

2015 Achievement Awards Virginia Association of Counties

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2015.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Locality: Fairfax County

Program Title: Employee Lifecycle Retention Program

Program Category: Organizational Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Nannette Bowler

Title: Director, Fairfax County Department of Family Services

Signature: *Nannette M. Bowler*

2015 VACo Award Submission



Fairfax County Department of
Family Services

Employee Lifecycle Retention Program

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www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs

Included with Entry:

- Application Form
- Program Write-Up
- Short Program Overview
- Press Summary

Fairfax County - Department of Family Services

Employee Lifecycle Retention Program

Overview of Employee Lifecycle Retention Program (ELRP)

Effective talent management requires a strong onboarding program aimed at reducing the high cost of turnover and helping new hires get acculturated to their positions and responsibilities. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) reports that close to 25% of the general workforce will undergo some form of work transition during their careers. For the Fairfax County Department of Family Services, some programs were on the opposite side of this figure with turnover rates as low as 3%. However, for our more critical programs addressing matters of child welfare and poverty, turnover rates were up to 23% with some programs going months with vacancies in key areas. So, in 2011 the need to strengthen our employee retention strategy was deemed a departmental priority and Fairfax DFS welcomed innovations in how we welcome new employees through the “front door” of their DFS careers and support them throughout their career lifecycle. The result was the creation of an evidence-based, 3-pronged approach to comprehensive onboarding and retention.



Needs/Problems Addressed by ELRP

Fairfax County Department of Family Services is a multifaceted agency with a workforce of nearly 1800 employees serving 5 distinct divisions (Children Youth and Families, Adult and Aging Services, Self-Sufficiency, Office for Children, and the Office for Women and Domestic and Sexual Violence Services). As part of Fairfax DFS's strategic planning, 21 *Lines of Service (LOS) Program Teams* were established; included in their work was a comprehensive analysis of the staff development and learning important to the competent practices in every major client service area. The agency-wide staff development LOS team reviewed the analysis, synthesized all findings and made recommendations that turned out to be instrumental in understanding and supporting our workforce and fostering retention. Five department needs were identified that cut across programs related to employee learning and growth. The findings indicated that we needed to strengthen our...

1. Consistency of employee development practices
2. Ability to connect employees to learning
3. Structural support for learning
4. Use of technology for learning
5. Focus on effectiveness of employee development

To best understand our 3-part Employee Lifecycle Retention Program, it is necessary to grasp the underlying *vision, principles* and *strategic planning* that converged to form the basis of this program.

These along with the LOS outcomes, allow for the shift in our organizational CULTURE that bolsters the ELRP program and its components.

First, our vision emerged from the LOS process described above and states that:

“We envision a culture of learning.....”

- where a collaborative spirit is nurtured in order to ensure all employees are supported in:
- Connecting learning to their work and then department's mission

- Embracing innovative learning opportunities
- Valuing professional development and taking responsibility for their own learning
- Accessing the knowledge and skills needed for the department to provide the best services possible to Fairfax County

Another key influence on our approach came from research conducted by the Gallup Poll organization and is described in detail in the book, “First, Break All the Rules.” In this book (FBATR), the authors highlight the importance of investing in managers and supervisors as instrumental toward developing and retaining employees all levels. Gallup discovered there were key questions that drove the most effective managers and supervisors studied. The first two questions though critical for all employees, are especially important for those who are new and just starting with our department. They are: 1) *Do I know what’s expected of me?* and 2) *Do I have the resources to do my job?* (**Buckingham, M., and Coffman, C. (1999), *First break all the rules: What the world's greatest managers do differently*. New York: Simon and Schuster).

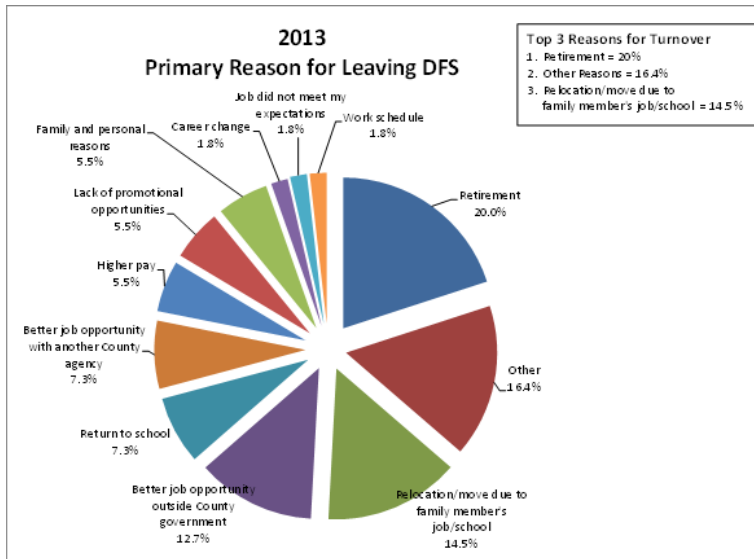
Finally, our 3-year strategic planning process allowed our program to evolve within the overarching direction of the department. Strategic planning produced professional development “Building Blocks” that support our organizational objectives and core values. Strong new employee onboarding along with directed employee support throughout each employee’s tenure with the department is part of this larger organizational context (our “Culture of Learning”) where professional development is an explicit departmental priority. Our department’s strategic planning process has made it clear how important our workforce is to the department’s future success.

