



Texas Department of Agriculture

Workforce Plan

Fiscal Years 2011 – 2015

Texas Department of Agriculture

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I. Agency Overview

A. Agency Mission

Partner with all Texans to make Texas the nation's leader in agriculture, fortify our economy, empower rural communities, promote healthy lifestyles and cultivate winning strategies for rural, suburban and urban Texas through exceptional service and the common threads of agriculture in our daily lives.

B. Agency Business Operations

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) was created in 1887 as a part of the Department of Agriculture, Statistics and History. In 1907, the Department became a separate state agency charged with “promoting Texas agriculture interests through organizing farmer’s institutes over the state.” Since 1907, the Texas Department of Agriculture has been mandated by the Legislature to be a full-service agency, involved with all phases of modern agriculture, agricultural businesses and consumer protection. Today its vital functions include regulatory activities, marketing, producer outreach, agricultural resource protection, agricultural research, economic analysis and promoting excellence in adult and children nutrition.

TDA finds new markets for value-added products, protects the public and the environment and enforces laws that maintain consumer confidence in the market place primarily through programs implemented by Regulatory Programs, Marketing and Promotion, Pesticide Programs, Rural Economic Development, Food and Nutrition and Field Operations.

The agency is organized into Executive Administration, including Internal Audit and External Relations; five program areas (Regulatory, Marketing and Promotion, Pesticide, Food and Nutrition, and Rural Economic Development), five regional offices (Lubbock, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and San Juan), 13 sub-offices and laboratories (Amarillo, Corpus Christi, El Paso, Ft. Worth, Lubbock, Lufkin, Pharr, San Angelo, Tyler, Stephenville, Giddings (2), and College Station), 6 export facilities (Brownsville, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, El Paso, Laredo and Houston), Administrative Services, Financial Services, Communications, External Relations, and General Counsel.

II. Current Workforce Profile

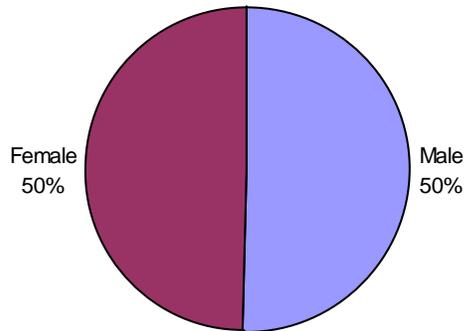
A. Workforce Demographics

The following charts profile TDA’s full-time and part-time workforce, based on data from the Uniform Statewide Payroll/Personnel System (USPS) and from the State Auditor’s ECLASS.

Gender

During Fiscal Year 2009, TDA had 642 employees on the payroll at varying times of whom 322 were male (50.2%) and 320 were female (49.8%). This total includes both full-time and part-time employees.

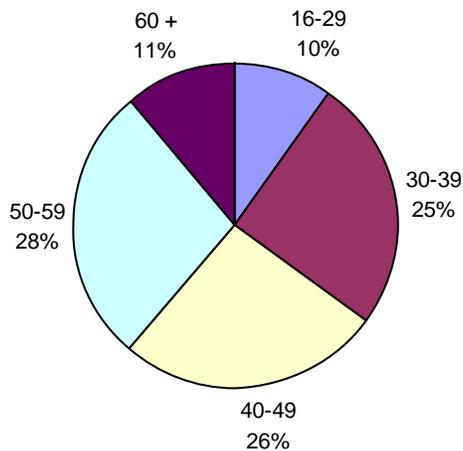
TDA Workforce by Gender



Age

As of August 31, 2009, more than 62.7% of TDA's current employees are age 40 or older. With less than 37.3% of the agency's workforce under 40 years old, TDA must aggressively plan how to replace the knowledge of the 218 employees who are eligible to retire before the end of FY 2015 or are currently return-to-work retirees.

TDA Workforce by Age



Diversity

The following table compares TDA’s ethnicity and gender percentages for 2008 to the state civilian workforce as reported by the Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division¹. (Civilian workforce data is not yet available for Fiscal Year 2009; therefore, Fiscal Year 2008 is used.)

