Develop and revise agency policy and procedures to be consistent and detailed.</li> <li>3. Develop mandatory training components for recognized agency sub-par skill sets.</li> <li>4. Complete a succession plan which incorporates timelines and minimal skill sets.</li> <li>5. Assess agency risk of potential knowledge loss due to departing key staff.</li> <li>6. Establish and implement a career ladder for agency departments as needed.</li> </ol>
Goal 2	Establish an agency culture of change enhancements to business processes
Rationale:	In an environment of limited resources, a culture of innovation is imperative to achieving more effective and efficient business operations. When staff are encouraged to provide input and share ideas for improvement, then engagement and ownership increase, ultimately benefitting agency customers.
Action Steps:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an ongoing mandatory training module on change enhancements.</li> <li>2. Add the skill of change enhancements and change management to the minimal core of essential job functions.</li> <li>3. Reorganize agency structure around processes.</li> </ol>