

# TCEQ Workforce Plan, Fiscal Years 2015–2019

*This document is an excerpt from SFR-035/13, the TCEQ's Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2015–2019.*

## Key Factors Facing the Agency

During the next five years, the TCEQ expects challenges as it fulfills its mission and goals. Key economic and environmental factors affecting the agency's workforce include turnover; retention of qualified, experienced employees; and an aging workforce. Economic conditions and high unemployment have previously kept the TCEQ's turnover rate relatively low. Typically, during these climates, working for governmental agencies is seen as more attractive and applicant pools increase. However, with a recovering economy and the largest increase in jobs in the nation, job growth in Texas is projected to outpace the growth in the Texas labor force. This will result in a continuing decline in unemployment over the next two years. Since fiscal 2011, turnover at the TCEQ has increased slightly, by 1.5 percent, as it appears that the economy is slowly recovering.

The ability to compete for highly skilled applicants, particularly in hard-to-fill occupations, will continue to prove critical in our efforts to maintain a diverse and qualified workforce necessary for the agency to carry out its mission. The attractive benefits and retirement package afforded state employees was altered during the recent legislative session, in an effort to address funding shortfalls. It appears likely that these changes will affect our ability to recruit applicants and retain staff.

The TCEQ does not expect significant changes in its mission, strategies, or goals over the next five years, but it does recognize the need to adapt readily to any changes required by legislation. Any new state and federal requirements will be demanding in light of budget and FTE reductions and will likely point to a need to rely more heavily on program changes, process redesign, and technological advancements.

## Retirement and Attrition

The departure of employees due to retirement and other reasons is, and will continue to be, a critical issue facing the TCEQ. Within the next five years, 39.2 percent of the TCEQ's workforce will be eligible to retire, with 21 percent eligible to retire by the end of fiscal 2014.

Likewise, turnover is increasing. Although well below the state average of 17.6 percent for fiscal 2013, the TCEQ experienced turnover at 12 percent in fiscal 2013, with voluntary separations, excluding retirement, making up 63 percent of total separations. This potential loss of organizational experience and institutional knowledge poses a significant need for continued careful succession planning for key positions and leadership roles.

An ongoing focus on organizational development and training will also be required. Training and mentoring emerged as the primary strategy identified by agency offices to address skill gaps due to retirements, with hiring methods ranking second.

Table E.1 demonstrates the projected increases in the number of employees eligible to retire from fiscal 2014 through fiscal 2019. The TCEQ estimates that approximately 1,017 employees (39.2 percent) will become eligible to retire by the end of fiscal 2019. Retirement of the agency's workforce at this level could significantly affect the agency's ability to deliver programs and accomplish its mission.

**Table E.1. Projection of TCEQ Employees Eligible for Retirement, FYs 2014–2018**

Fiscal Year	Projected Retirements	Percent of Total Agency Headcount (2,596)
2014	545	21.0
2015	617	23.8
2016	710	27.4
2017	817	31.5
2018	916	35.3

*Data Source:* Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 1/31/14.

## New and Changing Requirements and Initiatives

New federal and state requirements, as well as internal initiatives, will continue to have an agency-wide impact. Offices may be required to change and modify, eliminate, or add programs, processes, and procedures. Also, as a means to provide more timely data, the agency's use of the Web to report and receive information is expanding.

Among other expected program changes, mandates, and initiatives are the following:

- Widespread, persistent drought has affected the water availability, water supply, and water quality programs, causing significant increases in workloads.
- Massive growth and technological advancement in the oil and gas industry continues to result in substantial workload increases and increased coordination with the Texas Railroad Commission and Texas Department of Transportation. As regulations become more complex, demands for compliance assistance have increased.
- Staff continues providing technical assistance to small water systems at risk of water shortages or outages due to drought.
- The drought has resulted in interest in using brackish groundwater for public water supplies. Treatment systems for this groundwater cause a desalination concentrate waste stream; injection wells are a favorable disposal option. A number of municipalities have been identified by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) that are in need of a new water supply and have brackish groundwater supplies available for development. The TWDB's 2012 water plan also included the use of aquifer storage and recovery systems and aquifer recharge wells as water-management strategies; both of these technologies use injection wells regulated by the TCEQ UIC Program.
- With the EPA seeking changes to the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act, new and increased workloads are expected to the Office of Water.
- Increased workload due to changing National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the six criteria pollutants, growing federal and state requirements, and constant changes in the air quality field due to new regulations and technologies bring new and unique technical and policy issues for resolution.
- Texas will likely be designated nonattainment for pollutants other than ozone within the 2015 through 2019 time frame. In addition, it is anticipated that with revised ozone NAAQS will come further ozone nonattainment area designations, with each requiring SIP revision development.
- State implementation plan (SIP) revision requirements are increasing with newly defined mandates. SIP revision development is becoming more complex and the technical requirements are expanding. Developing and coordinating SIP revisions requires intimate knowledge of agency procedures and federal regulations as well as computing and analytical abilities.
- Texas will also be required to submit a SIP revision for regional haze and is expected to continue developing maintenance plans for certain criteria pollutants to show how an area will maintain its attainment status; this will have a direct impact on workload. The EPA's current review schedule for criteria pollutants is: lead in 2014, ozone in 2015, nitrogen dioxide in 2016, and sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide in 2017. The schedule for the next review of particulate matter is not known at this time.
- The agency adopted the federal Clean Air Act Amendment fee requirement; the new Section 185 program is being implemented. Staff will continue to track and maintain baseline information, alternative credit streams, and annual fee calculations. With ongoing implementation of the program, an additional FTE will be needed.
- Workloads for the Tax Relief for Pollution-Control Property and the Emissions Banking and Trading programs will also significantly

increase with expanded federal and state regulations for environmental protection.