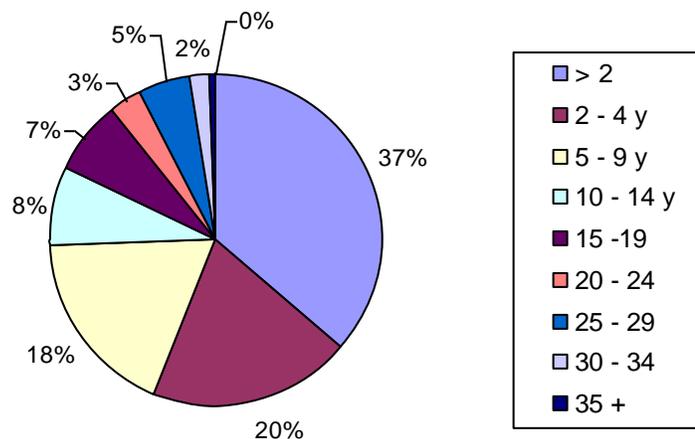
EEO by Ethnicity and Job Category						
	African American		Hispanic		Female	
	Statewide	TDA	Statewide	TDA	Statewide	TDA
Officials/Administrators (A)	9.0%	11.8%	23.7%	18.1%	38.8%	39.4%
Administrative Support (C)	13.2%	25.3%	31.9%	29.9%	66.2%	91.0%
Service/Maintenance (M)*	12.8%	12.6%	44.8%	23.6%	39.7%	55.9%
Professionals (P)	11.7%	9.0%	19.9%	25.0%	54.5%	41.3%
Technicians (T)	17.0%	7.3%	27.0%	23.3%	55.6%	34.7%

*Para-Professionals category is combined with the Service and Maintenance category.

Tenure

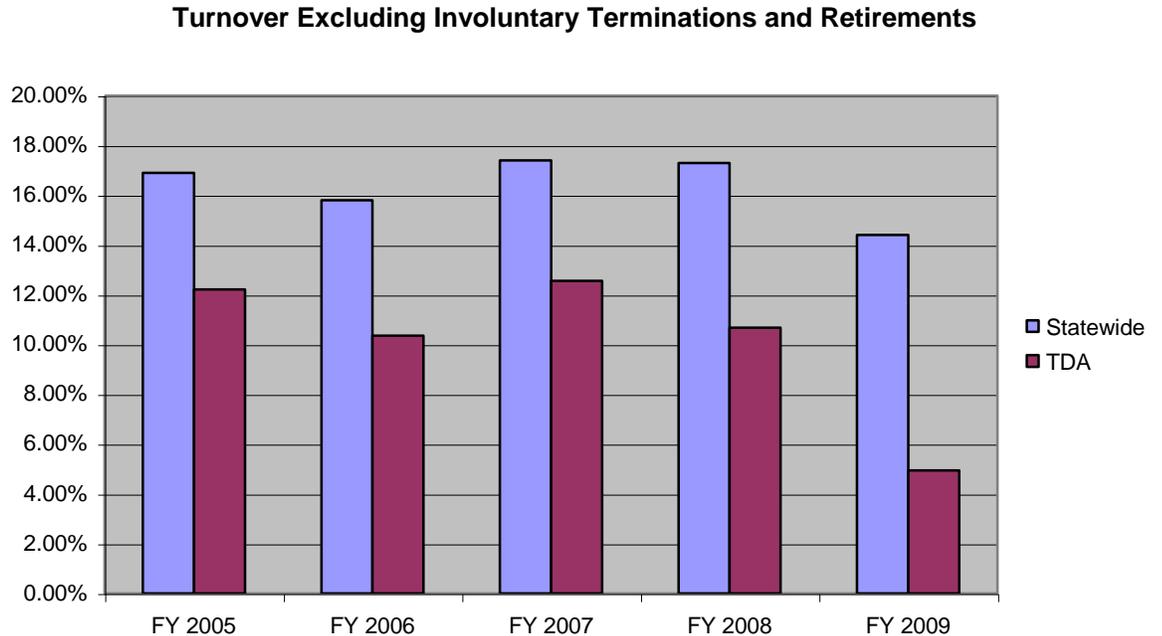
Of the 628 employees reported by ECLASS, as of August 31, 2009, 229 employees (36.5%) have less than two years of agency service and 122 employees (19.4%) have less than five years of service. There were 115 employees (18.3%) with five to nine years of service, 94 employees (15.0%) with ten to 19 years of service and 68 employees (10.8%) with 20 or more years of service. It should be noted that the majority of the employees with less than two years of agency service are due to legislative transfers that occurred in September and October of 2007.

