

Schedule C: Historically Underutilized Business Plan

Pursuant to Texas Government Code §2161.123 and Chapter 2056, the Executive Council of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Examiners will make good faith efforts to increase participation by historically underutilized businesses (HUBs), including Veteran HUBs, in agency purchasing and procurement opportunities. The agency will encourage HUB participation through outreach, competitive procurement practices, and the use of the Centralized Master Bidders List (CMBL) and HUB Directory to identify qualified HUB vendors.

Agency Veteran HUB goals are established using the FY2024 statewide percentage of total dollars awarded to Veteran HUBs by procurement category as follows: Heavy Construction (Other than Building) – 0.06%; Building Construction – 1.58%; Special Trade Construction – 0.32%; Professional Services – 1.01%; Other Services – 2.28%; and Commodities – 0.84%.

The agency will make good faith efforts to achieve these goals in accordance with Texas Government Code §§2161.181–2161.182 and 34 Texas Administrative Code §20.281 and will periodically review procurement practices and HUB participation to support continued compliance and improvement efforts.

Schedule D: Statewide Capital Plan (not applicable)

Schedule E: Health and Human Services Strategic Plan (not applicable)

Schedule F: Agency Workforce Plan

Section I - Agency Overview (Strategic Direction)

The Executive Council of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Examiners (ECPTOTE) is an independent state health regulatory agency, operating under the authority of its enabling legislation, Article 4512e-1, V.T.C.S. The 73rd Legislature, Regular Session, created the ECPTOTE in 1993 to administer and enforce the Physical Therapy Practice Act and the Occupational Therapy Practice Act. This legislation merged the administrative functions of the Texas Board of Physical Therapy Examiners and the Texas Advisory Board of Occupational Therapy under the Executive Council, while keeping the rule and decision-making authority of the two boards intact.

The ECPTOTE staff employees directly support or carry out the functions of one or both boards. The agency staff is organized into three functional areas - administrative support, licensing, and enforcement. The administrative staff supports the activities of the board members and other two staff groups in financial administration, information services, personnel administration, and general administration. The licensing staff responds to the unique needs of the physical therapy and occupational therapy licensee population they support. They are responsible for ensuring quality services for the consumers of Texas by licensing only qualified physical and occupational

therapists. While the process of issuing licenses is the predominate activity, a significant portion of staff's time is also dedicated to responding to inquiries about the professions we oversee. These inquiries come through various communication channels available within the agency. The investigation staff receives and investigates all complaints against the boards' licensees and works closely with the investigation committees of the two boards.

ECPTOTE has had 18 authorized full time positions since it became operational in 1993. In 2014 it increased to 19 and is currently 21. The agency maintained its staffing levels usually through reorganizations and leveraging of technology.

A. Agency Mission

The mission of the Executive Council of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Examiners (ECPTOTE) is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Texas through the regulation and enforcement of the practices of physical therapy and of occupational therapy.

B. Strategic Goals and Objectives

The ECPTOTE has two main operational goals.

Goal 1	<i>To license Physical and Occupational Therapists</i>
Objective	Ensure license and registration standards for PTs and OTs
Strategies	Issue and renew licenses
Goal 2	<i>To promote compliance and enforce PT and OT Practice Acts and rules</i>
Objective	Enforce and adjudicate PT and OT Practice Acts
Strategy	Enforce the Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Practice Acts

C. Anticipated Changes in Strategies

ECPTOTE anticipates several changes that will impact the agency's business processes and workforce. These changes are primarily driven by advancements in technology, as well as the need for effective succession planning and the retention of institutional knowledge.

As technology continues to evolve, the agency plans to implement new systems and tools to streamline operations and improve efficiency. While these advancements offer significant benefits, they will require employees to adapt and develop new technical skills. Cross training will be essential to ensure staff maintain versatility and can effectively support multiple functional areas.