- The TERP Program will continue to increase its workload due to the additional 1,000 to 1,500 contracts that enter into the monitoring portion of the program each biennium. These contracts are in addition to the over 10,000 contracts that are currently being monitored.
- Responding to citizen complaints, media inquiries, and public-information requests; investigating compliance with applicable air and water regulations; and educating regulated entities continues to be a challenge.
- Additional resources will be needed for ongoing deployment of air-monitoring stations as required by federal or state guidelines or in response to citizen concerns and the protection of human health.
- The agency continues to refine processes and procedures for disaster response, including hurricane preparedness activities. This requires the agency to maintain an appropriate level of emergency response equipment, maintenance, training, and personnel. The TCEQ is assisting public water systems in the preparation of emergency plans that will allow them to provide safe drinking water during the recovery phase following a natural disaster.
- House Bill 1600 of the 83rd Legislature (2013, Regular Session) transferred the utility functions of the TCEQ to the Public Utility Commission effective Sept. 1, 2014. Consequently, the duties of the Office of Public Interest Counsel (OPIC) related to utility rates will also cease. With the elimination of those duties, OPIC will be able to expand the agency's role into other areas, including rulemaking and enforcement matters.
- House Bill 2694 of the 82nd Legislature (2011, Regular Session; the TCEQ Sunset Bill) enacted TWC 5.2725 (a), which requires OPIC to prepare an annual report to the commissioners that provides (1) an evaluation of the office's performance representing the public interest; (2) an assessment of the budget needs of the office, including the

need to contract for outside expertise; and (3) legislative or regulatory recommendations under TWC 5.273. This is a continuing duty of the office.

- The TCEQ continues to promote waste reduction and recycling programs, with ongoing implementation of the computer and television recycling programs, and potentially, other legislative mandates related to electronics recycling and product stewardship.
- Agency staff strives to effectively communicate technical and complex environmental quality and natural resource issues of the agency to the state's leadership, elected officials, and stakeholders.
- Developing effective working relationships with new members of the state legislature during a time of significant turnover in officeholders is vital to the TCEQ and its executive management, as is providing timely and accurate analysis of legislation affecting the agency.

## Information Technology

To maintain and enhance the agency's level of service, respond to increasing customer demands and expectations, and implement legislative changes, the TCEQ must prepare for a number of issues in the area of information technology (IT). They include:

- New regulatory programs routinely require IT components to be developed and supported; the agency is providing more data and expanding the use of the Web for reporting information and receiving authorizations. In order to implement the flow of electronic information between the regulated community and the public, business processes must be analyzed and documented. The program areas will need to develop proficiency in analysis and design in order to facilitate implementation. The challenge will be to ensure that staff is capable of building and using these tools effectively and efficiently.
- Modifying, maintaining, expanding, and/or automating existing database, reporting, and storage capabilities, as well as new initiatives to allow greater public access to agency records,

will require large commitments in funding and manpower resources.

- Keeping the skill levels of employees up to speed with constantly changing Web and related technology, including advocating for increased skill-sets around the agency, remains a challenge.
- Developing a Web-based application for reporting performance measures will increase efficiencies.
- As the agency moves toward delivering more digital content—training, public education, and other informational materials—for use on TCEQ websites, we will have to produce content in HD (high definition) as SD (standard definition) fades away. Accessibility requirements for video will increase as the agency’s video production increases.
- In response to an increased demand for real-time data, additional staff will require training on applicable technology in the areas of environmental and compliance monitoring.
- Maintaining and improving online access and navigation (both internal and external) allows for quick dissemination of information to large groups, both in “real time” and customized, through increasing and varied access points, such as mobile devices, collaboration tools, and social media. This includes restructuring to adequately support content management.
- The agency’s Permitting and Registration Information System (PARIS), Authorization and Remediation Tracking System (ARTS) database, Consolidated Compliance and Enforcement Data System (CCEDs), and Central Registry will disseminate data electronically to the EPA’s National Environmental Information Enterprise Network (NEIEN), with the Phase I dataflow going into production in 2014. This will require extensive training and procedural updates.
- Skills are needed to implement the four primary IT initiatives in the Information Strategic Plan:
  - Content Management System. Develop an electronic-document management system for efficient internal and external retrieval.

- Information Gateway. Improve the availability and retrieval of agency information on the Web through a single starting point.
- Enterprise GIS. Build an agency enterprise GIS system with an external interface for customers to search for information spatially.
- Enterprise Modernization. Replace legacy applications with contemporary technology.

Equipment, technology, and training resources are not sufficient to maintain competencies and improve efficiencies. The agency will continue to monitor funding and examine program efficiencies, monitor and manage staff workloads, and evaluate the need for projects as funding reductions affect the agency.

