



## Schedule F: Agency Workforce Plan

### Current Workforce Profile (Supply Analysis)

#### A. Critical Workforce Skills/Functions

To fulfill the mission of TAHC, employees must have a variety of knowledge and skills to perform the agency job functions. These include:

- Veterinary medical knowledge
- One Health knowledge
- Knowledge of epidemiology principles, risk analysis, and risk management skills
- Expertise in new and emerging domestic and foreign animal disease identification, control, and prevention
- Safe and effective techniques for tissue and blood sample collection
- Livestock evaluation and safe handling
- Use and maintenance of personal protective equipment to safeguard against highly infectious emerging and zoonotic diseases as well as the chemical and pharmaceutical agents used for treatment and prevention
- Emergency management planning and response (local and state level)
- Development and delivery of public information presentations
- Development of public information news releases, pamphlets, and brochures
- Collaboration, negotiation, public relations, and customer service skills
- Supervisory and general management skills
- Budgeting, contract management, fee collection, and documentation
- Strategic planning and business plan development and implementation skills
- Technical writing skills to develop employee manuals, policies and procedures, forms, templates, procurement documents, and grants
- Employment law, recruitment, compensation and benefits, and human resources/employee relations skills
- Project management skills
- GIS development / GPS mapping skills
- General computer knowledge and data entry skills
- Information technology skills to include cybersecurity knowledge, cloud services and mobility solutions, software development, database administration, systems administration analysis, webmaster duties, business analysis, network engineering, electronic data management, and hardware and software maintenance skills
- Knowledge and training in logistics and supply, fleet, and asset management
- Knowledge and experience in records retention
- Knowledge and experience in safety and health rules, regulations, and standards
- Knowledge and experience in regulatory compliance, legal requirements, and administrative procedures
- Strong analytical, investigatory, problem solving, conflict management, and communication skills
- Knowledge and training in cross-department competencies



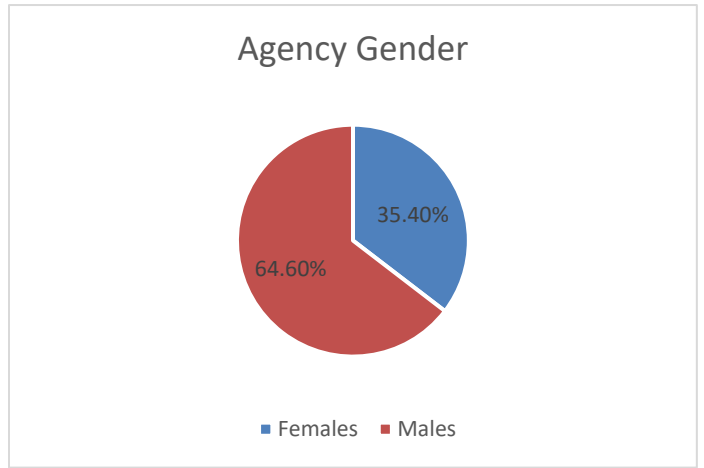
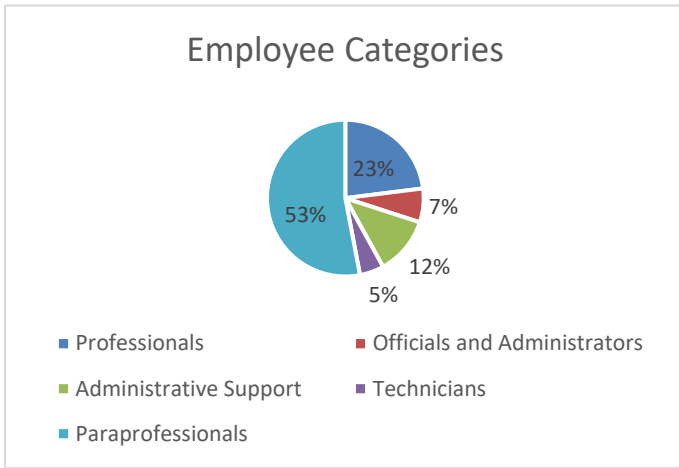
- Comprehensive audio, video, and editing skills
- Interagency and stakeholder relations skills including knowledge of the legislative process

**B. Workforce Demographics**

The agency is authorized 225.2 full time equivalent (FTE) positions for the 2024-2025 biennium.

