

APPENDIX E

Strategic Plan

WORKFORCE PLAN

Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists

May 2012

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.

Indirect Administration:

Objective: indirect administration.

Strategy: Indirect administration licensing.

Strategy: Indirect administration enforcement.

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 600 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 200 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.

Factors Expected to Result in Changes to the Agency:

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;

- ❑ In recent years the rare 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 need for more mental health practitioners because of the increasing population of Texas;
- ❑ The Board's dedication to timely and efficient services and its willingness to continually change processes to achieve this goal;
- ❑ Information 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;
- ❑ Cutback in federal funding for various programs resulting in the need for the state to devote more state funding to high priority items like transportation, criminal justice, social services, and especially Medicaid and Medicare;
- ❑ 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 13 FTEs are divided into the Licensing, Enforcement, Legal and Administrative Divisions. The agency regained 1.5 FTEs in the 81st Legislative Session but lost one FTE in the 82nd Legislature due to budget cutbacks. (See attached Organizational Chart.)

Supply Analysis

Current Workforce Analysis

Classified, Exempt, and Temporary Workers

The Psychology Board has a total of 13 classified employees (2 employees are half-time) and one exempt employee as of March 2012. The agency has no temporary employees.

In fiscal year 2011, there was a 22% turnover in staff.

Salary Budget

Fiscal Year 2012	\$589,575	FTE Salaries	0 Temporary
Fiscal Year 2013	\$589,575	FTE Salaries	0 Temporary

Location

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

Retirement

Two staff persons are eligible for retirement.

Diversity

The workforce diversity for the agency is:

Gender: 2 men, 12 women

Race: 12 Caucasian, 2 Hispanic

Age: under 30=2; 30-39=1; 40-49=5; 50+=6

Tenure: Less than 1 year = 3

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= 2

10 years or more but less than 15 years = 2

15 years or more but less than 20 years = 2

20 years or more but less than 25 years = 3

Projected Attrition Rate

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

Workforce Trend Analysis

Turnover

FY 2009 0%

FY 2010 15.1%

FY 2011 14.29%

FY 2012 7.14% (to date)

While the agency is not experiencing the high turnover that it had in FY 2001 where it had over 66% turnover in staff, any turnover at the agency is a setback to performance because of the time required to hire, the training that is required for new personnel and the time required of experienced staff in providing that training. Also, because the agency is small, all staff perform a variety of functions, each with many required steps.

Retirement

No person has retired from the agency in the last 16 years.

Hiring Patterns

FY 2010 1 vacancy for 1 month, 1 vacancy for 12 months

FY 2011 1 vacancy for 3 months, 1 vacancy for 12 months

In fiscal years 2010 and 2011, the agency could not hire a new Investigator position due to budget cutbacks.

Skill Assessment of Employees

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

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 vendor and programmers for the shared licensing/enforcement system.

4. Investigator/Enforcement Manager

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

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 the Renewal Coordinator. Organization skills. Data entry and electronic cash processing. 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, write concise reports based on investigation of agency records and other documents, and 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, maintain detailed calendars of time sensitive activities and extensive paper files, data enter information on enforcement database,

and 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. Ability to coordinate complaint resolution activities with Enforcement Manager.

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 the 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 cash processing activities. Ability to provide basic information by phone and to route calls.

10. Licensing Manager

Two years of college in business, social sciences, or other appropriate field. Communication and organization skills. Data entry and electronic cash processing. Ability to create and maintain paper files. Ability to review and approve 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 processing. Ability to create and maintain extensive paper and electronic files. Ability to review and approve 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 processing. Ability to create and maintain extensive paper and electronic files. Ability to review and approve 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 to route calls. Ability to use copier and FAX. Ability to maintain application requests. Limited data entry and information search on database. Ability to mail out licenses and packets of information.

14. Administrative Assistant 1 (Part-time)

High school education. Ability to file and organize manual files for imaging. Back-up to Front Desk Person, and skills of that position.

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 need ongoing training in computer security and instruction on how to avoid computer viruses.
- Staff 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 wellness training and training in 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. New shared database system that requires changes to business processes.

