

APPENDIX F
Strategic Plan

WORKFORCE PLAN

Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists **May 2008**

Overview

History:

The Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists was created by the Psychologists' Licensing Act passed by the Texas Legislature in 1969.

Mission:

The mission of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists is to protect the public by ensuring that psychological services are provided to the people of Texas by qualified and competent practitioners who adhere to established professional standards.

The Board accomplishes this mission through its regulation of the practice of psychology by:

- ❑ Establishing educational, experience, and examination requirements;
- ❑ Adopting professional standards for the practice of psychology;
- ❑ Investigating and enforcing compliance with the requirements of the Act, rules, and regulations of the Board; and
- ❑ Serving as a source of information to the public, the profession, and governmental entities.

Goals and Objectives:

Licensure:

Objective: To ensure that practitioners meet required competency standards for the practice of psychology.

Strategy: To operate a quality licensure program through an efficient and cost effective program of licensure, including education, experience, and examination requirements, continuing education requirements and renewal requirements.

Enforcement and Laws and Rules:

Objective: to ensure that all practitioners comply with established law and rules.

Strategy: Operate a quality investigations/enforcement program in response to complaints concerning psychological practice consistent with the due process laws of Texas, in a timely manner and with a focus during enforcement on rehabilitation of the psychological provider.

Historically Underutilized Business:

Objective: to make a good faith effort to increase government purchases in HUB categories awarded annually in each fiscal year.

Strategy: Develop and implement a plan for increasing the use of HUBs.

Business Functions:

The Psychology Board is charged with regulating the practice of psychology in the State of Texas. The Board reviews applications for licensure in accordance with the Psychologists' Licensing Act and the Board rules and policies. The Board administers the Jurisprudence Examination and the Oral Examination and approves applicants to sit for the national psychology examination, the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology. Four types of licensure are available: psychological associate, psychologist, provisionally licensed psychologist, and specialist in school psychology. The Board issues approximately 540 new licenses per year.

The Board investigates complaints and resolves them either by dismissal or disciplinary action. Disciplinary action ranging from reprimand to revocation is usually attained by agreed order. On average, the Board resolves approximately 190 complaints per year.

The Board is mandated to have a website and to produce an annual roster of licensees. The Board provides information about licensees to various segments of the public including insurance companies and health maintenance organizations as well as individual consumers. The agency's website has become its primary means of conveying information to its licensees as well as to all other entities seeking information about the Board and its operations.

Anticipated Changes to Mission, Strategies, and Goals for the Next Five Years:

The Psychology Board anticipates no changes to its mission, strategies, and goals for the next five years. However, the agency does expect to undergo some changes in the next five years that will affect its workforce. These are listed under the following heading.

Additional Considerations:

The following factors are expected to result in some changes at the agency in the next few years.

Key Economic, Environmental, and Other Factors:

The key factors facing the Psychology Board are:

- Potential for staff turnover due to low staff salaries;
- Across-the-board state salary increases do not keep up with the cost of living increases;
- The Legislature and other state entities mandating additional duties for the agency;

- ❑ The increasing need for more mental health practitioners because of increasing population of Texas;
- ❑ The Board's dedication to timely and efficient services and its willingness to continually change processes to achieve this goal;
- ❑ Technology increasingly used by the agency and other entities with which the agency interfaces;
- ❑ The economic forecast for the state predicts more persons retiring, and an economy that is slowed but still better than that of the nation;
- ❑ Customers demanding more timely services and greater access to information;
- ❑ Cut-back in federal funding for various programs resulting in the need for the state to devote its surplus to high priority items like transportation, criminal justice and social services;
- ❑ Static funding for state agencies not identified as top priorities for state funding.
- ❑ The Board's desire to take action to improve its business continuity preparations when faced with a disaster.
- ❑ Expanding the Board's dedication to protecting the public by obtaining FBI fingerprint criminal record checks on all licensees.

Organization and Structure of Board:

The Psychology Board's 12.5 FTEs are divided into the Licensing, Enforcement, Legal and Administrative Divisions. The agency regained ½ FTE in the 80th Legislative Session. The agency lost two FTEs because of budget cutbacks in the 79th Legislative Session. (See attached Organizational Chart.)

