



January 2006

Greetings from Committee Chair

Welcome to the fifth issue of the American Correctional Association (ACA) Human Resources Committee newsletter, previously known as *Human Resources InfoLink*. This newsletter was created by the committee to serve as a forum for information sharing among human resources professionals in corrections.

Inside This Issue

Greetings from Chair
Winter Conference
Newsflash!
Attendee Feedback
State of the State
New Web Site

You probably immediately noticed that this issue has a new name and a new look thanks to Darlene Jones Powell, Graphics and Production Associate, American Correctional Association, Communications and Publications, who created the new masthead for the newsletter.

The ACA Human Resources Committee met during the 135th Congress of Correction held in Baltimore, Maryland, in August 2005. The committee reviewed progress, which includes 25 workshops presented, development and implementation of a workforce-related website, and publication of the August 2004 workforce issue of *Corrections Today* magazine.

Workforce News Contact:

Debbie Boyer, SPHR
Corrections Quality Assurance
Administrator
Department of Corrections
2901 Classen, Suite 200
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106
PHONE: 405-962-6083
debbie.boyer@doc.state.ok.us

The committee also identified workshop topics for presentation during the 2006 Winter Conference. Additionally, the committee discussed topics including the importance of easily understood mission statements, employee turnover, the release of information to prospective employers, and acceptable ratios for relief factors in a correctional center.

The following were identified as next steps:

- Consider a method to regionalize human resources groups and enhance communication;
- Seek additional funding sources;
- Establish collaborative measures to promote workforce related tracks at their conferences;
- Publish an article in *Corrections Today* or in another ACA sponsored publication on the committee itself, its purpose and outcomes;
- Establish a promising practices publication distributed biweekly to ACA membership;
- Establish an "HR Corner" in the *Corrections Today* magazine to highlight trends or information relative to HR topics; and
- Publish workshop materials from each conference on the ACA web site.

Plan to Attend the Workforce Track at the 2006 Winter Conference!

Sunday, January 29, 2006; 1:30 p.m. ~ 3:00 p.m.

HR-1: Workforce Development: Recruiting and Retaining Staff in an Underfunded Environment

Description: Correctional facilities nationwide are struggling to recruit and retain staff in an underfunded environment. This workshop will offer a number of best practices that can be used to boost applicant pools and increase retention rates. Tools provided were designed using evidence-based practices and results from a recent workforce development project at the Virginia Department of Corrections.

Monday, January 30, 2006; 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

HR-2: Leadership Drain—How Organizations Ensure They Have the Right People Prepared for the Right Jobs at the Right Time

Description: As the workforce continues to age, many organizations will face significant "leadership drain." How can these organizations ensure they have the right people adequately prepared for the right jobs at

Mark Your Calendars Now!

Human Resources Committee Meeting

Sunday
January 29, 2006
9:00 a.m.

Presidential
Boardroom B
Gaylord Opryland
Resort

Workforce Steering Committee Meeting

Sunday
January 29, 2006
11:00 a.m.

Jackson A
Gaylord Opryland
Resort

the right time? Succession planning is critical to ensuring leadership continuity for the future. This workshop will provide an overview and best practices related to succession planning.

The workshop entitled *Workforce Legal Issues with Costly Consequences* is repeated at each conference. However, each session focuses on a new "hot topic" affecting the workplace.

Monday, January 30, 2006; 3:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.
HR-3: Workforce Legal Issues with Costly Consequences

Description: Corrections professionals must have a thorough understanding of local, state, and federal laws governing employment. Scanning the environment and staying abreast of the most current information is critical as mistakes can be costly to the organization. This session will provide information related to the most pressing workforce issues and related "hot topics."

Tuesday, January 31, 2006; 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
HR-4: Branding Corrections—Creating a Message That Endures

Description: The corrections profession has a tremendous positive impact on many stakeholders. The public's safety is a primary mission for corrections. Employees are impacted through job stability and fulfilling employment. Offenders are offered opportunities for rehabilitation. This workshop will focus on developing messages and strategies for educating the public about the corrections profession and marketing corrections as a viable employer and contributing partner in the community.

Tuesday, January 31, 2006; 4:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.
HR-5: Sexual Misconduct in the Correctional Workplace—Proven Strategies to Address This Costly Issue

Description: Correctional leadership is frequently plagued by major legal actions which stem from unprofessional, sexual misconduct among staff. Sexual misconduct in the workplace is extremely damaging to the organization, can be very costly, and inhibits employees from successfully performing their jobs.

This workshop will focus on practical strategies developed by the Colorado State Penitentiary to successfully address sexual misconduct in the correctional workplace.