Succession planning will be a key priority to ensure continuity of operations. The agency will focus on preparing staff to assume critical roles as needed, while also prioritizing the retention and transfer of institutional knowledge. When possible, the agency will hire new staff in

advance of a departing employee's transition to allow for shadowing and hands-on knowledge transfer, helping to preserve critical expertise and ensure a smooth transition.

To support these changes, ECPTOTE is committed to investing in employee development. Training and development opportunities will be provided to equip staff with the technical capabilities needed to utilize new systems, while also strengthening knowledge transfer and long-term workforce sustainability.

II. Workforce Analysis (Supply Analysis)

A. Critical Workforce Skills

ECPTOTE relies on a skilled workforce to effectively carry out its mission and support the licensing boards it oversees. The following critical skills are necessary for the agency's daily operations:

1. **Conducting Investigations:** Employees proficient in conducting thorough and impartial investigations are essential for addressing complaints against licensees and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards. This skill involves gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses, and analyzing information to make informed decisions.
2. **Interpreting Rules/Regulations:** A comprehensive understanding of relevant laws, rules, and regulations governing the practice of physical therapy and occupational therapy is crucial for accurate interpretation and application. Employees must be capable of interpreting complex legal documents to guide decision-making and ensure regulatory compliance.
3. **Effective Communications:** Strong communication skills are vital for fostering collaboration among staff members, engaging with stakeholders, and delivering clear and concise information. Effective communication contributes to efficient workflow, enhances customer service, and promotes a positive work environment.
4. **Customer Service:** Exceptional customer service skills are essential for addressing inquiries, providing assistance, and resolving issues raised by licensees, applicants, and the public. Employees must demonstrate professionalism, empathy, and responsiveness in their interactions to maintain stakeholder satisfaction and trust.
5. **Project Management:** Proficiency in project management is critical for planning, coordinating, and executing various initiatives and tasks within the agency. This skill involves setting goals, allocating resources, monitoring progress, and adapting to changing priorities to ensure successful project outcomes.
6. **Licensing Functions:** Employees responsible for licensing functions must possess knowledge and expertise in evaluating applications, assessing qualifications, and issuing licenses in accordance with statutory requirements. This skill is essential for maintaining the integrity of the licensure process and upholding professional standards.

7. **Technical Proficiency and Adaptability:** As the agency continues to modernize systems and implement new technologies, employees must be comfortable using digital tools, adapting to system changes, and participating in cross-training to support multiple functional areas.
8. **Knowledge Transfer and Succession Readiness:** Employees must actively participate in knowledge-sharing practices to preserve institutional knowledge. This includes mentoring, cross-training, and supporting transition efforts, such as shadowing new hires, to ensure continuity of operations.

ECPTOTE recognizes the importance of continuously developing these critical workforce skills to support operational effectiveness, adapt to evolving technological demands, and ensure long-term organizational sustainability. Through ongoing training, cross-training, and succession planning efforts, the agency will maintain a workforce capable of meeting current and future needs while delivering high-quality services to stakeholders.

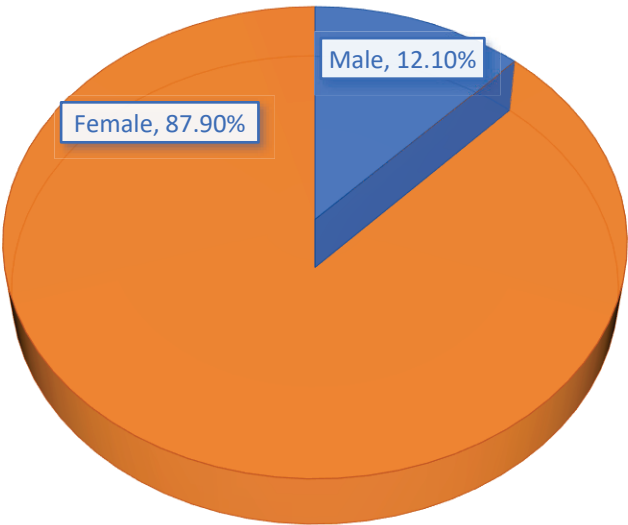
B. Workforce Demographics

The agency's workforce reflects a relatively experienced staff with a broad mix of age groups and tenure levels. Approximately 69.7 percent of employees are age 40 or older, reflecting a workforce with significant experience and tenure, while other staff are in earlier career stages, contributing to a balanced and diverse workforce.