In fiscal year 2023, TAHC was authorized for 215.2 FTE positions and the agency’s workforce had 183.5 employees with one exempt position, 182 full time classified positions, and one part-time classified position.

Based on the information in the Electronic Classification Analyst System at the State Auditor’s Office, TAHC employees are 35.4% females and 64.6% males. TAHC employees are 23% professionals, 7% officials and administrators, 12% administrative support, 5% technicians, and 53% paraprofessionals. Employees that were 40 years of age and older made up 17.8% of the workforce and 16.2% held at least 10 years with the agency.



The following table compares the percentage of African American, Hispanic American, and female TAHC employees for fiscal year 2023 to those reported by the State for fiscal year 2023. TAHC is trending ahead in the paraprofessional category for Hispanic Americans and for officials/administrators and administrative support for females. TAHC will continue to work to address the under-representation of African American, Hispanic American, and female employees in other categories.

Job Category	African American		Hispanic American		Female	
	TAHC	State	TAHC	State	TAHC	State
Professionals	5.3%	16.7%	17.6%	25.3%	38.2%	61.4%
Officials and Administrators	1.9%	12.7%	9.4%	21%	56.6%	54.5%
Administrative Support	2.2%	20.2%	26.7%	34.2%	95.5%	83.2%
Technicians	0%	19.2%	21%	35.6%	42.1%	51.5%
Paraprofessionals	2%	33.8%	42.8%	31.2%	16.4%	72.5%



The following chart illustrates the agency's average annual salary from fiscal year 2020 to fiscal year 2023, based on information from the State Auditor's Electronic Classification Analyst System. While there have been improvements made, the average salary remains below that of other state agencies which is currently \$57,747 per year statewide.



### C. Employee Turnover

The turnover statistics published by the State Auditor's Office are for voluntary separations, involuntary separations, and retirements by agency employees, including interagency transfers.

During fiscal year 2023, there were 37 resignations: 17 voluntary separations, 6 inter-agency transfers, 4 retirements, 3 dismissals for cause, and 7 resignations in lieu of termination. TAHC had a turnover rate for fiscal year 2023 of 20.2%, which was below statewide turnover rate of 21.1%.

In fiscal year 2023 and prior years, the agency experienced high turnover due to a variety of factors ranging from salary concerns to management structure. This turnover was evaluated and led to a major reorganization of the agency. As of May 2024, the agency is experiencing a positive trend lowering the turnover rate to 9.8%. TAHC will continue to provide training, education, and mentorship to the workforce to continue improving this category.

In addition to this information, after the agency reorganization took place, TAHC utilized UT Institute of Organizational Excellence's Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) in the spring of 2024. The results of this survey reflected a highly engaged workforce. TAHC had a high response rate of 80.5%, which increased by 13.6% since 2022, and an overall score of 396, which is considered engaged or highly engaged and is an increase by 16 points since 2022. The survey identified areas of strength were workgroup (team), workplace (environment), and supervision.

The results of the SEE also showed that there continues to be a significant area of concern regarding pay. When asked about to pay, the survey showed an overall score of 258, which suggests that pay is a central concern or reason for discontent for employees. TAHC will need to



increase pay to remain competitive with private sector and other government employers. The survey also showed a score of 387 for employee development, which also indicates that the potential for growth is a concern for TAHC employees. To address this, TAHC has already implemented additional employee development opportunities to help empower employees and is encouraging the use of promotions with internal opportunities for advancements to retain TAHC's highly skilled workforce.

#### D. Retirement Eligibility

TAHC will continue to face the challenge of losing many tenured staff to retirement and this trend is expected to continue throughout the next 10 years (2024-2034). A projected 36.6% of agency employees are eligible to retire over that 10-year period. Therefore, the agency must strategize for knowledge and skills transfer to personnel across the agency to ensure services are not negatively impacted upon their departure.

### Future Workforce Profile (Demand Analysis)

TAHC must continue to address the issues of competitive salaries to recruit and retain livestock inspectors and veterinarians who perform the key functions of the agency. The agency continues to address salary equity for veterinarians in regional management and field operations, as well as the agency's livestock inspector salaries, through appropriate resources. However, salaries are still below comparable positions in other agencies and private industry.