Based on the LOS findings, “First, Break All the Rules” philosophy and strategic planning, Fairfax DFS immediately set out to:

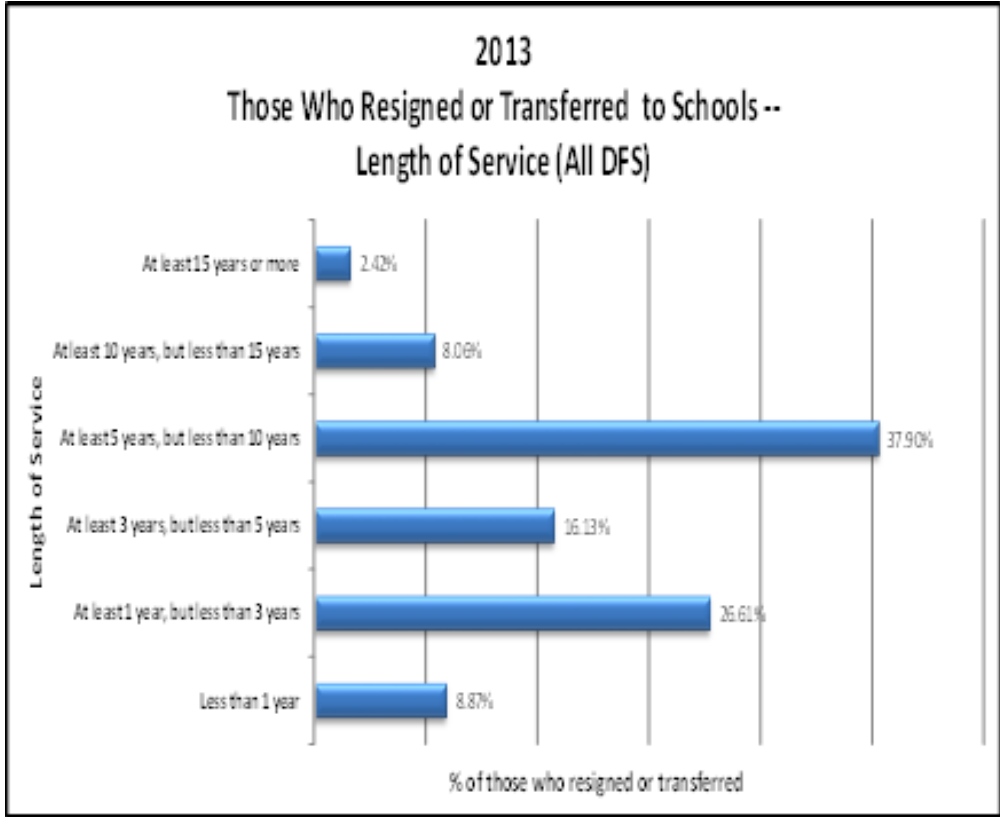
- Establish learning standards that would improve consistency
- Capitalize on program best practices (organizational strengths)
- With potential to improve employee retention
- And as a result. maximize our return on employee investments (ROI)

DFS is made up of many programs that operate regionally throughout Fairfax County, each with differing learning requirements for competent practices. This makes it hard to be encompassing yet consistent in our employee learning programs. Smaller programs tended to provide training within the unit. This meant learning varied significantly among these units - often due to differences in supervisor skill and interest. Larger agency programs tended to centralize their training which meant supervisors tended to be separated from staff core learning experiences. On the other hand, we also discovered strengths across department divisions, programs and units that had developed best practices for employee learning, although not everyone knew about them. So, there was potential to apply these “pockets” of best practices department-wide.

Why Employees Leave: As part of strategic planning, we also reviewed workforce exit survey data to ascertain reasons employees were leaving the department and to identify retention priorities. In the data chart below, with the exception of retirement (20 %), “other” was most often selected as a primary reason for leaving DFS. The combined “better opportunities” both in and outside of county government made up another 20%. We realized we needed to capture the story behind the “other” option in order to gain better insight on how to better onboard, develop and retain employees to improve stability in their ability to serve the families of Fairfax County.