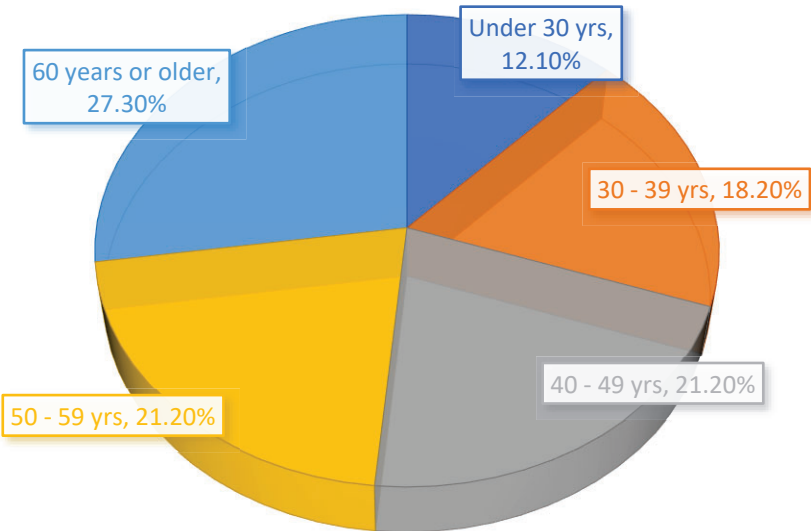
This distribution highlights both the depth of institutional knowledge within the agency and the presence of developing staff who can be prepared for future roles. The combination of experienced employees and newer staff supports operational stability while creating opportunities for growth and development.