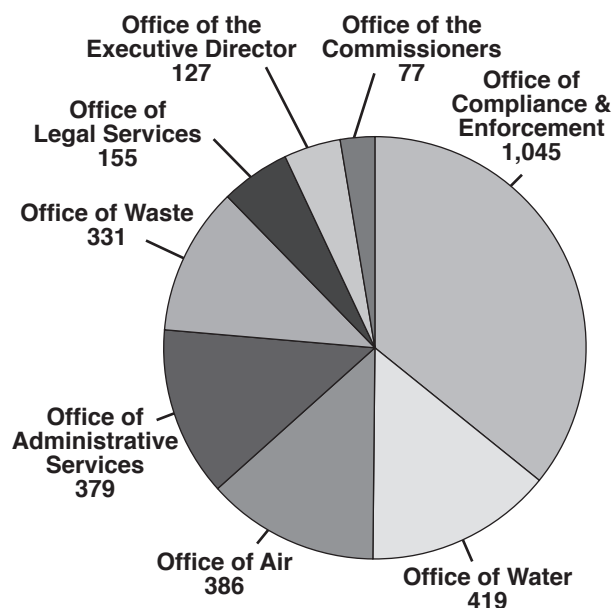
In addition, increased activity in rural areas of the state has affected daily travel requirements to conduct investigations and respond to complaints.

Another key concern is ensuring that agency salaries keep pace with the cost of living and that increases and salaries are competitive. Recruitment and retention of qualified staff is critical to the ability of the agency to effectively carry out its objectives. It is imperative that quality replacements be found, trained, and retained. Certified and licensed staff are highly marketable outside of the agency, which results in turnover and lower experience levels in the remaining staff. Ensuring that agency salaries are competitive with other organizations using similar skill sets continues to be a challenge.

## **Current Workforce Profile (Supply Analysis)**

In fiscal 2013, the TCEQ employed a cumulative total of 2,919 employees, which includes 323 separated employees. The following chart (Figure E.1) summarizes the agency workforce by office (the offices are now largely organized by media). The totals indicate an actual head count of employees, not full-time equivalents (FTEs), and do not include contractors or temporary personnel.

**Figure E.1.  
TCEQ Employees by Office, FY 2013**



*Note:* Data includes separations.

*Data Source:* Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

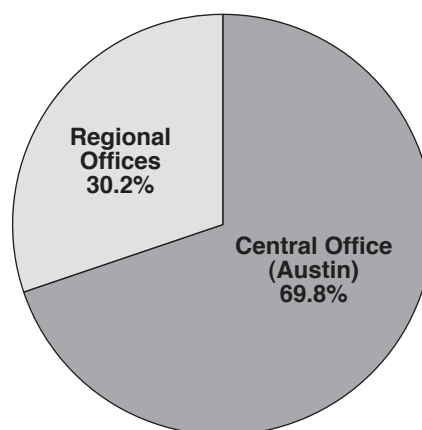
## Location of Employees

As of Aug. 31, 2013, 784 employees—or 30.2 percent of the total workforce—were located throughout the 16 regional offices (see Figure E.2). In an effort to facilitate delivery of the agency’s services at the point of contact and to increase efficiencies, 110 (14%) of the regional employees were matrix-managed staff who worked in regional offices, but were supervised from the Central Office.

## Workforce Demographics

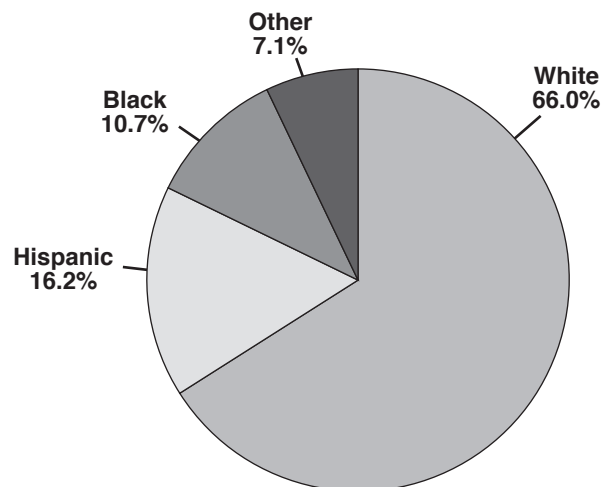
Figures E.3 and E.4 illustrates the agency’s workforce during fiscal 2013. Blacks and Hispanics constituted 26.9 percent of the agency’s workforce, with other ethnic groups representing over 7 percent. The available Texas labor force for Blacks is 12.1 percent; for Hispanics, it’s 33.1 percent. This reveals an under-utilization of over 18 percent, a decrease of 2 percent from the previous Workforce Plan, which can be attributed to the decrease in the available Texas labor force for Hispanics.

**Figure E.2.  
TCEQ Employees by Location, FY 2013**



*Data Source:* Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

**Figure E.3.  
TCEQ Employees by Ethnicity, FY 2013**

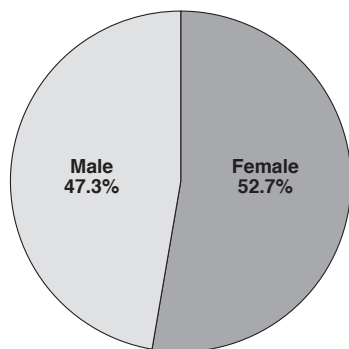


*Data Source:* Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

In fiscal 2013, the TCEQ workforce was 47.3 percent male and 52.7 percent female. These percentages indicate a small change from the last reporting period of fiscal 2011 (males, 48.6%; females, 51.4%). The available Texas labor force for males is 54.3 percent; for females, it’s 45.7 percent. This is a 7 percent under- and over-utilization, respectively, in these categories.