Supply Analysis

Current Workforce Analysis

Classified, Exempt, and Temporary Workers

The Psychology Board has a total of 11.5 classified positions and one exempt position. As of March 2008, all 11.5 positions were filled. In fiscal year 2005, the agency had 7% turnover of staff. In fiscal year 2006, there was 8% turnover. In fiscal year 2007 there was 0% turnover.

Salary Budget

Fiscal Year 2007	\$467,387 FTE Salaries	0 Temporary
Fiscal Year 2008	\$505,523 FTE Salaries	0 Temporary

Location

All employees work in the agency's one location in Austin: William P. Hobby Building.

Retirement

One staff person is eligible for retirement. One former staff person retired from this agency.

Diversity

The workforce diversity for the agency is:

- Gender: 2 men, 11 women
- Race: 11 Caucasian, 2 Hispanic
- Age: under 30=1; 30-39=1; 40-49=6; 50+=5
- Tenure: Less than 1 year = 1
 - 1 year or more but less than 3 years = 1
 - 3 years or more but less than 5 years= 1
 - 5 years or more but less than 10 years= 4
 - 10 years or more but less than 15 years = 1
 - 15 years or more but less than 20 years = 5

Projected Attrition Rate

It is expected that one staff person will retire within the next three years. Also, staff may leave for higher paying positions.

Workforce Trend Analysis

Turnover

FY 2004	17.4%
FY 2005	7%
FY 2006	8%
FY 2007	0%

The agency is not experiencing the high turnover that it had in FY 2001 where it had over 66% turnover in staff.

Retirement

No person has retired from the agency in the last 14 years.

Hiring Patterns

FY 2005	1 position, vacant for 1 month
FY 2006	1 position, vacant for 3 months
FY 2007	no vacancies

Past vacancies occurred in the Licensing and Legal divisions involving the following positions: Administrative Assistant I and General Counsel I.

Skill Assessment of Employees

All agency staff must have customer service skills since all staff interface with the public by phone, correspondence, fax, and some e-mail.

1. Executive Director

College degree in English, social sciences, or other appropriate. Communication and organization skills. Develops required agency reports, form letters, forms. Multi-tasking. Ability to supervise diverse functions of agency. Supervision experience. Extensive knowledge of state government, including legislative, accounting, human resources, administrative hearings, etc. Knowledge of health licensing activities and responsibilities.

2. Executive Assistant

College degree in English, social sciences, or other appropriate. Communication and organization skills. Drafts original correspondence regarding licensing, ethical practice and administrative matters. Responds orally to inquiries. Word processing skills. Maintains extensive paper and electronic administrative files. Multi-tasking ability.

3. Accountant/Information Resource Manager

College degree in accounting, knowledge of all state automated functions and accounting requirements, including payroll and purchasing. Knowledge and experience in financial reporting including AFR and LAR. This person also serves as the agency information resource manager. Knowledge of agency licensing and enforcement database and cash processing functions. Interface with contracted programmer for the system.

4. Investigator/Enforcement Manager

College degree in English, law, etc. Ability to read legal documents including court transcripts, ability to write concise reports based on investigation of documents and personal interviews, ability to make recommendations for complaint resolution based on evidence collected. Communication and interviewing skills. Ability to supervise three staff.

5. Investigator III/Renewal Coordinator

College degree in English, law, etc. Ability to read legal documents including court transcripts, ability to write concise reports based on investigation of documents and personal interviews, ability to make recommendations for complaint resolution based on evidence collected. Communication and interviewing skills. This position also serves as Renewal Coordinator. Organization skills. Data entry and electronic cash batching. Ability to create and maintain extensive paper and electronic files. Ability to review renewal and continuing education forms in compliance with rules and policies.

6. Investigator III/Compliance Officer (Part-time)

College degree in English, law, etc. Ability to read legal documents, ability to write concise reports based on investigation of agency records and other documents, ability to make recommendations for complaint resolution based on evidence collected. Communication skills. This person serves as the compliance officer for licensees fulfilling agreed orders.

7. Enforcement Assistant

High school degree. Ability to generate form letters, to maintain detailed calendars of time sensitive activities, ability to maintain extensive paper files, ability to data enter

information on enforcement database, ability to compile notebooks of complaint materials and reports for meetings. Ability to provide information by phone.