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.

The 81st Legislature through House Bill 963 required licensing Boards to offer a criminal history evaluation letter to persons with criminal histories who want to know if such histories would

prevent them from receiving a license in a chosen field even if they have the required education for the license. The Psychology Board has implemented this requirement by passage of a new rule, establishing new procedures, and creating an application form for this purpose. The General Counsel and the Enforcement Manager must be involved in evaluating such criminal histories and making a determination.

The 82nd Legislature through House Bill 1781 requires all state agencies to submit a report identifying which required reports should be eliminated because they are not necessary to accomplish the objectives of the statute that contains the reporting requirement, are redundant to other statutory reporting requirements or are required under statute to be provided at a frequency for which data is not available. The Psychology Board has not yet completed this mandated report.

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. In the last biennium, 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.

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

New Staff Required to Meet Mandate

By a change in the law, the 80th Legislature mandated the Board to obtain quarterly criminal history records on all of its licensees from the Texas Department of Public Safety's (DPS) 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 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 resulted in an increased number of complaints to be resolved beginning in fiscal years 2007 and continuing to date.

In early fiscal year 2012 it was discovered that DPS had changed its format for issuing quarterly reviews of licensees for regulatory agencies. While the new format would be useful to law enforcement agencies in seeking criminal history records on individuals, the new format gave such extensive details per criminal history record that the report became unwieldy for regulatory agency purposes seeking criminal histories on large numbers of current licensees. These reports would have taken enormous amounts of staff time to review, compared to the previous abbreviated criminal history reports. However, by working with the DPS's vendor for this system, the difficulty was assuaged to some degree by January 2012.

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 significantly 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 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 required time and effort on the part of the agency's one Accountant.

Moreover, in order to conserve Board funds and to make up for shortfalls 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 2009 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 any given year, approximately ¼ of adults are diagnosable for one or more mental health disorders. However, about 6% of the population suffer from a serious debilitating mental illness.

In comparison, the population of Texas is projected to increase from 20,851,820 in 2000 to 27,901,800 in 2015 or a 34% increase. The Texas Workforce Commission forecasts that the

number of psychologists will increase by 29.9%, from 6,700 to 8,700 licenses during the period 2006 to 2016. Currently, the Psychology Board has approximately 6,681 licensees who have a total of 7,759 licenses.

However, from fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2009, the Board increased the number of persons who are licensed to provide psychological services in this state by 24%. The total of new licensees issued for fiscal years 2005 through 2009 was 32% greater than the total number of new licenses issued for fiscal years 2002 through 2008.

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 in Texas 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 four 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.

The Board has continued this trend with more recent rule changes. Of note is a recent change to Board rule 463.15 to allow two additional types of waivers available for certain applications from the requirement to pass the Board's oral examination in order to qualify for application for licensure as a psychologist, to practice independently. The Board maintains that the waivers are based on previous licensure in other states where the licensees have had no disciplinary action and/or who have passed an oral examination requirement in another state. Therefore, this is sufficient evidence that the applicant can provide psychological services without supervision.

Enforcement Changes

The Board changed 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 has saved staff time, resolved complaints more expediently, and allowed the agency to devote its limited resources to 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. Moreover, the agency continues to review its rules and makes rule changes in the intervening years between formal rule reviews. The Board recently made changes in its rules to further define forensic psychological services, since the Board receives many complaints involving such services.

D. Increased use of Online Services and Increased Use of Technology.

Online Renewal

The Board is one of many agencies that provide their licensees the opportunity for online annual renewal of their licenses. At least 85% of the agency's renewals occur online. Because of a change stemming from a new shared licensing system with its own online renewal component in 2011, the Board anticipates that this percentage can be maintained and perhaps increased in coming years.