**Figure E.4.**  
**TCEQ Employees by Gender, FY 2013**



Data Source: Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

### The TCEQ Workforce Compared to the Available Texas Civilian Labor Force

The TCEQ workforce comprises four employee job categories, as established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). These categories are: official/administrator, professional, technical, and administrative support.

Table E.2 and figures E.5, E.6, and E.7 compare the agency workforce as of Aug. 31, 2013, to the available statewide civilian labor force as reported in the *Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Hiring Practices Report*, a publication of the Civil Rights Division of the Texas Workforce Commission (January 2013). This table reflects the percentages of Blacks, Hispanics, and females within the available statewide labor force (SLF) and the TCEQ workforce.

Although minorities and females are generally well represented at the TCEQ, the agency's ability to mirror

the available statewide labor force remains difficult. During fiscal years 2012 and 2013, the agency resumed hiring activities and saw significantly increased volume.

The SLF percentages increased for Blacks in all job categories, increasing the gap of under-representation at the TCEQ in all job categories. The Black workforce at the TCEQ remained relatively unchanged, with slight decreases in the Technical and Administrative Support job categories. While the Hispanic SLF percentages declined, the TCEQ remains under-represented in all job categories for Hispanics as well. The female SLF percentages decreased significantly in the Technical job category; however, the agency remains under-represented by almost 12 percent. Females at the agency are well represented in the Administrative Support job category. Official/Administrator and Professional job categories increased by almost 2 percent and almost 6 percent, respectively; females within the agency are under-represented in each. The agency continues to strive to employ a labor force representative of the available Texas workforce.

### Workforce Qualifications

The TCEQ employs a highly qualified workforce in a variety of program areas, performing complex and diverse duties. Strong employee competencies are critical to meet program objectives and goals.

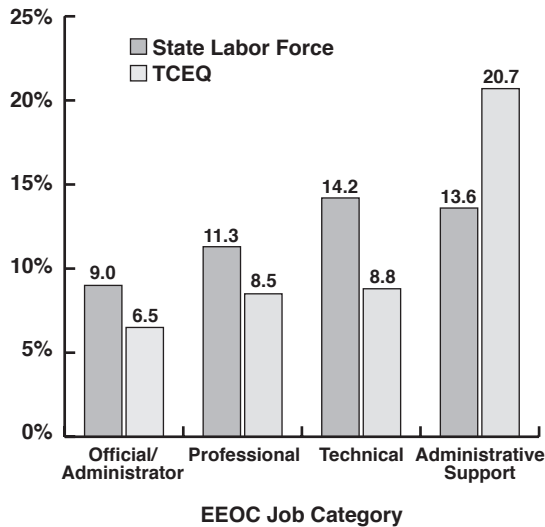
Over 24 percent of the TCEQ's job classifications require a bachelor's degree (see Figure E.8.). Another 63 percent require a degree; however, related experience may substitute for this requirement. The remaining positions not requiring a degree constitute 13 percent of the agency's workforce.

**Table E.2. TCEQ Workforce Compared to Available Statewide Labor Force, 8/31/11**

EEOC Job Category	Black		Hispanic		Female	
	SLF	TCEQ	SLF	TCEQ	SLF	TCEQ
Official/Administrator	9.0%	6.5%	19.5%	15.2%	39.3%	41.6%
Professional	11.3%	8.5%	17.4%	13.8%	59.1%	46.0%
Technical	14.2%	8.8%	21.4%	14.4%	41.5%	29.6%
Administrative support	13.6%	20.7%	30.5%	24.8%	65.6%	85.3%

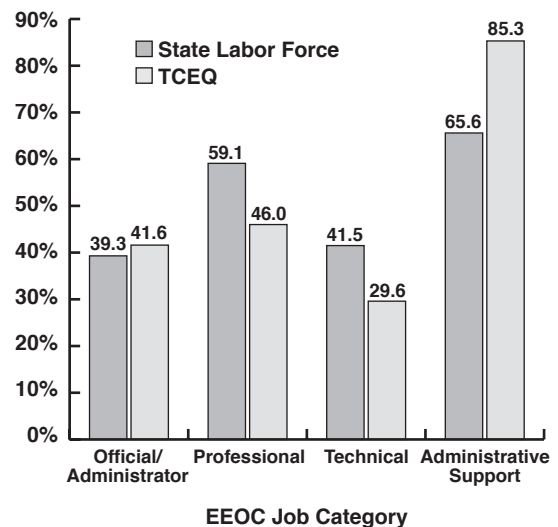
Data Source: Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

**Figure E.5.**  
**TCEQ Black Workforce Compared to Available**  
**Statewide Black Labor Force, FY 2013**



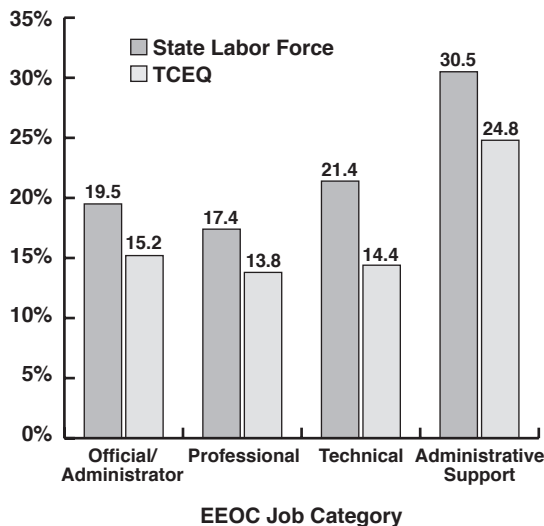
Data Source: Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