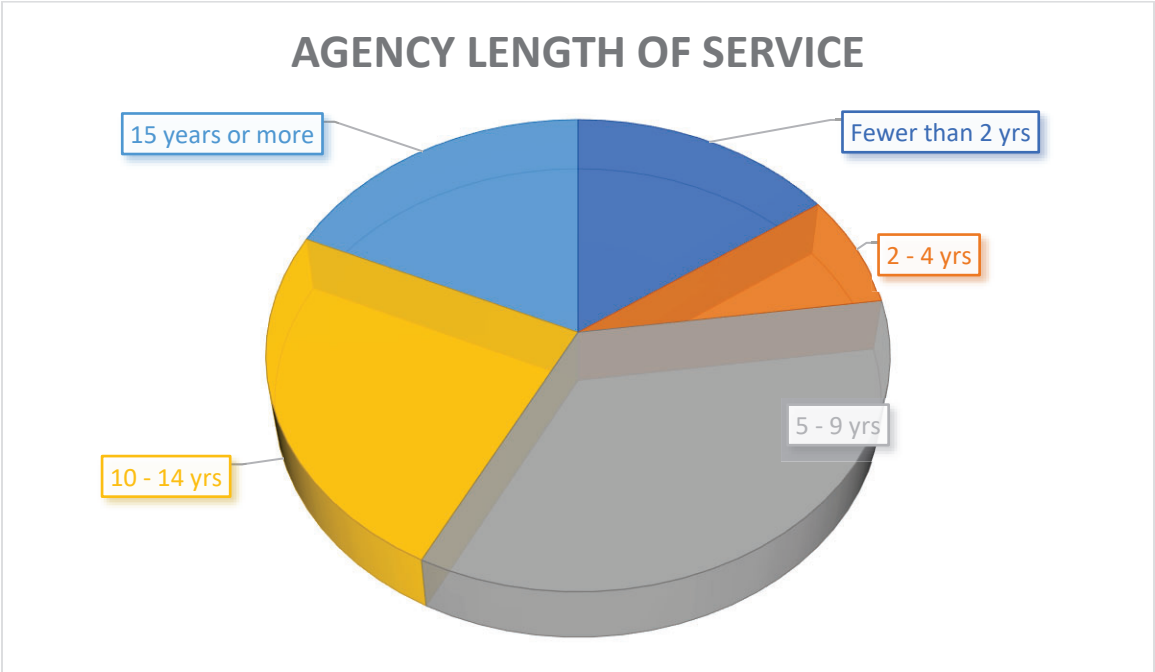
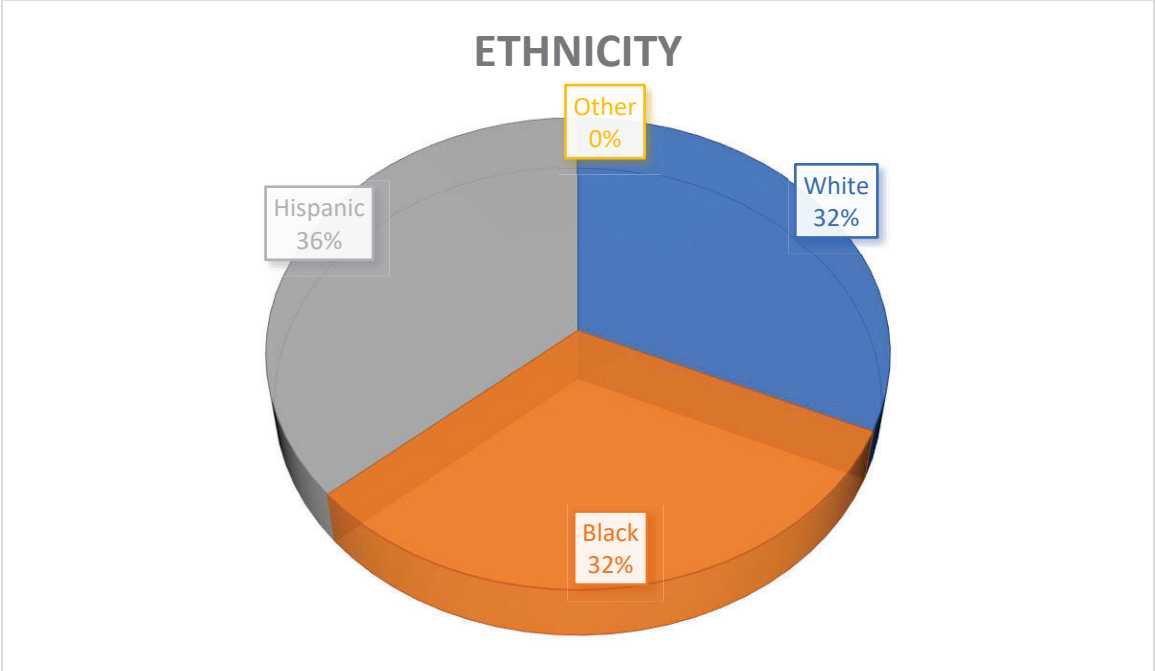
This demographic profile highlights the importance of succession planning and knowledge transfer. As more experienced employees become eligible for retirement over time, the agency must ensure that critical knowledge, skills, and responsibilities are effectively shared with newer staff. Through cross-training, mentorship, and proactive hiring strategies such as shadowing, the agency can maintain continuity of operations while supporting long-term workforce sustainability.

GENDER



AGE





C. Employee Turnover

Excluding interagency transfers, the agency's turnover rate was 12.1 percent in fiscal year 2024. This rate was lower than the statewide average of 16.5 percent but higher than the turnover rate for Article VIII and Self-Directed, Semi-Independent (SDSI) agencies, which was 10.0 percent. Continued emphasis on employee engagement, professional development, and workplace wellness contributes to maintaining stable retention rates. The agency will continue to monitor turnover trends and adapt strategies to support workforce stability.