8. Attorney/ General Counsel

Licensed attorney in Texas. Knowledge of Texas Public Information Act, Texas Open Meetings Act, Administrative Code, and other state laws. Experience with health licensing agencies enforcement and licensing activities. Communication skills. Ability to supervise an assistant.

9. Legal Assistant/Open Records Clerk/Accounting Assistant

High school education. Ability to perform detailed record keeping electronically and in paper format. Ability to summarize board and committee meetings. Knowledge of desktop publishing. Ability to submit rules electronically in accordance with Texas Register requirements. Communication skills. This person also serves as accounting assistant. Ability to perform state agency accounting procedures for leave accounting, payroll, and purchasing. Ability to use 10-key by touch. Experience in office setting. Ability to perform daily batching activities. Ability to provide basic information by phone and to route calls. Ability to use copier/FAX and to assemble application packets.

10. Licensing Manager

Two years of college in business, social sciences, or other appropriate field. Communication and organization skills. Data entry and electronic cash batching. Ability to create and maintain paper files. Ability to review applications in compliance with rules and policies. Ability to organize administration of oral examination. Ability to supervise four staff.

11. Licensing Coordinator of PLPs and LPAs.

Two years of college in business, social sciences, or other appropriate field. Communication and organization skills. Data entry and electronic cash batching. Ability to create and maintain extensive paper and electronic files. Ability to review applications in compliance with rules and policies. Ability to assist in coordination of oral examination.

12. Licensing Coordinator LSSPs/ Renewal Coordinator

Two years of college in business, social sciences, or other appropriate field. Communication and organization skills. Data entry and electronic cash batching. Ability to create and maintain extensive paper and electronic files. Ability to review applications in compliance with rules and policies. Ability to assist in administration of jurisprudence examination including mail out and grading. Ability to process renewals for LSSPs.

13. Front Desk Person

High school education. Ability to open and sort daily mail and receipt of fees. Ability to provide basic information by phone and route calls. Ability to use copier and FAX. Ability to maintain application requests. Limited data entry and information lookup on database.

Organizational Chart
(Attached)

Future Workforce Skills

- Future skills for agency staff will include increased use of technology and interface with technology to provide services.
- All staff will need ongoing training in computer security and instruction on how to avoid computer viruses.
- Staff will need on-going training in written communication in order to converse through e-mail, rather than form letters.
- Customer service skills will continue to be a high priority for all staff.
- All staff need periodic training in risk management, including business continuity and disaster recovery.
- All staff need periodic training in wellness training and emergency resuscitation.

Demand Analysis

There will be changes to the Psychology Board's workforce functions in the next few years. Generally, these changes will be caused by the following factors.

- A. The trend of the Legislature and other entities to place new mandates on the agency which increases the workload on staff.
- B. The current and projected need for more mental health practitioners, exponentially increased by the projected increase of the total population.
- C. The Board's dedication to timely and efficient services results in frequent changes to Board rules and policies.
- D. Online services, including online renewal and minimum data set information about licensees, resulting in more diverse staff duties and increased use of technology to deliver services.
- E. Turnover of staff caused by low staff salaries.
- F. Antiquated computer system.

A. Increasing Mandates from the Legislature and Other Entities Increase Staff Workload and the Complexity of Staff Duties

New requirements from the Legislature, the Governor's Office, and from other state agencies have increased the number of reports, surveys, and records that the Board is required to complete and/or maintain. Also, these mandates frequently require more staff training and they increase the workload on the staff. Staff have less time to meet pre-existing goals and strategies and such goals and strategies may become more complex due to such mandates.

Additional Staff Responsibilities Caused by New, Expanded or Revised Reports and Surveys

The agency now has to submit a fraud report, a risk management report, and open record reports, to name but a few. It regularly complies with surveys for classification audits. Recently, it completed extensive surveys on the agency's authority and procedures to obtain criminal history records and justifications for the exempt salary. It also completes frequent surveys and reports for the Department of Information Resources. Generally, the number of ad hoc reports has increased from many sources. Recently the Board was required to participate in a Business Process Review survey developed by the Governor's Office.

Also, many existing reports have been expanded to obtain even more detailed information or the format of the reports have been changed requiring previous information to be reported differently.

The 80th Legislature required that all agencies have a Business Continuity Plan to ensure that all essential services can be continued in the case of a disaster. Fortunately, the Board already had this plan but it endeavors to update it as more information is available concerning disaster prevention and disaster recovery.