**Figure E.7.**  
**TCEQ Female Workforce Compared to Available**  
**Statewide Female Labor Force, FY 2013**



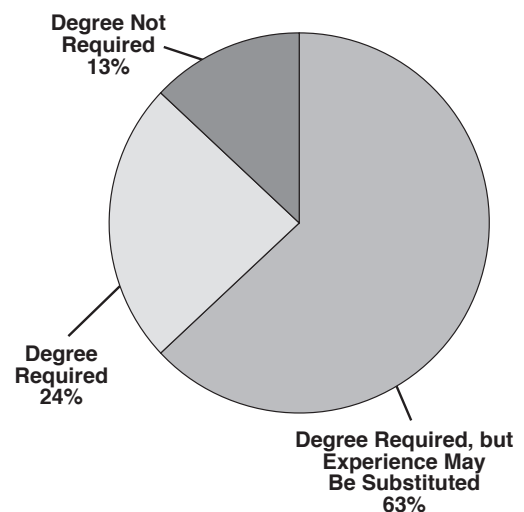
Data Source: Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

**Figure E.6.**  
**TCEQ Hispanic Workforce Compared to Available**  
**Statewide Hispanic Labor Force, FY 2013**



Data Source: Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

**Figure E.8.**  
**Education Requirements of**  
**TCEQ Employees, FY 2013**

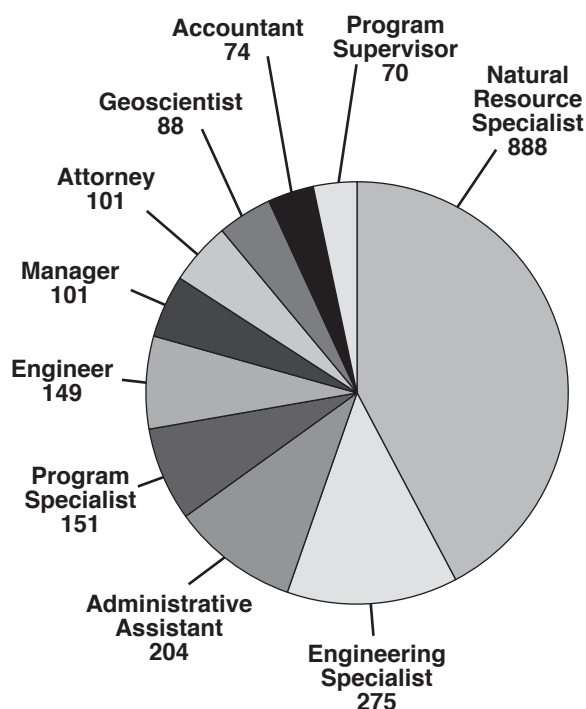


Data Source: Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

## Workforce Profile by Job Classification

Although over 75 percent of the agency's employees are categorized as Officials/Administrators and Professionals, the work fulfilled by TCEQ employees is diverse, requiring the use of over 300 job classifications and sub-specifications. Figure E.9 represents the ten most frequently used job classification series in fiscal 2013.

**Figure E.9.**  
**TCEQ Employees by Job Classification Series, FY 2013**



Data Source: Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

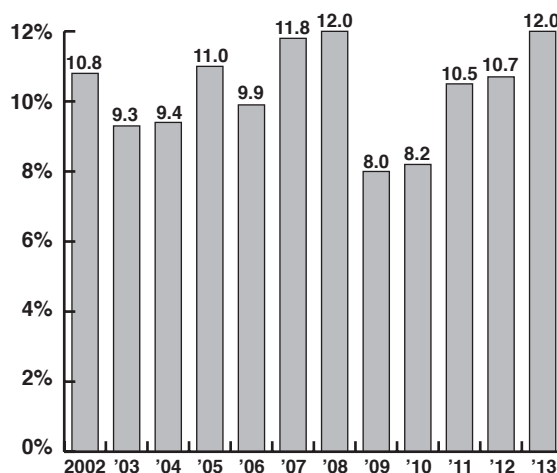
By the end of the fourth quarter of fiscal 2013, the TCEQ supplemented its workforce with 62 contracted staff to provide vital program support, manage workloads, and perform various information technology functions as a means of meeting agency goals and objectives.

## Employee Turnover

Turnover has increased to its highest level since 2008. Although the agency's turnover has increased (see Figure E.10), it consistently remains below statewide turnover. For example, in fiscal 2013, the statewide turnover rate was 17.6 percent, in comparison to the TCEQ's turnover rate of 12.0 percent. While this rate is higher than the fiscal 2012 turnover rate of 10.7 percent, the agency continues to enjoy a lower turnover than the reported statewide turnover. This can be attributed to the agency's retention efforts, as well as to the current economic climate. It is incumbent that the agency use strategies to attract and retain highly skilled staff.

While the TCEQ has been very fortunate to retain a highly qualified workforce, changes to the state's retirement and benefits plan, as well as a recovering economy, may affect future retirement decisions, as well as our ability to recruit.