TAHC's livestock inspectors represent over 50% of TAHC personnel. Recruiting and retaining livestock inspectors will continue to be difficult until the agency is able to ensure equitable pay.

Succession plans for retaining critical knowledge, skills, and abilities as tenured staff retire is also a significant challenge for the agency, and one that is difficult to administer with limited position redundancies and a small staff. The agency will continue to provide on-the-job training and encourage outside training to staff in an effort to prepare them for positions vacated by tenured staff who will soon retire.

TAHC receives federal funding to fulfill national disease control and eradication programs. With a decrease in availability of federal funding and resources, Texas will likely need to fill the gap. Likewise, Texas has also seen an increase in the number of outbreaks as well as growth in the diversity in numbers of some livestock and poultry sectors.

These factors require additional financial and human resources. TAHC continues to strive to support the livestock and poultry industry and producers with broad disease surveillance plans, routine regulatory enforcement on all disease programs, and an increased involvement in marketability issues. One Health issues, including zoonotic diseases, vector-borne diseases, food safety and security, and other health threats shared by people and animals continue to be a priority. Adequate resources are needed to promote and protect public and animal health. As a result, TAHC staff will play a greater role in protecting the economic viability of the livestock and poultry industries in Texas. It is critical for TAHC to recruit, hire, and retain highly skilled personnel to occupy these TAHC's positions.



## A. Critical Functions

- TAHC needs to attract and retain large animal veterinarians trained in domestic and exotic livestock medicine, epidemiology, and veterinary public health, a specialty area where a nation-wide shortage exists. Large animal veterinarians are becoming scarce as more graduating veterinary students are opting to go into more lucrative, flexible, and societally popular specialties of veterinary medicine. In order to attract and retain these specialized veterinarians, to work non-regular hours and respond in short notice to emergencies, the agency must pay at or above similar jobs in Texas state government, other states, USDA-APHIS, and comparable private entities.
- The emphasis of TAHC's livestock inspectors, veterinarians, and epidemiologists has shifted from a program geared toward cattle brucellosis eradication to one that encompasses a variety of species (cattle, hogs, sheep and goats, horses, poultry, deer, and exotic livestock and poultry) and corresponding diseases and conditions. One Health issues, the challenge of the wildlife to domestic animal disease interface, increase risk of unintentional disease introduction by visitors and travelers, and emerging diseases present challenges as well.
- Career ladders are continuously reviewed, updated, and implemented for all staff in the agency, pursuant to TAHC's governing statutes.
- It is imperative the agency keeps up to date with technological changes for animal disease tracking. Therefore, the agency must be able to recruit, hire, and retain staff who have the knowledge and expertise to understand, trouble-shoot, and update these technologies such as TexCore, GIS/GPS programs, cloud services, and mobile solutions.
- Expert managerial skills and abilities are needed to continue strong leadership within the agency and to oversee and coordinate complex programs. The agency is working to ensure that core management training modules are developed, and managerial training opportunities are provided. In house training is currently provided and resources for additional external training will be provided.
- To be able to capitalize on funding that is available from various sources, including the federal government, the agency is working to secure a skilled grant writer to assist in securing needed funding.
- Each biennium the agency is asked to provide additional services and to handle new projects, many times without additional funding or funding sources. To ensure that these projects are accomplished with maximum efficiency, the agency needs to train or employ staff with project management skills and expertise.
- The need to retain animal emergency management planners to assist local jurisdictions and industry partners in developing sound animal emergency response plans will continue and grow in the future.
- All TAHC staff must be trained and ready to undertake new roles and responsibilities when animal emergencies arise. To do so, staff must be adequately trained in utilizing the National Incident Management System and Incident Command Structure and be able to activate the structure to prevent or minimize loss of life or damage to property and/or natural resources as a result of either human or natural phenomena caused events.
- The need to retain and recruit investigators knowledgeable in state and federal animal health requirements and investigations is critical to the success of regulatory programs and enforcement.