New Staff Required to Meet New Mandate

Most notable is the Board's new mandate to obtain quarterly criminal history records on all of its licensees from the Texas Department of Public Safety's criminal history record database. This significant new responsibility for the agency resulted in the necessity of reviewing hundreds of professional files to determine if prior criminal records have been reported to the Board by the licensees. Unreported criminal records of licensees will result in the opening of complaints against them. The Board through its investigation may take disciplinary action against the licensee not only for failure to report the criminal action but also for the criminal action if it directly affects the practice of psychology.

This new responsibility has resulted in an increased number of complaints to be resolved in fiscal years 2007 and 2008. The Board received an additional ½ FTE Investigator position to assist the Enforcement Division with these added duties.

New Training Required

Annual training is now required for state purchasers and information resource managers. Additionally, new Board members are required to have training in open records and open meetings regardless of any previous training they may have had on these topics.

The 80th Legislature passed legislation to require that state agencies have specific ethics guidelines which all employees are required to adhere to.

Increasingly Complex Accounting Duties

The Accountant's duties have increased exponentially in recent years because of the many "hats" that she has to wear for the agency and the mandated annual training that is required for these different responsibilities. The Psychology Board's one Accountant

serves as human resource coordinator, purchaser, information resource manager, as well as the fiscal manager for the agency. Also, accounting functions for the agency have become more complex as more reports are required to be submitted online using different types of software, such as for purchasing and performance measures.

The Legislature, in its efforts to secure new funding for the state, has created many types of new funding initiatives that require new and complex types of accounting by the state agencies. Additionally, changes in the agency's budget structure require significant more work for the agency. For example, for the 2006-2007 biennium one indirect cost administration strategy was added for each existing direct cost strategy, in effect "doubling" the number of strategies the agency had to account for when budgeting and when accounting for expenditures. However, the structure for the 2008-2009 biennium has changed to having only one indirect cost structure, in effect, requiring the agency to restructure its budgeting. The reasons for such changes are not clear but they require time and effort on the part of the agency's one accountant.

Moreover, in order to conserve Board funds and to make up for short falls of appropriated receipts (part of the Board's base funding) in recent years the agency established an interagency contract with the Texas Funeral Service Commission to provide that agency with certain accounting services. This allowed that agency to reduce its FTEs by one.

B. Need for More Psychologists as Texas Population Increases

The demand and need for additional psychologists continues, and 2005 statistics from the Texas Department of Health indicate that there is a shortage of psychologists in the state.

The National Institute of Mental Health states that there are 44.3 million Americans suffering from a diagnosable mental health disorder. Untreated mental health disorders create huge costs for business and the economy with an estimated \$312 billion annually lost in productivity and absenteeism due to untreated mental health disorders.

In comparison, the population of Texas is projected to increase from 19,385,693 in 1998 to 23,624,150 in 2008, or a 17.9% increase. The Texas Workforce Commission forecasts that the number of psychologists will increase by 12%, from 7,500 to 8,400 during this same period. This number of psychologists includes the number of licensed psychologists as well as persons who work in exempt facilities (government and higher education) who are not required to be licensed. Currently, the Psychology Board has approximately 7,190 licensees.

However, from fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2007, the Board increased the number of persons who are licensed to provide psychological services in this state by 31.5%. During the same time period it increased the total number of licenses by 14.8%. During the last two fiscal years it issued 29% more new licenses than it did in the previous two fiscal years.

This demand and projected need for more mental health practitioners means that the number of licenses issued annually by this agency will continue at its present levels and/or increase for the next five years. Current staffing numbers in licensing and enforcement must be at least maintained in order to continue to meet basic Board goals and strategies.

Additionally, in order to encourage more psychologists to move to Texas, the Psychology Board has reviewed its rules and eliminated many of the impediments to licensure for licensed psychologists from other states who are experienced and have had no disciplinary action. Such rule changes encourage more out-of-state psychologists to relocate to Texas and have contributed to the increase in the number of new licenses issued in the last two years.

C. Frequent Updates to Rules, Policies, and Procedures

The Psychology Board is committed to providing timely services to customers and therefore continually reviews and updates its rules, policies, and procedures, to eliminate unnecessary requirements for licensure and unneeded steps in the investigation and resolution of complaints. By such changes, the Board is also requiring its staff to become more efficient in its duties.