**Figure E.10.**  
**TCEQ Employee Turnover Rate, FYs 2002–2013**

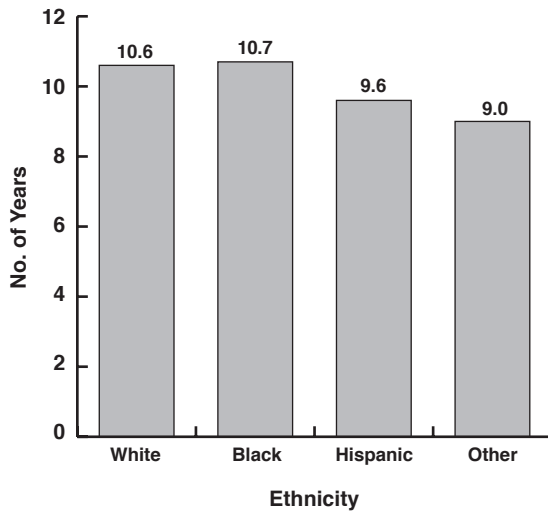


Data Source: Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

See Figures E.11 and E.12 for additional information about the average tenure of the TCEQ workforce, which remains relatively stable.

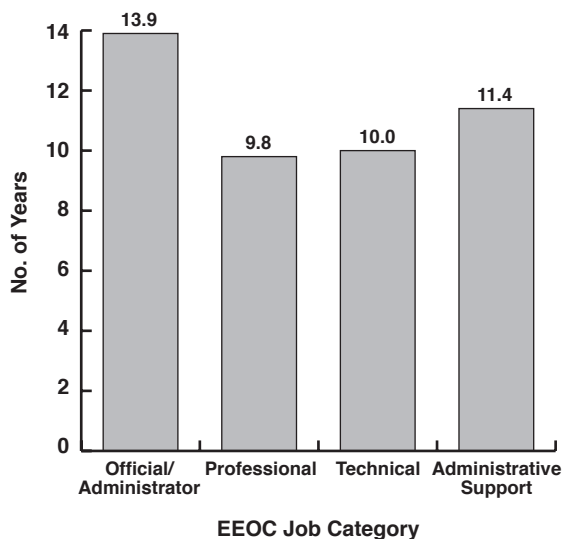


**Figure E.11.**  
**TCEQ Employee Average Tenure**  
**by Race, FY 2013**



Data Source: Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

**Figure E.12.**  
**TCEQ Employee Average Tenure**  
**by EEOC Job Category, FY 2013**



Data Source: Texas Uniform Statewide Accounting System, as of 8/31/13.

## Future Workforce Profile (Demand Analysis)

The TCEQ carries out its mission through broad and diverse activities. These activities require that employees demonstrate a high level of proficiency in a variety of critical skills. Table E.3 is a listing of sets of critical “skill clusters” that have been identified as the skill sets necessary to accomplish the agency’s mission.

**Table E.3. Critical Workforce Skill Clusters**  
**within the TCEQ Offices**

Problem Solving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis</li> <li>Critical thinking</li> <li>Decision making</li> <li>Innovation</li> </ul>
Information Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Database development, management, and integration</li> <li>Software proficiency</li> <li>Web development and maintenance</li> <li>Computer-assisted tools</li> <li>Graphic design</li> <li>Electronic reporting</li> </ul>
Technical Knowledge (may be unique to a certain program area)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency policies, procedures, and programs</li> <li>Local, state, and federal laws, rules, and regulations</li> <li>Specialized technical knowledge</li> <li>Policy analysis and development</li> <li>Statistical analysis</li> <li>Regulation analysis and development</li> <li>Technical analysis</li> <li>Research</li> <li>Litigation</li> <li>Auditing</li> <li>Inventory management</li> </ul>
Project Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizing</li> <li>Planning</li> <li>Managing multiple priorities</li> <li>Quality analysis and process improvement</li> <li>Coordination</li> </ul>

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**Table E.3. Critical Workforce Skill Clusters within the TCEQ Offices (continued)**

<b>Communication</b>
Written – composition and editing
Oral – public speaking and presentation
Interpersonal sensitivity
Translating technical information into layperson’s terms
Teamwork
Marketing and public relations
Customer service
<b>Management/Leadership</b>
Interpersonal skills
Performance management
Strategic planning
Conducting training
Mentoring
Meeting planning/facilitation
Contract management
Grant management
Financial management
Delegation
<b>Administrative/Support</b>
Word processing
Tracking and record keeping
Mail processing

The agency continues to emphasize and support workforce and succession planning. This process involves building a viable talent pool that contributes to the current and future success of the agency, including the need for experienced employees to mentor and impart knowledge to their potential successors. Such initiatives will enable the agency to identify the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to maintain our organizational excellence and to strengthen the skills of up-and-coming staff.

The agency strives to compete in the marketplace for certain disciplines, such as science and engineering. The predominant occupations used at the TCEQ—such as, for example, environmental engineer, scientist, and geoscientist—require STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) degrees; however, the number of degrees to be awarded in these fields is expected to fall short. According to the U.S. Bureau



of Labor Statistics, these occupations are projected to grow by 17 percent by 2018, compared to 9.8 percent job growth for non-STEM occupations. STEM occupations command higher wages, earning as much as 26 percent more than their non-STEM counterparts. Jobs in computer-systems design and related services are projected to grow by 45 percent by 2018. The occupations with the fastest growth in upcoming years—such as biomedical engineer, network systems and data communications analyst, and medical scientist—all call for degrees in STEM fields.