For several years now online renew options have provided enhanced convenience for the licensees and have saved staff time in processing renewals. Implementation of the new shared computer system required an inordinate amount of staff time, as did the training of all staff on the new system once it became operational. While the number of steps required for staff to perform many basic processes has increased, the Board will continue to refine the new system with additional programming that will enable the agency to perform all basic functions in a more expedient manner and to add more functions to save staff time. Additional funding will be needed for this purpose and the Board will seek such funding from the Legislature in reasonable increments in coming bienniums. Also, the agency is confident that the cost savings for implementation of this new, modern system will continue for many years to come.

Agency Exempted from Mandated Online Applications

In the past, the Department of Information Services and the Texas Online Authority determined that the agency did not meet the minimum threshold of new licenses issued per year to make online applications cost effective. However, the Board has since 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 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. The agency has purchased its own computer and scanner for exclusive imaging use, thereby significantly facilitating imaging of agency documents.

All staff require on-going training in computer security, ways in which to avoid computer viruses, and how 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 email 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.

Minimum Data Set of Licensees for Workforce Analysis

Senate Bill 29 passed by the 80th Texas Legislature required 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 State Health Services in projecting the health professional workforce needs in our state. The Psychology Board along with other health licensing state agencies was required to cooperate with this initiative. This new system is now a component of the online renewal system. It contains what is commonly referred to as a minimum data set of standard information about each licensee. The majority of this information is provided by the licensees and is not verified by the licensing boards. The information is not available to the public. The Board made the collection/updates of this additional information from the licensees a condition for annual renewal as noted in a rule change.

E. Potential for Staff Turnover Caused by Low Salaries

The 2010 workforce report by the State Auditor showed that the average salary at this agency was \$8,748 below that of the average salary for all other Article VIII agencies. This is a greater deficit in salaries than the 2008 workforce report by the State Auditor which showed that the average salary at this agency was \$8,197 below other Article VIII agencies.

If this small state agency cannot match the salary levels offered at other regulatory agencies, it is highly likely that our seasoned staff will seek positions at other regulatory agencies, thereby resulting in impediments in funding and performance for the Psychology Board. Because of the agency's low staff salaries, some staff must have part-time jobs in addition to their state employment. These are the staff who have the greatest propensity and incentive for seeking higher paying state positions. The agency lost one employee in fiscal year 2010 who complained of a low salary after 17 years of tenure with this agency. In fiscal year 2011 the Board lost yet another exemployee who complained that she was not paid enough. The agency heartily agrees with these complaints and anticipates that the potential for turnover will continue in this biennium because of low staff salaries.

It is important to note that 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 required for each position.

The agency was granted an additional 1.5 FTE positions by the 81st Legislature to help with the workload, but because of mandated budget cutbacks in the 2010-2011 biennium appropriations, one FTE position could not be hired and was eliminated for the 2012-2013 biennium.

The Board's new General Counsel could only be hired at a salary level that does not appropriately relate to the high level of expertise and dedication that is required for the heavy workload of this position as the agency's sole attorney.

The salary of the Board's Executive Director continues to be at a low rate despite the increase awarded by the 81st Legislature and to other executive director salaries for health regulatory agencies. At \$75,250, the Board's Executive Director's salary is approximately \$5,000 below the recommended *beginning* salary for this position made by the SAO in 2008.

The Board believes that retaining a qualified Executive Director is invaluable in maintaining a high level of performance at the agency and that continuity of leadership is especially important to an agency in difficult economic times such as the state and nation are currently facing.

F. New Replacement Shared Database System

The 81st Legislature approved funding to six small state agencies for the purchase of a new common licensing/enforcement system to replace six separate legacy systems. This effort, coordinated through the Health Professions Council, has been accomplished, although some functions for some agencies are still not fully functional.

Because of many setbacks and perhaps the underestimate by the vendor of the complexity of the functions that had to be performed, the "go live" date was postponed for many months. However, in June 2011, all agencies converted to the new system.

Despite the fact that this agency has no information technology staff, our one Fiscal Manager/Accountant served as the agency liaison in working with the vendor to establish this new system. Her knowledge of the business processes needed of this agency and her familiarity with many information technology components, allowed us to identify agency specific customizations and to transfer to the new system with relative ease. Accomplishing this feat required a substantial amount of her time for almost two years.