Following are a few of the comments received from those attending the workforce workshops presented during the 135th Congress of Correction, in Baltimore, Maryland, August, 2005.

Ethics in the Corrections Workforce (Major Session A)

Major Insights: Definition of ethics; setting standards from the start minimizes problems in the long run; great refresher; to be ethical, you must weigh the legal or moral issues and be consistent; to be honest at all times—play, personal, or business; ethics is defined as a soft pillow of the conscience.

Comments: Great session! Instructor was wonderful, and I enjoyed it; good training on a needed topic; continue the group interactive session—very good; group discussions were a plus; very enjoyable and interesting.

Feedback Into Action

The American Correctional Association Human Resources Committee has offered 25 workshops since its inception. Positive feedback from attendees has been received for every workshop. Suggestions from attendees are reviewed and considered when developing the next series of workshops.

Human Capital Alignment: A Metrics-Driven Process for Organizational Success (A-1)

Major Insights: Referral bonuses can be a great way to attract quality employees; importance of employee based input-culture versus identity; matrix pay for what you bring and give to the organization; goals should be both inside out and outside in and resources should be allocated in this way also.

Comments: Very informative; great session-lots of good ideas that I can apply; well done; I enjoyed the presentation a great deal.

Workforce Legal Issues with Costly Consequences (A-2)

Major Insights: Overtime as an essential part of a job description; what must be done by the employer to accommodate religious practices; multiple legal defenses to claims of religious discrimination; you must ask questions when an employee presents you with a request for accommodation.

Comments: Lawyers did an excellent job of discussing topics in laymen's terms; the emerging emphasis on religion, any religion, will subject employers to more claims of religious discrimination; very good information presented.

E-mail addresses are collected from workshop attendees and added to a growing electronic distribution list for the committee newsletter.

Marketing Messages for Corrections (A-3)

Major Insights: Perception of the corrections profession based on movies and powerful news studies; exit interviews from inmates prior to release; importance of portraying a positive message to future applicants about the field of corrections; need to improve the image of correctional officer as a professional career; responsibility of individuals in perceptions of corrections.

Comments: Great session; elaborate on how to promote and make marketing campaigns; very well prepared panel; would have preferred a longer session; have more outreach to correctional officers at lower levels.

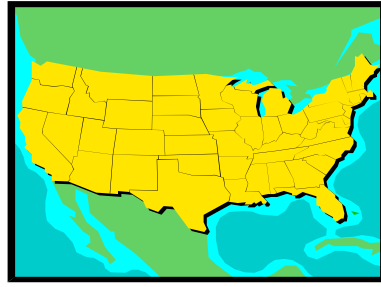
Exit Surveys: Process and Payoffs (A-4)

Major Insights: Reasons for exit surveys; examples of exit survey instruments; online survey looks great-no results shared/no work/no point; necessity to follow up and use the data and information gained from the exit interviews; good idea to give exit interviews seven days after person has left the organization.

Comments: Great information is regards to retention and recruiting; I think it's great that Oklahoma shared its challenges and work in progress; please continue the HR workshops; very good and needed information; I thought the exit survey from Texas was very good.

Coming Soon!

The committee will be issuing Technical Bulletins that provide resources and "promising practices" information on a variety of workforce related



What is “The State” of the Workforce In Your State?

This column spotlights workforce related “Hot Topics” and “Promising Practices,” from across the nation.

NEWS FROM VIRGINIA

Dr. Brian E. Cronin
Caliber, An ICF Consulting Company
bcronin@icfcaliber.com
703-219-4320

Recruitment and Retention: What Can Be Done Today?

Recruitment and retention. These words represent two major staffing concerns facing corrections facilities today. Corrections leaders across the nation have spent many long days and countless nights working to enhance recruitment efforts and retention rates in their facilities. Yet, people often misunderstand these two words and the processes they represent.

Drawing from the most current scientific research and recent projects with Missouri and Virginia Department of Corrections, this article will attempt to clarify some of the confusion and provide four “right-now” recommendations. Recruitment and retention are not crucial topics by themselves. They are important because they affect organizational performance and they impact the safety of individuals in correctional facilities, including offenders and employees. When we examine recruitment, retention, and organization performance together, the literature reveals that these three concepts have a cyclical relationship where recruitment directly impacts retention and retention in turn affects organizational performance.

When one or more of these factors is impaired, the three factors can create a vicious cycle. In facilities where all three concepts are effectively managed, the three factors support and enhance one another. Thus, it is essential to appreciate each and their relationships.