## B. Expected Workforce Changes

- A smaller ratio of veterinary and epidemiology staff-to-livestock inspectors is desirable to adequately manage domestic and foreign animal disease. With the growing list of animal species and disease types with which all staff must be knowledgeable, the demand on veterinary and epidemiology staff will increase.
- Livestock inspectors', investigators' and veterinarians' duties are also evolving. Technological changes are occurring rapidly, with increased technological usage of Global Positioning Systems (GPS), Global Information Systems (GIS), laptop computers, and automated animal identification collection technologies (i.e., Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags for animals) etc. While these technological changes should aid field staff in the efficient and effective performance of duties, these are new skill sets that have been added to their jobs. It is expected that technological changes will continually alter their duties and responsibilities in the future.
- Field staff must be able to effectively communicate with market owners and livestock producers and to educate them on state and federal requirements pertaining to the sale, movement, quarantine and disposal of livestock, poultry and exotic animals. Public speaking and effective communication skills are critical.
- Retirements of tenured staff with vast institutional knowledge of the agency and Texas' livestock and poultry industries will leave the agency with knowledge gaps in its workforce that must be addressed. The agency plans to bridge this gap through on-the-job training, recruitment strategies, and pertinent internal and third-party training of staff.
- Conversion to electronic documents will increase the need for enhance data management systems. This, in turn, will require training and recruitment of staff knowledgeable in these data management systems.

## C. Anticipated Increases in Number of Employees Needed

- Due to the ever-evolving livestock/poultry industries in Texas, the increased responsibilities of the field inspectors, veterinarians, epidemiologists, compliance personnel, and indirect administrative support staff could increase the number of employees needed.
- Because of the continued complexities involved in recognizing, categorizing and effectively planning for eradication efforts of new and emerging animal diseases, more veterinary and epidemiological staff will be required to face future demands.
- The continued effort to address cattle fever ticks in south Texas and other disease issues along the Rio Grande continues to stretch agency human and financial resources.
- The domestic animal wildlife interface hinders effective disease response and continues to present additional and unique challenges. For this reason, a wildlife biologist might be needed to work with issues related to nilgai, white-tailed deer, and other wildlife animals that are participating in the movement of diseases and pest into and within Texas.
- Due to future demands and ever evolving technology, additional FTEs may be needed to adequately address and monitor the agency's project management duties and information resources responsibilities and to implement, support, and assure effective and efficient use of new technologies. As the span, complexity, and utilization of software systems increases, additional FTEs may also be needed to help with database and integration coding maintenance and data entry along with an appropriate and effective



data quality control and data quality assurance framework.

- Due to future demands and ever-evolving legal complexities, additional FTEs may be needed to adequately address the agency's legal and compliance duties and responsibilities.
- Global trade is ever increasing, and additional FTE's may be needed to respond to disease introductions and risks of disease introductions posed by animal and product movement.

#### D. Future Workforce Skills Needed

- Veterinary medical knowledge
- One Health knowledge
- Knowledge of epidemiology principles, risk analysis, and risk management skills
- Expertise in new and emerging domestic and foreign animal disease identification and control
- Safe and effective techniques for tissue and blood sample collection
- Livestock evaluation and safe handling
- Use and maintenance of personal protective equipment to safeguard against highly infectious, introduced, or emerging diseases and agents used for treatment
- Emergency management planning and response (local and state level)
- Development and delivery of public information presentations
- Development of public information news releases, pamphlets, and brochures
- Collaboration, negotiation, public relations, and customer service skills
- Supervisory and general management skills
- Budgeting, contract management, fee collection, and documentation
- Strategic planning and business plan development and implementation skills
- Technical writing skills to develop employee manuals, policies and procedures, forms, templates, procurement documents, and grants
- Employment law, recruitment, compensation and benefits, and human resource/employee relations skills
- Project management skills
- GIS development / GPS mapping skills
- General computer knowledge and data entry skills
- Information technology skills to include cybersecurity knowledge, cloud services and mobility solutions, software development, database administration, systems administration analysis, webmaster duties, business analysis, network engineering, electronic data management, and hardware and software maintenance skills
- Knowledge and training in logistics and supply, fleet and asset management
- Knowledge and experience in records retention
- Knowledge and experience in safety and health rules, regulations, and standards
- Knowledge and experience in regulatory compliance, legal compliance, and administrative procedures
- Strong analytical, investigatory, problem solving, conflict management, and communication skills
- Knowledge and training in cross-department competencies
- Comprehensive audio, video and editing skills
- Interagency and stakeholder relations skills including knowledge of the legislative process



## Gap Analysis

### A. Anticipated Shortage of Employees

Veterinarians, epidemiologists, and livestock inspectors may be needed in greater numbers as TAHC's role in dealing with new and emerging animal diseases evolves and needed skill sets change. The agency's involvement in emergency response for the state of Texas continues to grow beyond the current FTE allocations in that area. To meet regulatory and statutory requirements, supervisory and administrative support staff will need to be hired as the labor force is increased.