TDA Workforce by Tenure



B. Employee Turnover and Projected Attrition

The Texas Department of Agriculture's turnover rate for FY 2009 was 9.1%. The following chart depicts TDA's turnover data for Fiscal Years 2005 – 2009 compared to the state employee workforce as a whole².



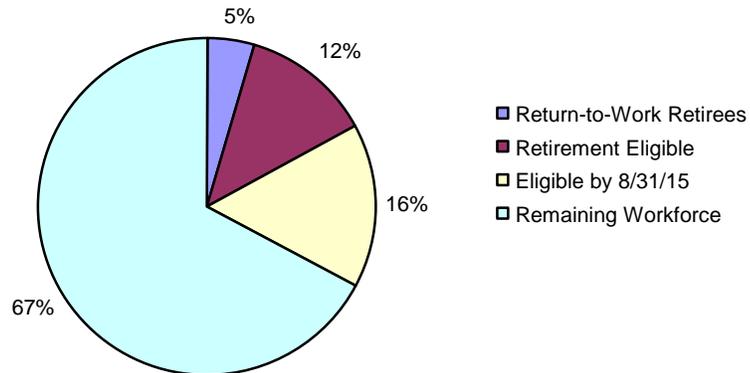
According to information obtained through the State Auditor's Office's (SAO) Exit Interview, retirement is the primary reason employees leave the agency followed by inadequate salary. Many leave to pursue higher compensation with other state agencies and in the private sector.

The highest percentage of turnover occurs among employees in the Administrative Assistant, Program Specialist and Inspector series, who make up the majority of the TDA workforce.

Because TDA is a mature agency (with over 62.7% of its employees over the age of 40 including 37.3% over the age of 50), retirements may have a significant impact on the agency over the next five years. These could result in the loss of important institutional knowledge and expertise. TDA recognizes the importance of minimizing the loss of critical program knowledge and organizational experience with departing employees.

Using the Employees Retirement System's (ERS) retirement projections, it is estimated that 188 TDA employees could retire by the end of FY 2015. If so, this would result in 28.3 percent of the agency's employees retiring by the end of Fiscal Year 2015. This is in addition to the 30 (4.5%) return-to-work retirees currently employed with TDA.

Projected Retirements



C. Critical Workforce Skills

TDA employs qualified individuals in numerous program disciplines. Strong employee competencies are critical to meet ongoing business objectives and goals. Skills are needed in the following substantive areas in order for TDA to accomplish its basic business functions:

- Regulatory and consumer protection;
- Legal services;
- Information resources;
- Adult and child nutrition;
- Rural economic development; and
- Business development and marketing.

TDA employees also need the following skills to succeed:

- Critical thinking;
- Technology/computer;
- Customer service;
- Leadership and management;
- Dietary/nutrition management;
- Research and analysis;
- Financial management;
- Data and information management;
- Performance management;
- Strategic planning;
- Staff hiring, development, retention and management; and
- Mentoring and coaching.

The following business areas are most at risk for loss of skills and institutional knowledge:

- Regulatory programs;
- Pesticide programs;
- Legal services;
- Metrology;
- Regional operations;
- Information resources; and
- Financial services.

III. Future Workforce Profile

A. Expected Workforce Changes

As a result of increasing public demands in the areas of adult and child nutrition, consumer protection and additional programs given to TDA past legislative session, it is expected that a greater distribution of agency resources will be directed to these areas in the future. Additional resources will be required to address these demands:

- Staffing and service adjustments due to the addition of the Special Nutrition Programs transferred from the Health and Human Services Commission and the legislative transfer of the Structural Pest Control Board;
- Increase in monitoring, reviewing and physically inspecting businesses regulated by TDA;
- Increased field presence to improve regulatory functions;
- Increased emphasis on the use of technology to serve customers and to revise and streamline work processes to make them more efficient;
- Increased workload in administrative and financial support functions;
- An aging workforce;
- Increased diversity in employee demographics, backgrounds, experiences and other characteristics;
- Periodic difficulty in attracting and retaining qualified employees in certain positions due to fluctuations and cycles in the labor market, especially in terms of the impact of private sector business cycles;
- Closing of smaller field offices and relocation staff to shared office space;
- Periodic reorganizations to realign resources to achieve agency goals;
- Increased demand for work/life balance.