All staff have been trained on the new system, but as some components are used infrequently, the staff expect to continue to experience a lag in performing such duties through at least fiscal year 2012.

GAP ANALYSIS

A comparison of the Psychology Board's workforce supply to the agency's workforce demand reveals that there are some gaps that need to be further addressed.

- New Full-time Investigator Required:

One foremost gap in this agency's workforce supply and demand is the need for the additional Investigator position that was eliminated by the 82nd Legislature as a means to reduce agency appropriations. The effect of this cut in position and funding will be the inability of the agency to implement the requirement to have all licensees submit a fingerprint criminal history record check with their annual renewal if they have not previously provided such a criminal history check as a condition for initial licensure. Other duties to be assigned to this position would be to assist the Enforcement Manager in processing fingerprint criminal history record checks for applicants for licensure with the goal of freeing up more time of the Manager to investigate and resolve complaints. Moreover, the new position would allow the agency to report disciplinary actions of the Board to the federal national databanks which store this information and provide it to certain insurance companies and other government entities.

From its experience to date with securing fingerprint criminal history records on applicants, the agency now anticipates that to secure these criminal records on almost 7,500 licensees, an additional entry-level Investigator is required and the project will have to be phased in over a period of four years.

When the agency is able to employ the new Investigator, the agency believes that it will be adequately staffed in enforcement for the next five years.

- Additional Skills for Licensing Staff Needed:

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 email. Increased use of email 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.

- Legal Division: There is not sufficient staff in this division for the next five years. Currently, the General Counsel has only minimal clerical support. The General Counsel could focus more on the highly professional aspects of his legal work if the agency could provide him with additional legal assistant support.

Moreover, there is the possibility that if the Legislature would give back to the agency the Investigator I position cut for the 2012-2013 biennium, a person with legal skills, such as a paralegal, could be hired to assist the General Counsel with some legal work.

- **Staff Turnover Ongoing Concern:** The agency's ability to continue to implement new changes and new mandates depends heavily on its retaining its trained, experienced staff. Relatively low staff salaries continue to make possible turnover a concern to the agency.

The anticipated reductions in health care benefits for state employees in the 2014-2015 biennium reduce the attractiveness of state jobs to potential applicants for state positions. This when current staff leave for higher pay at other agencies or to the private sector, the agency will have more difficulty in securing replacement staff.

Gap Strategy Development

The Psychology Board had its historic 14 FTEs cut in fiscal year 2005 to 12 FTEs due to the 12.5% budget cutback by the 79th Legislature. Since that time, in order to meet the resulting gap between the demands and the supply, as identified in this work plan, the agency developed innovative strategies.

This gap would have been reduced by the addition of the 2 FTEs to the agency by intervening legislative sessions, but as noted, one FTE Investigator position was eliminated by the 82nd Legislature, again leaving the agency with a gap in its workforce necessary to accomplish its mission and goals of protecting the public.

Gap Strategy: Consolidate Staff, Internally and Externally

After the elimination of two staff positions in fiscal year 2005, 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 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

Positions at the agency have training manuals which include materials pertinent to each position including policies and procedures, as well as form letters, checklists, etc. Some positions have such complex duties that other procedure manuals serve as the primary position books. These

manuals are invaluable in training new staff persons. They are updated and added to as procedures in various areas change or are enhanced.

A new staff position book was created for the most recent new position, the half-time Administrative Assistant I.

Documentation of Processes

The Board has various policy and procedure manuals. Such written documentation provides standardization of agency functions, assists in cross-training staff, and provides training for new staff. These manuals are continually updated and revised as rules change, new legislative mandates occur, or the agency determines more efficient ways to perform its responsibilities.

Extensive Files

Board administrators maintain paper 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 assist in the training and transition of duties to new staff. Generally, agency policy is to retain record copies with electronic file paths so that documents can be easily located in electronic files, but in some instances only the electronic copies are maintained to reduce storage needs.