The ability to recruit people with information-technology skills will also be essential. Network and computer-systems analysts are projected to have a faster-than-average job growth, at 25 percent, with network administrator, software engineer, and database administrator maintaining a high profile as fast-growing occupations in Texas and elsewhere.

## Gap Analysis

Each office within the TCEQ analyzed the anticipated need for each skill set and the possible risk associated with the skill being unavailable over the next five years. Skills that are “at risk” are indicated in Table E.4, prioritized by “low,” “medium,” or “high,” reserving the “high” designation for those gaps that will require action to address them.

**Table E.4. Critical Skills Checklist and Gap Analysis**

LEGEND	
CO – Office of the Commissioners	OLS – Office of Legal Services
ED – Office of the Executive Director	OOW – Office of Waste
OAS – Office of Administrative Services	OCE – Office of Compliance & Enforcement
OA – Office of Air	OW – Office of Water

Skill Category	Skill	CO	ED	OAS	OA	OLS	OOW	OCE	OW
<b>Problem Solving</b>	Analysis				Med				
	Critical thinking				High				
	Decision making				Med				High
	Innovation			Med	High				High
<b>Information Management</b>	Database development, management, and integration	Med			High			High	High
	Software proficiency	Med			Med				High
	Web development and maintenance	Low			Med			Med	Med
	Computer assisted tools	Med		Med	Med				
	Graphic design								Med
	Electronic reporting	Low			High			High	High
	Other: Hardware								High
<b>Technical Knowledge</b> (may be unique to certain program areas)	Agency policies, procedures, and programs				Med			High	High
	Local, state, and federal laws, rules, and regulations			Low	Med			High	High
	Specialized technical knowledge	Med		High	High		High	High	High
	Policy analysis and development	Med			Med			High	High
	Statistical analysis	Med			Med			Low	
	Regulation analysis and development				Med			High	High
	Technical analysis	Med			Med				Med
	Research				Med				
	Litigation								
	Auditing	Med							Med
	Inventory management								
	Other: GIS, GeoDatabase								Med
	Other: Strategic-plan development			Med					
	Other: Fiscal note process			Med					
	Other: Performance measure analysis and development			Med					

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**Table E.4. Critical Skills Checklist and Gap Analysis (continued)**

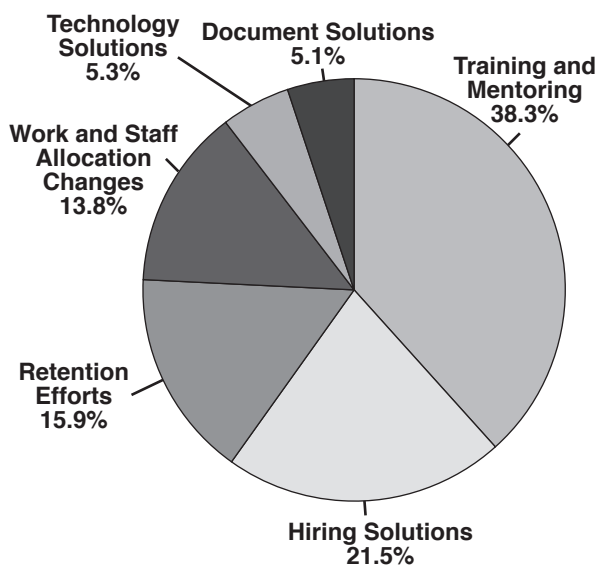
Skill Category	Skill	CO	ED	OAS	OA	OLS	OOW	OCE	OW
<b>Project Management</b>	Organizing								
	Planning								
	Managing multiple priorities	High			Med				Med
	Quality analysis and process improvement				Med			High	Med
	Coordination								
	Other: Business analysis			High					
<b>Communication</b>	Written: Composition and editing	Med		Med	Med			High	
	Oral: Public speaking and presentation	Med		Med				High	
	Interpersonal sensitivity	Med							
	Translating technical information into layperson's terms			Med	Med			High	
	Teamwork	High							
	Marketing/public relations			Med	Med			High	
	Customer service								
	Other: Business process documentation and knowledge transfer				Med				
	Other: Spanish-speaking staff for hearing questions and other customer-service issues								Med
<b>Management/Leadership</b>	Interpersonal skills							High	
	Performance management				Med			High	
	Strategic planning				Med			High	Med
	Conducting training	Med		Low					
	Mentoring	Low		Low	Med			High	
	Meeting planning/facilitation	Med							
	Contract management			Med	Med				High
	Grant management				Med		High		High
	Financial management				Med				High
	Delegation	Med		Low					
<b>Administrative Support</b>	Word processing								
	Tracking/record keeping								
	Mail processing								
<b>Other Skills</b>	Other: Database design and programming	Med							

## Strategy Development

The TCEQ anticipates implementing key strategies, which are discussed in the following sections, to address expected skill gaps. Figure E.13 displays the strategies that were identified by agency offices.

As in past assessments, Training and Mentoring will be the primary focus, followed by Hiring Solutions, to ensure that the TCEQ aligns appropriate personnel with the necessary skill sets to fulfill the agency's core functions. These strategies changed less than 1 percent from the previous Workforce Plan. There is a slight increase in the planned use of Work and Staff Allocation Changes (almost 3%) and Technology Solutions (over 2%). Retention Efforts to remedy projected skill gaps decreased about 4 percent. The use of strategies as indicated below reflects an awareness among hiring supervisors that there is a critical need to continue developing current staff skills while also hiring a future workforce with the critical skills needed.