Additionally, TAHC will need additional employees with highly developed information technology skills to modernize the data systems and provide specialized training to TAHC employees to best utilize new tools as technology advances. There are many technological tools that would aid in efficiency, but TAHC does not have adequate staff to implement those tools.

TAHC's ability to recruit and retain needed staff will continue to be limited by the agency's state and federal funding.

### B. Critical Skills Shortage

- The agency has found it very difficult to hire and retain qualified veterinarians, epidemiologists, and livestock inspectors. The agency is seeking new and innovative ways to recruit and retain employees for these positions. Veterinarians, epidemiologists, and livestock inspectors must continually learn and develop increased skills and knowledge to work with new and emerging disease issues, communicate with various producers and industry groups about the agency's programs, and publicly address a variety of audiences.
- The agency will need to work to ensure that training opportunities are provided to all staff to address new technological developments to ensure the workforce maintains the skillset needed to work with increasingly sophisticated databases, software, GIS/GPS equipment, security infrastructure, cloud technology, and data networks.
- Management staff will need to enhance strategic planning skills and to develop skills in business process planning, information management, and execution.
- Grant writing skills for select staff will be required in the future.
- Existing staff should be trained and new staff should be hired to provide critical project management and information resource skills for the agency.
- All staff train and practice the use of an incident command structure so the agency will be ready and capable of fulfilling its required emergency management roles and responsibilities.





## Strategy Development

TAHC will work toward achieving the following goals intended to address workforce competency gaps and the overall anticipated shortage of staff.

### A. Organizational Structure

**Goal:** Ensure that employees are allocated appropriately to cover workload demands.

**Action Steps:**

- Analyze current allocations and geographic distribution of employees.
- Develop strategic allocations or distribution of employees based on analysis and projection of future mission priorities.
- Maintain a cost-effective management-to-staff ratio to ensure maximum productivity and accountability of employees.

### B. Recruitment and Retention Strategies

**Goal:** Identify key recruitment resources and develop and implement succession plans to most effectively accomplish the agency's mission.

**Action Steps:**

- Identify factors that prevent the agency from successfully competing with other employers and develop strategies to address those factors.
- Identify and contact potential resources for minority recruitment, especially in those areas of under-representation in the agency's workforce, in all areas of the state.
- Analyze reasons for employee turnover and identify trends.
- Continue to participate in the Survey of Employee Engagement; analyze results and develop strategies to address areas needing improvement.
- Update human resources policies and procedures to address the findings of these analyses.
- Develop tools and identify strategies that place emphasis on work-life balance for employees.
- Provide supervisory and management skills training.
- Identify positions for which succession planning is critical; implement training plans to ensure knowledge, skills and abilities are developed.
- Continue to review position classifications, job duties/tasks, and salaries to strive for salary parity with other state and federal agencies and the private sector.
- Continue to implement alternate work schedules, flexible leave, and performance leave to strengthen employee morale and retention.
- Continue to offer the employee wellness program and encourage staff to participate.

### C. Career Development and In-Service Training Programs

**Goal:** Ensure that staff is equipped with necessary and appropriate skills and knowledge to most effectively accomplish the agency's mission.



### Action Steps:

- Provide training opportunities for veterinarians to achieve required continuing education units for veterinary licensing, to achieve designated epidemiologist status in a number of diseases, and to update knowledge and skills in new and emerging animal diseases.
- Support and encourage staff attendance at job-relevant conferences and training programs.
- Establish specific job requirements for necessary skills development.
- Based on identified skill requirements, allow employees to utilize on-line training tools and/or research training sources that are cost-effective.
- Conduct in-house management conferences to focus on leadership skills development and application.
- Encourage employees who seek new challenges by assigning special projects and encouraging cross-training.
- Ensure that TAHC managers participate in both internal and external seminars to enhance and further develop managerial skills.
- Update and/or establish career ladders for eligible staff.