Recruitment

The human resources literature suggests that 'good' recruitment begets 'good' retention. Clearly, then, it is important to understand how to achieve 'good' recruitment. The first step is to increase the size of the applicant pool. A large applicant pool provides a better opportunity to identify the right people for the job, which decreases the probability of 'false/positive' hires. Naysayers will suggest it is simply not possible to increase the size of an institution's applicant pool due to low starting salaries and a shortage of qualified applicants. Despite the authenticity of such fears, the beliefs behind them are not always substantiated. Findings from decades of research in human resources and organizational psychology have told us that there are a variety of measures that can be used to improved recruitment efforts despite constraints. In fact, the results of such recruitment research is very promising to the field of corrections.

Decision makers must think outside of the traditional concrete and mortar walls to increase applicant pool size. Recruitment efforts should made in non-traditional areas such as online-community classified ads, other non-corrections government web pages, and speaking on local college campuses. This type of advertisement will reach new audiences and bring new applicants to the table. For example, college students who major in psychology and sociology are usually not targeted as potential applicants for employment at correctional facilities. Yet, their scholarly interests have a definite match to the requirements of the job (e.g., working with people in difficult life circumstances).

The human resources literature suggests that 'good' recruitment begets 'good' retention.

Add these "Right Now" Recommendations to your recruitment toolbox!

In addition, the degrees these students receive do not provide them with a natural outlet for their skills like other students who might receive a criminal justice degree and go right into law enforcement. These circumstances seem to create a nice supply and demand model between facilities and psychology/sociology students. For this reason, these people and others like them should be reached.

'Right-now' Recommendation 1: Increase the size of your applicant pool by reaching new audiences.

The recruitment literature also advises that it is critical to know who and what you are looking for when you are recruiting. A thorough job analysis and needs assessment are key ingredients to any well-planned recruitment strategy. These types of analyses define the requirements of the job, the outstanding needs of the organization, and allow recruiters to target people in the applicant pool who have the best 'fit'. Hiring applicants who meet an existing organizational need and have the right job-fit will lead to increased retention. This logic follows the cyclical model described earlier in this article, where 'good' recruitment leads to 'good' retention, which ultimately leads to increased organizational performance.

'Right-now' Recommendation 2: Know what you need and hire applicants who have a good fit with the requirements of the job.

Retention

Studies show that increased retention improves organizational performance since more-experienced employees are more efficient in their work and able to handle greater responsibilities. We have already noted that hiring the right applicants can increase retention; however, that is only part of the story. Retention can also be enhanced through measures implemented within the organization.

For instance, I recently conducted a study with the Virginia Department of Corrections, which involved a job analysis and employee needs assessment as prescribed above. Although the project was conducted with Probation and Parole Officers (PO), the project yielded rich, useful data that are applicable to many facilities struggling with retaining staff. Among many interesting findings, results suggested that 'providing a specific career ladder', 'improved respect from department administrators', and 'more time to get the job done' are three factors that can increase employee retention. While base pay and bonuses were also found to be important retention drivers, these additional variables provided an opportunity for the department to make low-cost improvements to their workforce immediately.

These findings reinforce other research that suggests employees want to feel a sense of pride in their work. They want to feel as if they are making a difference, and they also want to know where their careers will take them. Facilities can meet these needs by recognizing the performance of their employees and rewarding them for a job well done. In addition, organizations can better meet the needs of their employees by providing frequent opportunities for advancement within the organization, even if the steps are small.

These project findings also suggest that even in tight-budget situations it is possible to enhance retention once the right applicants have been hired. In fact, these findings are currently being used to implement a workforce development blueprint in this DOC, which has been designed by the host state's administrators to reduce PO turnover across all state districts. Their workforce blueprint combines many of the low-cost retention drivers found in the job analysis/needs assessment phase of the project with small monetary incentives to create a new state-of-the-art workforce development plan.

Employees want to feel a sense of pride in their work. They want to feel as if they are making a difference, and they also want to know where their careers will take them.

The objective of the blueprint is to update the state's job structure, pay structure, and pay practices for POs and align these functions with the strategic direction of their department.

'Right-now' Recommendation 3: Employees want to feel a sense of pride for their job and be confident in the direction their career is taking. To do this, create a plan to recognize high-performance and to provide employees with a career path.

Organizational Performance: The Real Issue

Recruitment and retention efforts are significant because they have a direct relationship with organizational performance, and organizational performance is obviously very important; it is critical to the existence and success of corrections as field.