**Figure E.13.**  
**TCEQ Strategies to Address Skill Gaps**



*Data Source:* Office Workforce Plan, TCEQ, March 2014.

Some of the specific strategies mentioned by agency offices are:

- Develop viable options to recruit, obtain access to, contract with, or train staff in critical-needs areas.
- Seek transition positions to allow new junior, interim, or training positions until full technical positions become available through attrition or retirement.
- Allow adjustment of position sweep dates to provide flexibility to re-post available positions when needed by the program areas.
- Continue to document processes and procedures for core functions and produce guidance documents to record the protocol used for specialized decision-making.
- Develop tools (checklists, flow diagrams, guidance documents, desktop tools) to assist staff and the regulated community.
- Assign staff to special projects to increase their knowledge base.
- Allow staff to obtain college credit by utilizing the agency's tuition-reimbursement program.
- Assign backups to positions where medium and high gaps are identified and include these responsibilities on the backup's performance plan.
- Hold peer-review meetings to discuss common areas of concern and to ensure consistency in the processing of approvals, applications, permits, and authorizations.

## Training and Mentoring

It is evident that mentoring, job shadowing, on-the-job training, and cross-training will continue to be critical to maintaining institutional knowledge and technical expertise as well as to developing and enhancing critical workforce skills. This will allow less-tenured staff to work with senior subject-matter experts, with the goal of developing and sharpening specific skills. It is also vital that the TCEQ provide quality training and professional development that focus on agency and division critical skills, competencies, and technical requirements for all employees. Staff should be afforded

the opportunity and encouraged to attend training that promotes personal and professional development.

The TCEQ will continue developing future leaders with the Aspiring Leaders Program. This program provides developmental and promotional opportunities for in-house talent to rise in management positions that support the agency's long-term objective for a team with a strong institutional-knowledge base.

Travel funds could affect efforts to ensure that staff remains knowledgeable of scientific and technological changes, by limiting the ability to attend specialized technical training or to participate in national technical organizations and initiatives. As agency resources are limited, the Human Resources and Staff Services (HRSS) Division is asked to enhance technical and leadership training, while maximizing training dollars. As a means to accommodate budget constraints, the agency is turning to developing in-house classes and online training.

## **Hiring Solutions**

While the agency has limitations on FTE levels, offices may address these restrictions by realignment, the elimination of unnecessary programs, and documenting and streamlining business processes to maintain a consistent level of regulatory oversight and customer service. Offices will pursue hiring above the entry level for jobs that are hard to fill due to the competitive market base. In addition, the continuation of internship programs has proven to be a successful avenue for hiring employees that have an interest and experience in environmental work.

The TCEQ has a commitment to employing a qualified and diverse workforce. The recruitment program maintains a strong diversity focus and is committed to building a quality workforce. Recruitment events are regularly planned to target qualified ethnic minority and female candidates. The increased recruitment efforts necessitate a continued presence at events, while operating within limited agency resources.

The TCEQ will continue to analyze hiring practices and determine opportunities for enhanced workforce diversity through usage of the Express Hire Program at

diversity-focused events and predominantly minority colleges and universities. This program allows hiring supervisors to identify and hire qualified applicants for job vacancies on the spot at recruiting events. A final review of the applicant's qualifications, along with other hiring requirements, is conducted later.

Hiring supervisors also have the benefit of utilizing the agency's Transitions Hiring Program, which provides a diverse applicant pool to expedite hiring for entry-level positions requiring a degree. Recruiters actively recruit at colleges and universities and at professional events throughout the state. Hiring supervisors have access to a pool of graduating or recently graduated college students from diverse backgrounds for professional entry-level positions.

## **Retention Efforts**

Retention of qualified staff remains a continuing challenge in a competitive market. Offices plan to retain individuals who possess essential skills by providing opportunities for increased responsibility (promotions) and salary enhancements to recognize and reward exceptional performance. The TCEQ will also continue to provide developmental opportunities for employees to focus on critical skills, competencies, and technical requirements needed by the agency. It is vital to develop employees to offset potential losses in staff with technical expertise, institutional knowledge, and management experience.

Other retention strategies will include the continued use of recognition and administrative-leave awards and flextime or other alternative work-hour schedules to support a more flexible and mobile workforce. In addition, HRSS administers employee programs to promote the health, well-being, and education of employees, and to promote a sense of community throughout the TCEQ.

## **Work and Staff Allocation Changes**

Managers continue to review workforce needs and available skill sets to ensure that adequate staff are assigned to meet the business needs of the agency. Offices indicate that the strategies most utilized in



this area will be to assign backups to every position, include these backup responsibilities in their performance plan, restructure jobs, revise functional job descriptions, and, in some instances, involve entry- and journey-level positions in senior decision making. Managers may also pursue process redesign as a means to improve efficiencies and reduce the risk associated with a potential loss of specialized skill sets.

### **Documentation and Technology Solutions**

Managers understand the need for documenting processes and procedures to ensure that tools are

available for training purposes and continuity of operations. Documenting processes and procedures also provides a basis for streamlining core functions and can be used for specialized decision-making. Development of tools (checklists, flow diagrams, guidance documents, desktop tools) that can be used by both staff and the regulated community will also streamline and communicate processes and answer frequently asked questions. Technological solutions will continue to allow the agency to reallocate its human resources. Offices are encouraged to research and seek approval to purchase appropriate technology as well as utilize existing technology.