D. Retirement Eligibility

Workforce demographics indicate that a meaningful segment of the agency's staff is at or nearing retirement eligibility. Notably, a significant portion of employees have long tenures with the agency, with an average length of service of approximately 9.9 years, reflecting a deeply experienced workforce.

Additionally, a review of years-of-service and retirement eligibility criteria shows that a number of employees are either currently eligible or will become eligible to retire within the next 3–5 years. This concentration of tenure and eligibility suggests the potential for increased retirements in the near future.

This trend underscores the importance of proactive succession planning, including identifying critical roles, preparing internal candidates for advancement, and implementing structured knowledge transfer efforts. These actions will help ensure continuity of operations and preserve institutional expertise as workforce transitions occur.

E. Veterans Employed

In fiscal year 2024, the agency's percentage of veterans employed was 15.0 percent, exceeding the statewide average and demonstrating continued progress toward the statewide goal of 20.0 percent. This represents an increase from prior years and reflects the agency's ongoing commitment to recruiting and retaining veterans.

III. Future Workforce Profile (Demand Analysis)

To effectively manage the agency's workload, ECPTOTE must proactively plan for changes in staff and leadership while continuing to advance technological integration across all operations. With an average employee tenure of approximately 9.9 years, the agency benefits from a highly experienced workforce with deep institutional knowledge. At the same time, this concentration of long-tenured employees indicates a potential for increased retirements in the coming years.

As a result, workforce planning efforts must emphasize continuity, succession planning, and knowledge transfer. These efforts will require comprehensive training programs, cross-training opportunities, and the development of standardized procedures to ensure seamless transitions and ongoing operational stability.

A key priority is preparing for anticipated workforce changes driven by retirements and turnover trends. The agency will focus on developing internal talent to assume critical roles while also

strategically recruiting qualified candidates with the technical skills needed to support evolving systems and processes. When feasible, hiring ahead of anticipated departures will allow for shadowing and hands-on training, ensuring the transfer and retention of institutional knowledge.

Equally important is the continued development and retention of a skilled, adaptable workforce capable of taking on expanded responsibilities, including supervisory and management roles. This will involve ongoing professional development, targeted training in emerging technologies, and fostering a culture of continuous learning.

Central to this approach is cultivating a workforce that demonstrates accountability, initiative, and alignment with agency goals. By prioritizing these attributes in both current and prospective employees, ECPTOTE can maintain operational continuity, strengthen succession pipelines, and support long-term, sustainable growth.

A. Critical Functions

To ensure the agency's continued ability to meet its workload demands, ECPTOTE must engage in strategic planning that addresses workforce trends, succession needs, and ongoing technological advancement. With an average employee tenure of approximately 9.9 years, the agency has a workforce with substantial experience and deep institutional knowledge. Additionally, a number of employees are either currently eligible or will become eligible for retirement within the next several years, signaling the potential for increased turnover.

As a result, it is essential to proactively plan for retirements, turnover, and the preservation of institutional knowledge. This includes a coordinated effort to modernize the agency's I.T. infrastructure while equipping staff with the tools and training necessary to adapt to evolving systems and processes.

A primary challenge is developing and retaining skilled personnel capable of assuming increased responsibilities and leadership roles. This requires the recruitment and retention of technically proficient staff, as well as continuous professional development to ensure employees can effectively support new technologies and operational demands. Cross-training and knowledge sharing will be critical to maintain operational flexibility and continuity.

Succession planning plays a vital role in preserving institutional knowledge and preparing staff for advancement. When feasible and budget allows, the agency will implement proactive hiring strategies that allow new employees to shadow departing staff. This approach supports hands-on training, strengthens knowledge transfer, and ensures smoother transitions in critical roles.