When Employees Leave: Looking at the tenure of employees who have either resigned or transferred to schools, the chart below shows that employees most often transition out of DFS between their 5th and 10th years of service and their 1st and 3rd years. When compared to the noted primary reasons for leaving the county there is an opportunity to understand how to support employees who at key times in their career lifecycle in the county and retain their skill and knowledge.



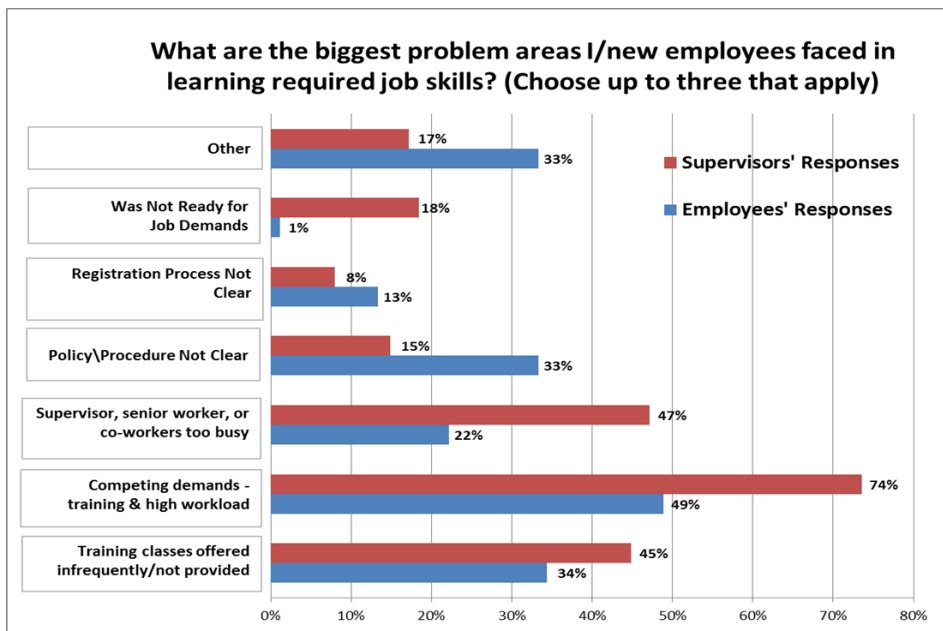
As a result of the strategic planning information and the analysis of workforce that included exit interviews and length of service data, we developed our **Employee Lifecycle Retention Program** focused on three core strategies 1. Develop a standard **Learning Map** for new employees that would accelerate their access to essential information and development essential to their success during their critical first 6 months; 2. Establish **Career Management Plans** with standards, tools and processes to engage employees throughout the lifecycle of their employment; and 3. Devise the **Pulse Check System** to regularly monitor of the state of the workforce at critical points before they are most likely to leave the department to allow time to intervene and improve retention.

Description of the Program

The Employee Lifecycle Retention Program is built on 3 pillars: Learning Maps, Pulse Check and Career Management Planning. Together these 3 strategies employ innovative applications of tools and approaches that contribute to the health and stability of our agency.

A. Learning Maps

When supervisors and employees were asked to identify the biggest problems faced in learning required job skills, it turned out all of the categories mentioned (displayed in the chart below) were considered a problem by either supervisors, new employees or both. We noted that new employees felt training classes play an important and critical role though looking at this data we conclude that training classes alone were not enough given time constraints and on the job learning that employees need.



Our jobs are complex, and new employees have lot to learn. Research shows that only about 30% of what we learn comes from formal training, while about 70% of the learning we need to do to get our jobs done comes from on-the-job training and experiences. So, if 70% of what we learn happens on the job, then this leaves room for huge inconsistencies. Learning maps allow us to establish a framework and best practices for this huge part of the learning process that may have previously lacked a consistent structure

and process. Learning Maps help new or newly promoted employees perform their jobs more quickly, consistently and accurately. Learning Maps also guide career development and support succession planning.

Written survey comments provided additional insight into employee responses and highlighted some of the limitations they had with training classes i.e. held too early or too late, or not the best fit for specific jobs or multiple types of job situations.

Overall survey conclusions revealed that supervisor and new employee views differed on perceptions about:

- Frequency of feedback
- Well defined learning process
- Focus on applying learning to the job
- How long it takes to become skilled
- Role of classroom training
- inconsistent division, program and unit practices
- Learning needs are growing in complexity

Survey results validated the prior themes (needs/problems) we had heard from the LOS Teams- that uneven practices exist at division, program and unit levels across the department.

