
MINUTES

TALENT DEVELOPMENT WORKGROUP
SEPTEMBER 24, 2014 1:30 TO 3:00 PM
CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES ~ 100 W. COURT STREET

Present:

Brody Lorda, Human Resources; Natalie Dillon, Child Support Services; R.C. Smith, District Attorney; Kevin Martyn, Agriculture & Standards Inspector; John Young, Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights & Measures; Tracie Olson, Public Defender and Yovana Gojnic, Intern

Not present:

Diane Parro, Board of Supervisors; Svitlana Shramenko, Mental Health Services; Amy Thurman, Public Health; Sandi Reyes, Child Support Services

Survey

- The group discussed the ultimate purpose of the survey. Natalie explained that the purpose is to assess employee interest in talent development and to determine where their interests lie. The County already conducted a survey that gathered information on problems, so these sorts of questions are not in our scope.
- R.C. stated the importance of asking questions in a positive manner. For example, the term “obstacles” should be replaced with “support.”
- The group discussed why many of the questions are on a scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree,” rather than simple yes or no. R.C. stated that using this method offers a better barometer because it may be easy to over-interpret a “yes” or “no.” John raised the issue that there are many long-term employees that are disgruntled and their responses might skew the results. R.C. responded that the beginning part of the survey will offer useful demographic information to show the departments where employees are most dissatisfied, which is important to know as it raises a leadership issue. He also mentioned that a “somewhat agree” response shows a lukewarm response to a topic, which raises a motivation issue.
- The group discussed the format of the survey. Brody suggested that a sentence or two description before each section would be useful. The group determined that section headers are not actually needed. The group also determined that a few of the questions should be duplicated to specify “county” vs “department” level, so that responses would indicate any disconnect between levels in terms of what is available.
- R.C. said that the survey is just the first step; it’s the foundation to build off of. The second step will be to conduct focus groups that are pulled together based on the demographic distribution of our findings. He also said that we need to avoid sending the message that talent development means promotion.

- Brody mentioned that on page four, the scale and “check all that apply” portions are duplicative of one another. The group agreed to omit the “check all that apply portion” and to swap the labeling on the 1-5 scale.
- John asked what will happen when the survey becomes public information. For example, if a particular department’s results come out negative, what can the Union do with that information? Tracie responded that we could just release the results as an aggregate rather than by department.
- John also asked about the best method to get the highest participation. He said that it would be a good idea to have the employee council put out an announcement, so that the intent seems more team oriented, rather than top down. The group agreed that this is a good idea.
- *Action Item: Yovana will incorporate the changes to the survey that the group discussed before the Director’s meeting on 9/25. Brody will connect with Yovana on the County’s Survey Monkey account.*

Competencies

- Yovana and Natalie went through the LACOE competency dictionary and chose the ones that seemed to make the most sense for Yolo County, given what we are trying to accomplish. Natalie said that she spoke with Frank Benest, and he recommended using broader competencies as a foundation for the entire County, since it would take years to determine job specific (occupational) ones.
- Brody mentioned that the LACOE competencies can be used to assist in developing hiring standards and that the County’s infor system has the eventual capability to match the competencies to training efforts. This will take a lot of time though.
- The group agreed that the competencies will be useful for future evaluation processes, since they are universal and relevant to any employee classification. There was a question as to whether departments could even change the format of their evaluation forms.
- The group discussed some potential language changes to how some of the descriptions are written to address the importance of being “unbiased” and to “teach others.”
- *Action Item: Yovana will add “teaching others” to the effective column of the Continuous Learning Competency. Yovana will also add something about being unbiased in the Integrity and Ethics competency description.*

Cross Training

- Yovana provided an outline of some cross training best practices based on some basic internet research. Yovana was unable to find any local jurisdictions that have a County-wide cross training program. All cross training is department specific. San Mateo County is working on an internal rotational program, but the information is not ready to be shared.

Strategies for Employee Engagement

- Yovana distributed another outline of some techniques that other jurisdictions use to get their employees engaged in learning and development opportunities. Tracie likes the idea of the certificate program that Washoe County has, and she said that it may be a good idea to add a

“Relationship Building” competency.

- *Action item: Yovana will add a “relationship building” competency to the list. Brody will email the entire competency glossary to the team and save it to the I: drive.*

Advertisement of Job Openings

- Natalie raised the question of whether part of the group’s job is to improve communications of what County jobs are available. Do we need to do a better job of advertising? Brody said that the Neogov website is not controlled by the County, and that we would have to manually send out notifications somehow. . There is no technology to do this automatically at this time. She said that many employees are still applying for positions in other departments. R.C. said that there is a mutual responsibility, but some people may not know where to look for available jobs.

Next steps for survey

- Goal is to have the survey finalized and disbursed no later than October 31.
- *Action items: Natalie will talk about what the group came up with at the Department Head work group. Brody will discuss with the Employee Council how to get the word out about the survey. R.C. will draft an introductory letter for the survey, based on some language that he used in prior surveys.*

Additional Meetings

All future meetings will be on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 1:30 to 3:00. We will meet so long as the majority of the group can make it. Next Meeting: October 22nd

Future agenda topics

- **Employee Survey**
- **Talent Identifier/Strengths based philosophy**