The agency's modernization efforts are focused on enhancing operational efficiency and service delivery. This includes implementing upgraded call center software and hardware to improve customer service, support data collection, and strengthen performance evaluation capabilities within the licensing department. These tools will provide improved tracking of call metrics, workflow trends, and service demands to better inform decision-making and resource allocation.

Additional efforts include refining workflows to strengthen continuity of operations planning and expanding remote work capabilities. These improvements will enhance operational flexibility, improve communication and task management, and ensure the agency can maintain critical functions

during emergencies or disruptions while continuing to deliver efficient and effective licensing services.

B. Expected Workforce Changes

Ongoing and progressive technological advancements to modernize and streamline work processes will continue to reshape how many job functions are performed. As the agency implements new systems and tools, employees will need to adapt by developing enhanced technical competencies and flexibility in their roles. Cross training across functional areas will be essential to support operational continuity, promote knowledge sharing, and ensure the retention of institutional knowledge, particularly as the agency prepares for anticipated retirements and workforce transitions.

C. Anticipated Increase/Decrease in Number of Employees Needed to Do the Work

The agency's ability to attract and retain qualified staff may be impacted by external factors such as cost of living increases and market competition. While the agency's turnover rate remains relatively stable compared to statewide trends, competition from other state agencies and the private sector continues to present challenges that could affect staffing levels and workforce continuity.

At the same time, the agency's workforce demographics reflect a highly experienced staff, with an average length of service of approximately 9.9 years. This level of tenure indicates a concentration of institutional knowledge but also suggests the potential for increased retirements and normal workforce transitions in the coming years.

As a result, these factors may create additional staffing needs in the near future and may require the agency to maintain or modestly increase staffing levels to ensure continuity of operations and effective workload management.

To address these challenges, the agency will continue to strengthen its recruitment and retention strategies through professional development opportunities, cross-training, and initiatives that support employee engagement and work-life balance. Additionally, succession planning and proactive hiring practices such as hiring ahead of anticipated departures to allow for shadowing and knowledge transfer will be critical in maintaining adequate staffing levels and preserving institutional knowledge.

The agency will also continue to evaluate its full-time equivalent (FTE) needs to ensure alignment with workload demands and evolving priorities. Advances in technology and process improvements may help offset some staffing pressures by increasing efficiency; however, a flexible and adaptive workforce strategy will remain essential to meeting the agency's operational needs.

D. Future Workforce Skills Needed

ECPTOTE relies on a competent and knowledgeable staff to meet its mission and adapt to evolving workforce demands. In addition to core competencies, the following skills are essential for the agency's future workforce:

- Ability to set goals and align individual performance with agency objectives.
- Self-directedness and the ability to work independently while adapting to changing priorities.

- Strong sense of ownership and accountability within established agency guidelines.
- Technical proficiency and the ability to adapt to an increasingly technology-driven environment, including the use of new systems and tools.
- Flexibility and willingness to participate in cross-training to support multiple functional areas.
- Knowledge-sharing and collaboration skills to support the transfer and retention of institutional knowledge.
- Leadership and developmental skills to support succession planning and prepare employees for future supervisory and management roles.
- Adaptability and continuous learning mindset to keep pace with technological advancements, process improvements, and changing workforce expectations.

These skills will be critical in supporting operational continuity, adapting to technological advancements, and ensuring a smooth transition of responsibilities as the agency prepares for future workforce changes.

IV. Gap Analysis

Recruitment and retention of staff continues to present a challenge for the agency, particularly given competition from other state agencies and the private sector, as well as rising cost of living in the Austin metropolitan area. These factors impact the agency's ability to attract and retain highly qualified candidates and may contribute to workforce turnover and staffing gaps. Additionally, the agency's workforce demographics—characterized by a high proportion of experienced staff, with approximately 69.7 percent of employees age 40 or older—highlight the need to prepare for future retirements and ensure continuity of operations through effective succession planning and knowledge transfer.