Recruitment and retention efforts are significant because they have a direct relationship with organizational performance and organizational performance is obviously very important; it is critical to the existence and success of corrections as field. Without a stable, enduring workforce however, it is difficult for any organization to run efficiently and effectively. This is particularly true in corrections where staff are provided with extensive training and asked to rely on each other as part of their daily routine. In an organization with recruitment and retention issues, staff are often asked to extend themselves to cover other staff vacancies. If not approached carefully, this can lead to fatigue, possible procedural errors, and even safety concerns. In addition, recruitment and retention issues lead to wasted resources as training money is lost with every employee who leaves. These problems eventually result in organizational performance deficiencies, which lead to frustrated employees, thereby fueling the retention problem. Thus, the vicious cycle continues.

The good news is organizational performance can be improved through 'good' recruitment and retention. As in Virginia, facilities can enhance organizational performance by aligning their organizational values and goals with their business objectives.

The first step in this process is to define the values and goals of the organization. If these have been defined, it may be a matter of simply revisiting them. Where these have not been defined, time should be spent to create these statements. Goals and values give the entire organization and each of its processes, including recruitment and retention, a target upon which to align. For example, if the organization's goal is to rehabilitate offenders, individuals should be recruited who have the same personal goal rather than people who can just fill a space. Although time may be lost initially finding the right hire, the amount of dollars saved through employees who stay with the organization will make up for this spent time handsomely. In the end, the objective should be to find employees who will commit 10 to 20 years of service not two or three years.

Right-now Recommendation 4: Define or re-familiarize yourself with your organizations values and goals. Then, align your organization's recruitment and retention processes with these goals.

Hopefully, this article has shed some light on the topics of recruitment and retention. The four 'Right-now' Recommendations are first steps to addressing some of the important elements of these processes. To implement the recommendations, I suggest setting aside one full morning or afternoon to meet with decision-makers in your department. Next, brainstorm 4 or 5 ideas around each of the recommendations. Then, categorize your ideas into four categories: 1. Ideas we can implement within one week, 2. Ideas we can implement within one month, 3. Ideas we can implement within 6 months," and 4. Ideas we can implement within 1 to 5 years." With your ideas organized, prioritize activities within the categories and begin to address each worthwhile idea as soon as possible.

News Flash!

The Human Resources Committee has created a new web site.

The web site offers information about the committee, committee progress to date, workshop information for upcoming conferences, PowerPoint presentations from previous conferences, and a wealth of informational links to additional resources on a variety of workforce issues. The web site is accessible at:

<http://www.aca.org/committee/HumanResource/>

Special thanks and appreciation is extended to Prasanna Kattel, ACA Web Technology Manager!

NEWS FROM TENNESSEE

Amanda Sluss
Communications Officer
Tennessee Department of Correction
Amanda.R.Sluss@state.tn.us
615-253-8144

TDOC Officer Harris
receives Medal of
Valor, Genesis
Transition
Community Opens,
TDOC Welcomes Drug
Dog Teams, and
much more!

To get the latest information on the news from the Tennessee Department of Correction, check out the *TDOC Newsline* available at the following link:

<http://www.state.tn.us/correction/newsreleases/pdf/fall2005.pdf>

NEWS FROM OKLAHOMA

Debbie Boyer, SPHR
Corrections Quality Assurance Administrator
Oklahoma Department of Corrections
debbie.boyer@doc.state.ok.us
405-962-6083

Agency Announces Pilot of *Connect & Collect!* Employee Recruitment Referral Incentive Program

In a *Director's News Update* dated September 9, 2005, the Oklahoma Department of Corrections announced the launch of its *Connect & Collect!* Employee Recruitment Referral Incentive Program. The program was developed by a team of agency employees as a project for a National Institute of Corrections leadership course entitled, "Management Development for the Future." The program is based on research that indicated employee referrals are consistently ranked among the most favored and most effective recruitment tools used by employers. The program provides a series of staggered payments (up to \$600 in United States Savings Bonds) to eligible employees whose referrals are hired and remain employed with the agency for two full years.

The agency has already started seeing results! In a *Director's News Update* issued December 13, 2005, the agency reported that within the first 45 days of implementation, 14 employees were already approved to receive payments totaling \$1,500.

Details about the program can be found at the following link:

<http://www.doc.state.ok.us/Offtech/op110227.htm>

Employee referrals are consistently ranked among the most favored and most effective recruitment tools used by employers.

Do You Need Further Information About the American Correctional Association?

American Correctional Association
4380 Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706-4322
1-800-ACA-JOIN (PHONE)
FAX 301-918-1900 (FAX)
www.aca.org

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Charles J. Kehoe
Immediate Past President

James A. Gondles, Jr., CAE
Executive Director

Make Plans Now to Attend the 2006 Winter Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, January 28 to February 1, 2006

Speaking Out and Standing Up for Corrections