Licensing Changes

While the Board had previously made headway in streamlining licensing processes for individuals licensed in other states, act changes required by the Board's Sunset legislation, HB 1015, passed by the 79th Legislature, resulted in even more streamlining. For this type of applicant, there is less documentation of supervised experience required. Also, certain applicants with national professional organization credentials are deemed to have met selected licensing requirements.

Enforcement Changes

The Board continues to change its enforcement processes to give more leeway to staff in reaching settlement offers on complaints for relatively minor infractions. By eliminating the requirement to go to an informal settlement conference for this type of complaint, the agency is saving staff time and resolving complaints in a timelier manner. Also, this will allow the agency to devote its limited resources to the more serious and complex complaints.

Additionally, the agency in its rule reviews has revised many enforcement rules to clarify intent and assist the Board in obtaining disciplinary action against licensees who violate the rules. Such clarification continues in the Board's current rule review especially in the area of forensic psychological services. The Board believes that such clarification will aid in reducing the number of complaints that the Board receives that concern forensic services.

D. Online services, increased use of technology, change in vendor for database maintenance, and minimum data set of licensees for the public.

Online Renewal

The Board is now one of many agencies that provides its licensees the opportunity for online annual renewal of their licenses through the TexasOnline system. Currently 80% of renewals occur online. To further facilitate cost savings, the agency no longer sends out paper renewal forms to licensees, but instead renewal reminder postcards.

Online renewals have provided enhanced convenience for the licensees and has saved staff time. However, additional duties for agency staff were incurred by the online services including interface with the vendor for online services, new accounting requirements, new cash processing requirements, reconciliation activities, and providing information by phone as well as in various paper formats about this optional online service for licensees.

Agency Exempted from Mandated Online Applications

The Department of Information Services and the TexasOnline Authority determined that the agency did not meet their minimum threshold of new licenses issued per year to make online applications cost effective. However, the Board placed all of its applications for licensure and supporting materials on its own website, and they are now available for free download, thereby cutting down on the wait time for applicants to receive application materials by mail.

Increased Use of Technology by Licensing Staff

Transformation of paper renewals to online renewal requires the licensing staff to use their computers more frequently and in different ways. However, the use of computers is already an integral part of licensing activities since the agency has a licensing database with cash processing capabilities.

Another factor contributing to the increased usage of computers by licensing staff is the agency's imaging system shared with members of the Health Professions Council. Licensing staff image their documents and retrieve them electronically. Recent enhancements to the original system have made it more efficient and user friendly and these in turn have allowed the staff to make significant progress in imaging its backlog of documents.

All staff require on-going training in computer security and ways in which to avoid computer viruses and to prevent hacking into agency computers.

Writing skills for licensing staff have not been an issue to date since the majority of written correspondence is via form letters. However, as e-mail becomes a more frequent means of communication, the ability to write concisely and clearly will become an important skill for licensing staff. Current funding levels for this agency do not allow it to reclassify its licensing positions at levels that would allow it to make written skills a prerequisite.

Change in Vendor for Database Maintenance

The Department of Information Services awarded the statewide contract for information technology to IBM. Maintenance of the Board's RAES computer system is such a small item in the large contract that IBM has subcontracted it to a local vendor, Abdeladim and Associates. This entity will provide the programming services that the Board needs as they occur. As before, the Board must pay for any new programming needed on its in-house licensing/enforcement/cash processing system through this contracted vendor.

This change over occurred September 1, 2007. To date the transition appears to be smooth and no special programming has been required by the Board.

Minimum Data Set of Licensees for Workforce Analysis

Senate Bill 29 passed by the 80th Texas Legislature requires the Department of Information Resources to create an online system for health professionals licensed by the state of Texas to capture information to be used by the Texas Department of Health in projecting the health professional workforce needs in our state. The Psychology Board along with other health licensing state agencies is required to cooperate with this initiative. This new system is to become a new component of the TexasOnline system. It will contain what is commonly referred to as a minimum data set of standard information about each licensee. This information will primarily be provided by the licensees and will not be verified by the licensing boards. The information will not be available to the public. It is assumed that the collection/updates of the information from the licensees will be a condition for annual renewal.