Strategy Development

To address the gap between the current workforce and future needs, the agency has identified key strategic goals focused on workforce development, retention, and operational flexibility. These strategies are informed by workforce data, anticipated retirements, and the increasing need for technical proficiency and adaptability in a more technology-driven environment.

Gap 1

The agency faces challenges in recruiting and retaining staff with the technical skills and competencies necessary to support evolving business processes and technology systems.

Goal 1

Develop a highly skilled, adaptable workforce capable of meeting current and future operational demands.

Rationale 1:

Ongoing training and development are essential to maintaining agency effectiveness. Emphasis will be placed on enhancing the skills of existing staff, supporting career progression, and ensuring employees are prepared to adapt to new technologies and expanded responsibilities.

Action Steps 1:

1. Identify Training Opportunities:

- Assess critical workforce skills needed to support agency functions, including emerging technology competencies.
- Implement targeted training programs and continuously update them to align with operational needs.
- Continuously evaluate and update training offerings to reflect operational and technological changes.

2. Internal Development:

- Establish clear career pathways to prepare staff for advancement and leadership roles.
- Provide mentorship and coaching opportunities to support employee growth and readiness.
- Expand cross-training initiatives to increase workforce flexibility and knowledge transfer.

3. Collaboration and Communication:

- Promote knowledge-sharing practices to capture and retain institutional knowledge.
- Partner with other agencies and organizations to share best practices and resources.
- Facilitate regular meetings, workshops, and collaborative sessions to strengthen communication.

Gap 2

The agency continues to face challenges in attracting and retaining qualified employees in a competitive labor market.

Goal 2

Strengthen the agency's ability to attract, develop, and retain a high-quality workforce.

Rationale 2:

Maintaining a competitive and supportive work environment is essential to retaining talent. The agency will focus on employee engagement, professional development, and workplace wellness to support long-term retention and workforce stability.

Action Steps 2:

1. Wellness and Work-Life Balance:

- Promote policies and initiatives that support employee health and well-being.
- Encourage flexible work arrangements where feasible to improve work-life balance.
- Provide resources for stress management and mental health support.

2. Offer Development Opportunities:

- Offer training programs, certifications, and learning opportunities to enhance skills.
- Provide opportunities for employees to participate in special projects or assignments.
- Encourage cross-training to broaden skill sets and support career growth.

3. Develop Succession Plans:

- Identify critical positions and develop succession plans for each role.
- Prepare internal candidates through targeted training and leadership development.
- When feasible, hire ahead of departures to allow shadowing and effective knowledge transfer.

Gap 3:

Certain positions, particularly within the licensing department, face limitations in telecommuting, which may affect operational flexibility and continuity.

Goal 3:

Enhance operational flexibility and continuity through expanded telecommuting capabilities and technology integration.

Rationale:

Strengthening telecommuting capabilities supports continuity of operations and ensures consistent service delivery, particularly during emergencies or disruptions. Increased use of

technology, including AI tools, will further enhance efficiency, data analysis, and decision-making.

Action Steps:

1. Telecommuting Expansion:

- Assess roles to determine current and future telecommuting eligibility.
- Update policies and procedures to support remote work and operational needs.
- Provide training on remote systems, cybersecurity, and compliance requirements.

2. Paperless Environment:

- Implement digital document management systems to support remote workflows.
- Transition licensing processes to electronic formats to improve efficiency.
- Promote secure digital communication and document-sharing practices.

3. Technology and AI Utilization:

- Identify and implement AI tools to support data analysis and workflow efficiency.
- Train staff on the effective and compliant use of AI and emerging technologies.
- Continuously evaluate technology solutions to enhance decision-making and operations.

Schedule G: Workforce Development System Strategic Planning (not applicable)

Schedule H: Report on Customer Service

Executive Council of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Examiners Report on Customer Service March 2024 – March 2026

Overview

The Executive Council of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Examiners (ECPTOTE) maintains a commitment to delivering exceptional customer service across all stakeholders.

External Customer Inventory