B. Anticipated Change in Number of Employees Needed

TDA has the ability to meet changing workload through the strategic allocation of FTEs within the agency. Additionally, the use of technology and streamlined processes allow TDA to continue to meet the changing needs of its constituents.

C. Critical Functions

The Texas Department of Agriculture's critical functions are:

- Regulatory and consumer protection;
- Marketing Texas products, communities, and businesses;
- Nutrition program administration;
- Rural economic development; and
- Various grant programs.

To successfully complete these critical functions, TDA relies on a strong set of support areas with expertise in areas such as:

- Administrative Services;
- Communications;
- External relations;
- Financial services; and
- Internal Audit.

D. Future Workforce Skills Needed

The critical workforce skills needed to fulfill TDA's mission include:

- Critical thinking;
- Technology/computer;
- Customer service;
- Leadership and management;
- Dietary/nutrition management;
- Research and analysis;
- Financial management;
- Data and information management;
- Performance management;
- Strategic planning;
- Staff hiring, development, retention and management; and
- Mentoring and coaching.

Future functions to accomplish TDA's mission and goals will include the following:

- Increase computer skill sets for employees;
- Increase and maintain high levels of customer service skills by maximizing electronic records and minimizing paper records;
- Create and implement a comprehensive training program as part of the Human Resources' partnership with agency divisions and management, and
- Enhance and promote a comprehensive internship program.

IV. Gap Analysis

A. Anticipated Worker Shortage/Surplus

With more than 28.3 percent of TDA's workforce being eligible for retirement by FY 2015, TDA projects a potential shortage in staffing and skill levels needed to meet future requirements. The projected shortage of qualified employees with the necessary skills and knowledge will most affect the following areas:

- Food and Nutrition programs;
- Regulatory programs;
- Regional operations; and
- Pesticide programs.

With the expectation of staff retirements, combined with the increase in programs and responsibility, TDA will need to identify alternatives to current recruiting and retention practices.

B. Anticipated Skill Shortage/Surplus

TDA believes replacing projected retirements and turnovers in management will require succession planning and greater emphasis on professional development and training. With this additional professional development, TDA believes the current workforce has the majority of the skills required to replace the anticipated loss of institutional knowledge.

A significant barrier to replacing all skill sets is funding, both for professional development and training of existing employees and for recruiting employees externally.

Specifically, TDA may experience shortages of employees with the following skill sets and knowledge:

- Leadership and management;
- Thorough knowledge of laws and regulations affecting the agency;
- Valuable institutional knowledge, expertise and experience; and
- Information technology.

V. Strategy Development

A. Goals

Goals to address TDA's projected workforce gap will include the following:

- Career development programs – Programs such as mentoring, the expansion of the internship program and an increase in professional training and development for staff will be initiated throughout the agency;
- Leadership development – Efforts will be made to identify, retain and develop existing employees with management and leadership capabilities. This will require the funding to identify and increase leadership training;

- Organizational training and development – Funding for in-house training such as managerial training and skill development will be needed to address individual employee training needs for the day-to-day operations of the agency; and
- Succession planning – Supervisors will be made aware of what skill sets are critical to meeting their objectives and can plan for employee attrition. Succession planning will also address staffing or skill imbalances due to turnover and retirements.

B. Recruitment and Retention

- Recruitment plan – Recruitment efforts will focus on areas that are difficult to attract and/or retain such as metrologists, attorneys, inspectors; and
- Retention programs – Managers will be trained regarding employee retention programs such as flex-time, staggered work hours, personal development training opportunities, mentoring and service awards.

C. Workforce Plan Evaluation and Revision

The Workforce Plan will be implemented in connection with TDA's Strategic Plan. Strategic Plan changes due to leadership or legislative changes may result in adjustment to the Workforce Plan.

Human Resources (HR) will develop a stronger business partnership with each of the divisions to determine training needs, assist with workforce strategic and succession planning. HR will provide divisions with information regarding turnover, retirement eligibility and tenure in addition to assisting in recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.

¹ Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Hiring Practices Report. Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division. January 2009.

² Annual Report on Classified Employee Turnover for Fiscal Year 2009. December 2009.