The efforts to establish this new system are on-going. The Psychology Board does know at this time if it will be required to obtain additional programming to its existing system to allow the many additional fields of information to be captured or if a new across-the-boards database will be established and maintained by the Texas Department of Health. This is one of the many decisions that must be made to implement this new initiative. If additional programming is not known if the agency will require additional funds for this purpose.

E. Potential for Staff Turnover Caused by Low Salaries

The State Auditor reported for fiscal year 2006 that the agency's average salaries were \$7,012 below the average salary for all other Article VIII agencies. The agency's staff salaries are so low that several of the staff have part-time jobs. These are the staff who have the greatest propensity and incentive for seeking higher paying positions. The agency anticipates the potential for turnover to continue in the next biennium.

With the cutback of two of the agency's original 14 staff positions which occurred in 2005, each staff person had to absorb more duties with no salary increase. This makes replacement of any one staff person even more difficult, given the wide variety of skills that are now required for each position.

The Board's General Counsel continues at a low salary level in view of the high level of legal acumen that is required for the position as the agency's one attorney. Because of her skills the Board has only minimal contact and assistance from the Attorney General's Office thereby keeping the indirect service costs for this agency with the AG's Office very low.

The Board's Executive Director salary remains comparatively low when compared to executive director salaries for other small state agencies with fewer FTEs and smaller budgets. Additionally, the experience and tenure of the Executive Director has proved invaluable in maintaining a high level of performance at the agency.

The salaries of classified staff continue to be low. While there are advantages to working at this particular state agency as reflected in such documents as the Survey of Excellence, the salaries are minimal compared to similar positions at other state agencies taking into account the tenure that majority of the staff have with this agency.

F. Antiquated Computer System

The Board is working with several other small regulatory agencies who each have separate antiquated computer licensing systems and DIR to identify a vendor that can supply a common system to replace the individual systems. The common system would have to include customization for each agency to ensure that no efficiency afforded by current antiquated systems is lost.

The goal is to identify the vendor and to estimate the costs and to present these to the 81st Texas Legislature for funding.

The workforce will be directly impacted in working with the selected vendor to ensure the comprehensive implementation of this news system and to secure the required customization. The goal is obtain a system that provides at least the current level of computerized services so that staff will not have to revert to manual operations in any manner. Hopefully, the new system will afford even greater efficiencies.

All staff will have to be trained on the new system.

GAP ANALYSIS

A comparison of the Psychology Board's workforce supply to the agency's workforce demand reveals the agency there is a need for additional staff. In the immediate future it is estimated that the agency requires 1.5 additional staff which would bring it back to its FTE staffing level of 14 in 2004.

Generally, the additional of these new staff would allow the agency to perform its duties more efficiently and use its skilled staff more effectively. It would allow the agency to

cross-train its staff to a higher degree so that staff absences for various types of required leave could be accommodated without a reduction in productivity or timeliness of completion of duties. Moreover, it would allow the agency to take its efforts at obtaining criminal record checks to the final and top tier of obtaining FBI national fingerprint criminal record checks on all licensees of the Board.

- New Part-time Clerk Required: There is need across all areas of the agency for additional clerical support personnel. Because this is such a small state agency, the additional of one half-time FTE clerk could provide support to all areas of the agency. This clerk could free up the time of the agency's professional staff to perform more high-level duties. The clerk could perform routine duties of filing, copying, routing mail, and serving as back-up to the front desk person.

In licensing this clerical position could assist the division with filing, imaging of documents, and routing calls.

- Additional Skills for Licensing Staff: Licensing staff positions already require computer literacy and data-entry skills, however, it is anticipated that licensing staff will have to acquire writing skills in order to communicate frequently by e-mail. Increased use of e-mail could become a necessity because of increasing online services, rather than staff relying on basic form letters and information provided by phone. Requiring such a new skill should be compensated with increased salaries, but the agency has no discretionary appropriations for this purpose.
- Administrative/Fiscal Division: There are enough staff in this division for the next five years. The part-time clerical position would assist this division with copying.
- Legal Division. There is not sufficient staff in this division for the next five years. Currently, the General Counsel has only minimal clerical support. With the addition of the part-time clerical position it is anticipated that some additional skilled clerical support could be provided to the General Counsel by other existing professional staff.

The new part-time Investigator position secured in the 80th Legislative Session will lessen the duties of the General Counsel in regard to compliance efforts, thereby freeing her time to perform other important duties for the agency.