## Workforce Plan Evaluation and Revision

TAHC's Workforce Plan will be implemented with the Strategic Plan. It will be reevaluated biennially to determine if adjustments need to be made due to changes in disease diagnoses, changes in technology, or workload shifts.

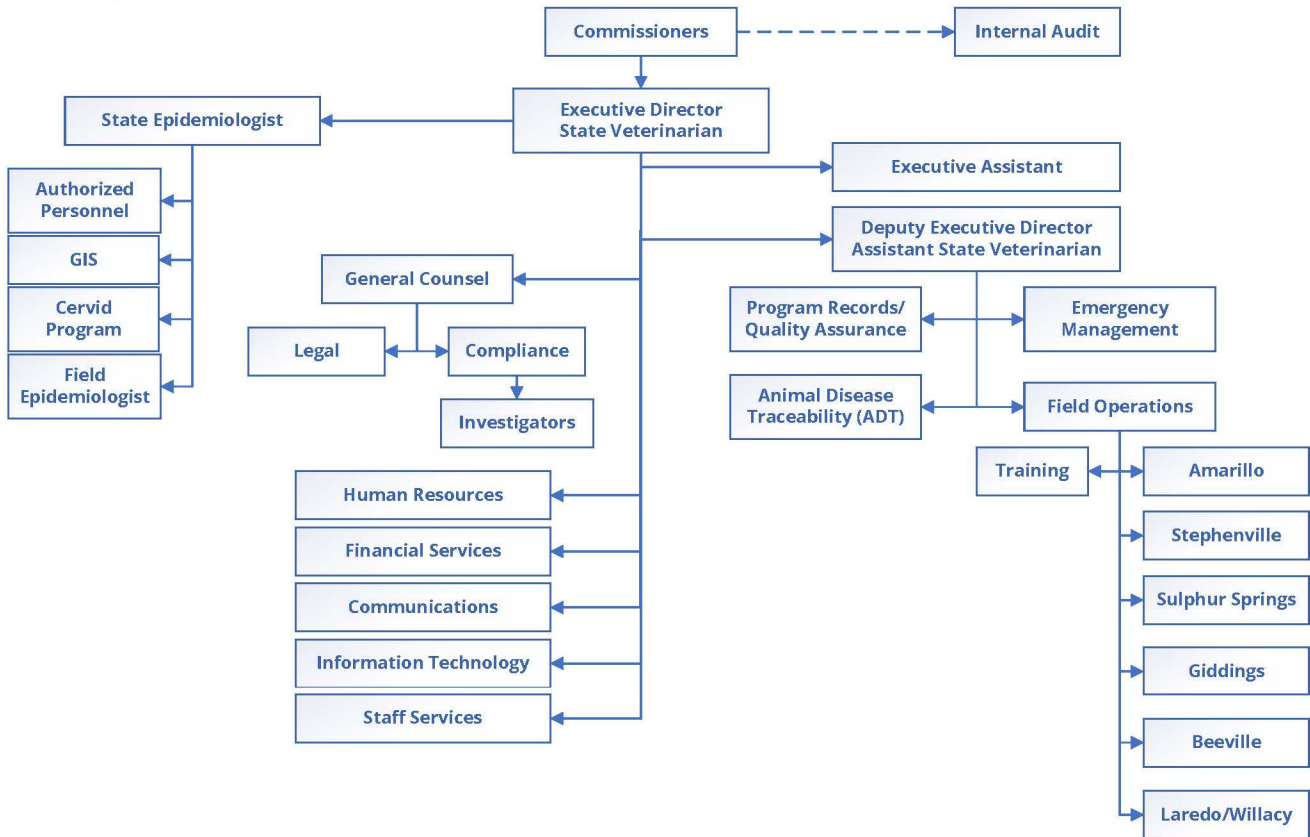
The Human Resources Department will work in collaboration with executive staff and division directors to ensure that agency workforce is adequately trained and up to date on technological advances that may change the way we do business to ensure that planned or unexpected turnover and/or retirements do not affect the agency with a gap in knowledge and skills.



**Current Organizational Chart – Fiscal Year 2024**



**TEXAS ANIMAL HEALTH COMMISSION**



March 2024