Cross Training of Staff

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

For example, the Executive Assistant 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 as well as the General Counsel have provided compliance duties for the agency. Also, licensing staff are cross-trained to coordinate all activities for the administration of the oral examination to over 170 applicants per year should the Licensing Manager not be available to perform those complicated duties.

Manager Training

The Executive Director works closely with the managers of the agency and the Executive Assistant to ensure that the agency could continue to function for the length of time required to hire a new Executive Director when there is turnover in that position. 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.

As possible, staff are provided with training on computer security and 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.

In the next few months, selected staff plan will receive training in state and federal school law that will be provided by a current Board member who is a trainer in this area. This will assist agency staff in processing complaints concerning school psychological services.

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. This same employee serves as the agency's central liaison to the contracted vendor for the agency's new shared licensing/enforcement database. She upholds all of 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:

In previous legislative sessions, responding to cutbacks in FTEs, the agency converted one licensing position to a half time Investigator and half time licensing position. This meant that the agency reduced its Investigator position by half. This shortage of personnel was somewhat alleviated by the addition of a half time Investigator position approved by the 80th Legislature and a half time Administrative Assistant approved by the 81st Legislature for this agency.

However, as previously noted, the Investigator position added by the 81st Legislature was cut by the 82nd Legislature, again leaving the agency with a shortage of enforcement personnel.

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

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 promotes staff satisfaction and invests them in seeking quality in the 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.

Most recently, because of the changes in business processes necessitated by the standardization required by the agency transferring to a new replacement licensing system, key licensing staff now approve licensure for applicants in adherence to specific rules, policies and procedures. Only applicants that have some unique problems or who must be denied licensure must be reviewed and approved the Executive Director or the Applications Committee of the Board. Also, applicants with criminal histories are reviewed by the General Counsel.

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 have second jobs are given some leeway in their work hours to accommodate their second jobs when possible. Also, in certain limited circumstances, key staff are allowed to complete work assignments from home.

Promotion from Within

When a vacancy occurs in the agency, qualified internal staff are encouraged to apply for the position. Most recently a part-time front desk clerk was promoted to a full-time position as Enforcement Assistant. Such upward mobility of staff provides added impetus to entry level staff to perform their duties to the best of their abilities.

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. Although, unfortunately, budget cutbacks for the 2012-2013 biennium have required the agency to eliminate the online roster of licensees. The agency's website also has important links for licensees to online annual renewal services and all applications for licensure are downloadable at no cost from the agency's website.

Email Newsletter

The new shared database allows the agency to store email addresses of licensees through an option in the online renewal system. For those licensees who choose to provide their emails to the agency in this manner, the agency will begin submitting to them by email the agency's biannual newsletter. This newsletter will also continue to be included on the agency 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. However, due to budget cutbacks for this biennium, the agency will not be able to replace hardware in accordance with its planned replacement schedule. This means that for the 2014-2015 biennium, the agency must request additional funding from the Legislature for this purpose.

Recruitment

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

The agency was certified by the Texas Human Rights Commission in 2009. Commission recommendations were incorporated into agency policies and procedures. Some of the agency's policies were used as examples for other agencies in their development of policies.

Gap Strategy: Ease of Access to Files

The agency has made headway in improving access to licensing and enforcement files by having an aggressive program to image these files as they occur, as well as imaging older files that have previously not been microfiched. While this requires additional staff time initially, eventually all past files will be imaged and therefore be much easier to access as they are needed with a resulting savings in staff time, as well as conserving the agency's limited storage space.

Gap Strategy: Legislative Appropriation Request

The 82nd Legislative Session resulted in a cutback of agency appropriations of over \$172,000 for the biennium. The agency anticipates that it will request additional funding for the 2014-2015 biennium for the following items: 1) salary increases for key agency staff, especially for the agency's one attorney, 2) salary for and restoration of the the Investigator position FTE, 3)

replacement computer hardware, and 4) programming to further refine the new shared licensing system.

The agency is devoted to protecting the public through its services and to serving an increasing licensing population that in turn places greater demands on the agency. With additional funding for these purposes, the agency will be able to adequately perform its mandated duties.