- Full-time Investigator Required: Currently, the agency has been able to implement FBI fingerprint criminal record checks on all applications for licensure beginning in fiscal year 2007. This was accomplished with the addition of the part-time Investigator secured in the 80th Legislative Session.

However, the Board is now ready to begin this type of national record check on all of its current licensees. However, from its experience to date with securing

these records on applicants, the agency now anticipates that to secure these criminal records on all 7,500 licensees, it will require an additional entry-level Investigator. It also anticipates that this process must be phased in over a period of four years.

With the addition of this Investigator position, the agency believes that it will be adequately staffed in enforcement for the next five years.

- The agency's ability to continue to implement new changes and new mandates depends heavily on its retaining its trained, experienced staff. However, the agency anticipates that there is potential for staff turnover as the economy in Texas continues to stay strong.
- The agency awarded no merit salary increases for the last two biennia. However, the agency has been able to forestall some turnover by awarding one-time merits to deserving staff during this and the foregoing two biennia. In this biennium to date there have been no salary increases except for a modest increase in salary for the General Counsel.

Gap Strategy Development

The Psychology Board had its historic 14 FTEs cut in fiscal year 2005 to 12 due to the 5% budget cutback by the 79th Legislature. Therefore, in order to meet the gap between the demands and the supply, as identified in this work plan, the agency had to develop innovative strategies. This gap has been narrowed somewhat by the addition of the ½ FTE Investigator position for the agency by the 80th Legislature.

Gap Strategy: Consolidate Staff, Internally and Externally

After the elimination of two staff positions, the remaining 12 staff had to absorb the duties of the former two positions. This was done without compensatory pay increases for the affected staff.

Additionally, the Board has entered into an interagency contract with the Texas Funeral Service Commission for accounting services, thereby allowing the Commission to reduce its number of FTEs and to conserve funds. This arrangement was possible by the transfer of some of the Accountant's duties to other staff at both agencies.

Such changes have required all agency staff to learn new duties and to perform all duties more efficiently.

Gap Strategy: Succession Planning

Staff Position Books

Each position at the agency has a training manual which includes materials pertinent to that position including policies and procedures, as well as form letters, checklists, etc. Some positions have such complex positions that other procedure manuals serve as the primary position book. These books are invaluable in training a new staff person for the position. These position books are updated and added to as procedures in various areas change.

A new staff position book will be created for the new part-time Investigator position and the duties that this person performs as they are added.

Documentation of Processes:

The Board has extensive policy and procedure manuals. Such written documentation is invaluable in standardization of agency functions, in cross-training staff, and in training new staff.

Extensive Files:

Board administrators maintain document filing systems that allow for training and transition of duties to new staff as they occur. This is true for professional licensing and enforcement complaint files as well as for administrative, fiscal, and personnel files.

Moreover, the agency maintains electronic files for each position, which again assist in the training and transition of duties to new staff as they occur. Agency policy is to retain record copies with electronic file paths so that documents can be easily located in electronic files.

Cross Training of Staff

Staff are provided cross training for other positions within the agency. This is difficult to achieve because of the intricacies of each position, the resulting amount of time required to cross train for another position, and the lack of time available for this purpose. Additionally, staff do not receive any kind of increased salary for cross training in other positions.

Most recently, the Executive Assistant has received training as the back-up Open Records Clerk regarding posting rules and open meetings with the Texas Register. Additionally, the Enforcement Manager and the part-time Investigator have supplemented compliance duties of the General Counsel.

Manager Training

The Executive Director works closely with the managers of the agency to ensure that the agency could continue to function for the length of time required to hire a new Executive Director. The Director also works closely with the Executive Assistant for the agency and with other key staff. Generally, the Executive Assistant serves as the head of the agency in the absence of the Executive Director.

Staff Involvement in Policy Development

Opinions and input are sought from key staff persons before changes are made to rules, policies, and procedures. This allows the agency to make full use of the expertise of staff and facilitates both development and implementation of the changes by investing the staff in the success of the changes.

Gap Strategy: Employee Development

Staff Training

In anticipation of increased use of e-mail by staff, the agency hopes to assist all staff in becoming better writers by sending them to various training opportunities. However, the shortage of staff makes it difficult to allow staff persons to be absent from their position for such training.

