

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Strategic Plan**

# **WORKFORCE PLAN**

## **Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists**

### **May 2014**

#### **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: Ensure that practitioners meet required competency standards for the practice of psychology through 2019

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

Strategy: Provide for the processing of occupational license, registration, or permit fees through Texas.gov.

***Enforcement and Laws and Rules:***

Objective: Ensure that all practitioners comply with established law and rules through 2019.

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 650 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 250 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, as well as the federal government 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 14 FTEs are divided into the Licensing, Enforcement, Legal and Administrative Divisions. The agency regained 1 FTE in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session that had been lost during the 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature due to budget cutbacks.

**Supply Analysis**

*Current Workforce Analysis*

Classified, Exempt, and Temporary Workers

The Psychology Board has a total of 12 classified employees (1 employee is half-time) and one exempt employee as of May 2014. The agency is currently in the process of filling its only vacant position. The agency has no temporary employees.

Salary Budget

Fiscal Year 2014	\$624,778	FTE Salaries	0 Temporary
Fiscal Year 2015	\$624,778	FTE Salaries	0 Temporary

Location

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

Retirement

Two persons retired from the agency in the last two years. Additionally, one staff person is currently eligible for retirement and one staff person is a return to work retiree.

Diversity

The workforce diversity for the agency is:

Gender: 4 men, 9 women

Race: 10 Caucasian Americans, 2 Hispanic Americans, 1 African American

Age:

Under 30 = 0

30-39 = 4

40-49 = 4

50-59 = 3

60+ = 2

Agency tenure:

Less than 1 year = 3

1 year or more but less than 3 years = 2

3 years or more but less than 5 years = 0

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 = 1

20 years or more = 3

Projected Attrition Rate

It is expected that three staff persons will retire within the next three years, and that the return to work retiree will also leave the agency. Additionally, other staff may leave for higher paying positions.

***Workforce Trend Analysis***

Turnover

FY 2011 14.29%

FY 2012 23.08%

FY 2013 23.08%

FY 2014 28.57% (to date)

During the last three years the agency had a higher turnover rate than the state average. 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.

## *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. 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. Deputy Executive Director

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. Chief Financial Officer

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 IV/Enforcement Division 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. Admin Asst III/Renewal Coordinator

High school degree. Ability to create and maintain extensive paper and electronic files. Ability to review renewal and professional development forms in compliance with rules and policies. Organizational skills. Data entry and electronic cash processing.

### 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. Admin Asst III/Enforcement Assistant

High school degree. Ability to generate form letters, maintain detailed calendars of time sensitive activities and extensive paper files, enter data and information on enforcement database, and compile notebooks of complaint materials and reports for meetings. Ability to provide information by phone.

8. General Counsel I

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. Admin Asst III/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 respond to public information requests. 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. Admin Asst V/Licensing Division 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. Admin Asst III/ 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. Admin Asst III/ Licensing Coordinator of 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. Administrative Assistant I/Receptionist

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. Investigator II

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.

***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 correspond 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.
- All staff need periodic training in maintaining the confidentiality of protected health information found within the agency's records.

**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, as well as the federal government 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, as well as online licensing examinations, resulting in more diverse staff duties and increased use of technology to deliver services.
- E. Turnover of staff caused by low staff salaries.

***A. Increasing Mandates from the Legislature and Other Entities, as well as the Federal Government, Increase Staff Workload and the Complexity of Staff Duties***

New requirements from the Legislature, the Governor's Office, the federal government, 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 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, through H.B. 300, required all governmental entities to begin training all staff as required by Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann. §181.101. This training pertains to the state and federal law governing protected health information as it relates to the covered entity's particular course of business and each employee's scope of employment. House Bill 300 also required those same entities to report disciplinary actions to the Texas Attorney General's HB 300 (Texas Medical Records Privacy Act) reporting portal. The Board has implemented the training as required, and the agency's Public Information Officer has established an account with the Attorney General's reporting portal.

As a state health regulatory agency the Board is mandated by federal legislation to report disciplinary actions against its licensees to the National Practitioner Databank. Although the Board was unable to comply with this unfunded federal mandate for many years because of insufficient resources and personnel, the Board has recently begun reporting as required by federal law. Although this reporting takes up valuable staff time and prevents staff from focusing solely on their regulatory duties, as of June 2014, the Board is current on all of its reporting requirements.

#### **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.

#### **More Staff Time Required to meet Mandate and DPS Reporting Changes**

By a change in the law, the 79<sup>th</sup> 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 take enormous amounts of staff time to review, compared to the previous abbreviated criminal history reports. Therefore, the agency no longer requests quarterly reviews of its licensees but instead relies on the DPS/FBI rap back program to determine if a licensee has a new criminal history record since becoming licensed with the agency. However, the agency will implement a new program beginning in September 2014 which will require each licensee to get fingerprinted as a condition of renewal if they were licensed prior to the agency requiring fingerprint checks to with initial applications. The agency received an Investigator position in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative session and this person will be working on criminal history records and complaints arising from those individuals.

### **New Training Required**

Annual training is now required for state purchasers and information resource managers. Additionally, pursuant to Tex. S.B. 1681, 83<sup>rd</sup> Leg., R.S. (2013), Board members must now undergo contract management training, and all 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 80<sup>th</sup> 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.

Additionally, 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 the February 2014 report entitled *The Mental Health Workforce Shortage in Texas* published by the Texas Department of State Health Services indicates that there is a shortage of psychologists in the state.

For a more detailed description of the factors driving the increased demand for more psychologists in the state, please refer to the *Board's External/Internal Assessment, Subsection D. Service Population Demographics*.

This demand and projected need for more mental health practitioners means that the number of licenses issued annually by this agency should continue at its present levels 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.

### ***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 79<sup>th</sup> 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. Following passage of Tex. S.B. 162, 83<sup>rd</sup> Leg., R.S. (2013), the Board amended its rules to further streamline the licensing procedures for applicants with military experience, as well as spouses of active duty service members. Additionally, the Board has proposed an amendment to its rules reducing the application fee for applicants with military experience to further supplement its efforts to comply with S.B. 162.

#### *Enforcement Changes*

The agency in its rule reviews has revised many 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. Additionally, the Board is currently undertaking an extensive review of its rules related to supervision with the assistance of an ad hoc advisory committee made up of stakeholders pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §2001.031.

### ***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. For several years now, the online renewal option has provided

enhanced convenience for the licensees and has saved staff time in processing renewals. Presently, at least 85% of the agency's renewals occur online, with that number expected to increase in the future.

#### Agency Exempted from Mandated Online Applications

In the past, the Department of Information Resources 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 online, and launched a pilot program with the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) whereby applicants may apply for licensure using ASPPB's PLUS system. The PLUS system is a secure online application system designed with mobility between licensing jurisdictions in mind. The PLUS system is currently in use in several states and provinces across the U.S. and Canada.

While the use of an online application system is certainly beneficial to applicants applying in various jurisdictions, it has required an extensive period of review and revision to the Board's application materials, and extensive staff training to become familiar with the new design and layout of those materials. It has also required staff to undergo training to learn how to use the PLUS system. The launch of this new online application process has been accomplished while also maintaining the current paper based application process system.

#### 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. The agency has 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.

#### ***E. Potential for Staff Turnover Caused by Low Salaries***

For fiscal year 2011, the State Auditor's (SAO) Legislative Workforce Summary stated that the average salary at this agency was \$7,449 below that of the average salary at other Article VIII regulatory agencies. That same report showed that the salary disparity had grown to \$8,598 for fiscal year 2012.

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 employee 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 81<sup>st</sup> 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. However, in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature the agency again received a FTE Investigator position which it has maintained.

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 Executive Director's salary for this agency continues to be below the minimum rate for an entry level person for this position. According to the 2008 SAO Report No. 08-708, the recommended entry level salary for the Executive Director position at this agency is \$80,500, while the 2012 report by the SAO on executive compensation found that the salary for the Board's Executive Director is well below the market average of \$95,985. Despite minimal increases in the past 10 years, the salary level remains at \$3,700 below the recommended "entry level salary" for this position.

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 times such as the state and nation are currently facing.

## **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.

- 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.
- 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 reductions in health care benefits for state employees in the past biennium reduced the attractiveness of state jobs to potential applicants for state positions. Thus, 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 79<sup>th</sup> 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 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, again leaving the agency with a gap in its workforce necessary to accomplish its mission and goals of protecting the public. However, following the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, the agency once again received an FTE Investigator position which it has maintained.

### ***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.

### *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 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.

### *Manager Training*

The Executive Director works closely with the managers of the agency and the Deputy Executive Director 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 Deputy Executive Director 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 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.

### ***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 shared 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 80<sup>th</sup> Legislature and a half time Administrative Assistant approved by the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature for this agency. However, as previously noted, the Investigator position added by the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature was cut by the 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, again leaving the agency with a shortage of enforcement personnel. However, in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature the agency again received a FTE Investigator position which it has maintained and has allowed the agency to convert the half time investigator/half time licensing person back to full time licensing.

### ***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; the Deputy Executive Director 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; the Enforcement Manager is permitted to dismiss complaints against licensees who fail to submit required professional development hours provided that they pay a penalty fee; and the Executive Director meets with the managerial staff on a quarterly basis to seek input on agency operations, as well as any ideas for improving those operations.

Lastly, because of the changes in business processes necessitated following the implementation of the shared database 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 by 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 staff are encouraged to apply for the position. 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 changes

include the addition of the online public search feature of the new licensing database and the biannual newsletter.

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

The Psychology Board has been able to maintain up-to-date computer equipment and ancillary office machines, thereby best utilizing its limited staff. This is due to the fact that in the 2014-2015 biennium, the agency received additional funding from the Legislature for the replacement of computer equipment in order to get the agency back on track with its computer replacement schedule.

#### 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.

#### ***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 agency anticipates that it will request additional funding for the 2014-2015 biennium for the following items: 1) salary increases for agency staff, including the Executive Director, 2) funding to purchase a replacement high-speed scanner, 3) funding for staff training, 4) funding for agency's pro-rata share of costs to upgrade the shared imaging system, 5) additional funding for the agency's pro-rata share of any increased Health Professions Council funding, including any funding necessary to cover increased shared database maintenance costs 6) additional funding for increases in shared IT staff salaries, and 7) additional funding to cover the agency's pro-rata share of the ITSS contract amount, in the event the Dental Board withdraws from the ITSS contract.

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.