All staff are provided with training on computer security and specifically how to avoid computer viruses and to prevent hacking into agency computers. This in-house training is provided by the shared information technology staff of the Health Professions Council (HPC).

Provided that there is no additional cost to the agency and there is no adverse affect on performance, staff are encouraged to learn other aspects of the agency and other skills that would expand or enhance their job-related abilities.

Online training for staff is also available in the areas of sexual harassment, ethics, and open records/open meetings. Additionally, some staff are able to participate in staff training through webinars as coordinated by the HPC for employees of its member agencies.

Gap Strategy: Changes in Organizational Structure

Information Resources

While the HPC consolidated information resources assistance, e.g. website and network maintenance, has assisted the agency, the remainder of on-site information technology for the agency is still provided by the agency's one accountant who serves as the agency's Information Resources Manager. Also, she is the liaison with the contracted programmer for the agency's licensing/enforcement database. She upholds these duties, at the same time that her fiscal duties are expanding as state accounting becomes more complex and demanding.

Fiscal Resources

As previously mentioned, the Psychology Board's accountant also serves as the accountant for the Texas Funeral Service Commission.

Enforcement and Licensing:

Responding to cutbacks in FTEs, the agency converted one licensing position to a ½ time investigator and ½ time licensing position. This meant that the agency reduced its

investigator position by ½. However, this shortage of personnel has been somewhat alleviated by the addition of a ½ investigator position approved by the 80th Legislature for this agency.

Gap Strategy: Retention of Staff

The agency increases its ability to retain qualified staff through the following agency policies that are highly regarded by the staff.

Empowering of Staff

In adherence to a previous recommendation by the State Auditor for this agency, the Psychology Board empowers its staff in both licensing and enforcement activities. Besides such benefits as improving performance measures, providing more timely services to its customers, and conserving staff resources, empowering staff also provides staff satisfaction and invests them in the processes and products that the agency provides.

For example, the General Counsel has been empowered to offer agreed orders to first time offenders when certain conditions are met without holding an informal settlement conference. Also, the Enforcement Manager dismisses complaints against licensees who fail to submit required continuing education provided that they pay a penalty fee.

The Executive Assistant issues temporary licenses to out-of-state licensed psychologists who request to practice in the state for a period of less than 30 days per year.

Flexitime

The Psychology Board provides flexitime for some positions. However, at small state agencies flexitime is inherently limited because the office must remain open and provide services from 8 to 5 weekdays. Therefore, not all staff positions can have the option of flexitime. Staff are informed of the availability of flexitime before they are hired.

Additionally, staff who must acquire second jobs are given some leeway in their work hours to accommodate those second jobs when possible.

Gap Strategy: Conservation of Resources

Enhanced Use of Board Website

No single change has allowed the agency to conserve resources more than the transformation of several agency paper publications to online versions on the agency's website. These include the annual roster of licensees and the biannual newsletter. The agency's website also has important links for licensees to TexasOnline services. Also, all applications for licensure are downloadable at no cost from the agency's website.

Increased Use of Technology

In recent years the Psychology Board has invested in up-to-date computer equipment and ancillary office machines, thereby best utilizing its limited staff. Additional funding

secured from the 80th Texas Legislature for the 2008-2009 biennium will allow the agency to adhere to its planned schedule for replacing computers and printers.

Additionally, the agency plans to request additional funds from the 81st Legislature to purchase three laptop computers and printers to allow key staff to work from their homes in the case of illness or family illness that prevents them from traveling to the office. Also, this computer equipment would assist the agency in business continuity in the face of a certain types of disasters.

Recruitment

The agency will continue to adhere to its Affirmative Action Plan in posting job openings with minority organizations and institutions. Additionally, the agency will post any job vacancy notices with entities that do not charge for such posting, for example universities and organizations.

The agency was certified by the Texas Human Rights Commission in 2004. Commission recommendations were incorporated into agency policies and procedures.

Gap Strategy: Legislative Appropriation Request

The agency will include in its Legislative Appropriation Request for the 2010-2011 biennium the following:

- Additional funding for a new investigator position
- Additional funding for a new part-time clerical position.
- Additional funding for merit salary increases for staff
- Additional funding for increase to the Executive Director's salary
- Additional funding for new laptops and printers
- Additional funding for shared licensing system.