We needed to create standard processes all supervisors could follow with their new employees. Our new employees face increasing complexity in their learning- everything from sophisticated phone systems and networked copiers to federal and state program certification requirements, and everything in between.

“Checklists” had been an established part of practice for some individual units and with further development, had the potential to be apply agency-wide to more consistently provide integrated training, supervision, and on the job learning as well as promote organizational change and development.

What are ‘Learning Maps’? Learning Maps are electronic documents that essentially cover all of the core federal, state, county, departmental and position knowledge required in the course of an employee’s first full year on the job. And a screen shot of one is presented below. Almost everything a new employee needs to know is located in one spot with activities, accountability and timelines that have been meticulously developed in collaboration with key supervisors and managers.

Fairfax County Department of Family Services Employee Orientation • Learning Map New Employees				
Employee Name				
Job Title				
Program				
Division				
Supervisor's Name				
Date Starting in Position		Monday, January 06, 2014		
Published July 2014				
Learning Item Number	Learning Activities	Date Due	Date Complete	# Hours to Complete
1	Section I: Welcome to DFS			
2	Welcome Message from DFS Director, Nannette Bowler	Tuesday, January 14, 2014		
3	Employee Learning Maps - Understand the purpose of the learning map process and how to use it develop your knowledge and skill.	Tuesday, January 14, 2014		
4	Learning Map - Know how to use your Learning Map. Establish times with supervisor to discuss progress and provide guidance/feedback.	Tuesday, January 14, 2014		
5	Co-worker Introductions - Know who works in your area, program, and division. Be sure you have contact information for others as needed.	Tuesday, January 14, 2014		
6	Tour of Building - Know the location of mailboxes, sign-in/sign-out board, meeting rooms, client reception area, vending machines, kitchenettes, restrooms, and/or other appropriate places.	Tuesday, January 14, 2014		

The Department of Family Services had existing training processes for new employees such as checklists, manuals, classroom training and “shadowing”. However, prior to the introduction of Learning Maps, there was no department-wide standard to: Ensure consistent, best practice learning, Support appropriate self-guided learning, Build the supervisor/new employee partnership in learning. The Staff Development Workgroup researched each of those gaps to determine an integrated solution that would address each shortcoming while having the greatest positive impact on learning. The Learning Maps provide a structured process that combines training mandates, growth activities, appropriate self-guided learning, and electronic resources. Incorporating electronic learning resources allowed for information to be readily available, thus further improving the learning process. Early results indicate the Learning Map process is meeting those goals. Supervisors report new employees learning job requirements more quickly, and employee’s report greater understanding and clarity in expectations for their training period. Both

translate into more consistent behaviors from a high-performance workforce. Also, the onboarding Learning Map framework they created will be adopted by the County's Human Service agencies.

A Staff Development Workgroup which was primarily responsible for the development of our Learning Maps, represented five different divisions within Family Services, as well as different program areas within those divisions. Each member not only had to find time to participate in this workgroup, but also had to work together with others to develop a product that could be utilized by all. This required developing new relationships, learning new skills in research, developing creative solutions, using existing technologies in new ways, implementing new processes, and testing and refining solutions. It also required them to engage supervisors and new employees in a new process that was both different and unfamiliar.

Learning Maps are the hallmark of our onboarding program and focus on a SHARED or collaborative process for successful learning and teaching. The various components of the Learning Map provide a framework for conversations as well as allow the employee to access and review information independently. In order to be used successfully, Learning Maps require a mutual commitment by both the employee and the supervisor.

Supervisor/Employee Responsibilities:

- Understand they share responsibility for learning
- Empower employee to take action to learn
- Plan weekly meeting to review progress
- Celebrate knowledge/skills acquired
- Assess talents/strengths for individual development plan

Employee Learning Maps provide a systematic way for employees to become familiar with policies, procedures, practices, and job-specific information for Fairfax County Government and the Department of Family Services.

Learning Maps help new or newly promoted employees perform their jobs more quickly, consistently and accurately. Learning Maps improve the efficiency of learning and streamline processes because information is cohesive and read Learning Maps include agency-wide components as well as activities and resources that meet divisional, programmatic, and job-specific needs, are as close as the employee's computer desktop. For example, areas covered include...

- Orientation to Fairfax County
- Related Federal, State, County and DFS policies and procedures
- Work unit philosophy and culture
- Job-specific components
- Professional expectations and standards of conduct
- Ethics and confidentiality
- Training requirements
- Performance expectations and evaluation methods

Learning Map activities include instructional phrases to help guide the employee efficiently and effectively through the orientation process. These instructions are based on the **level of learning** that need to take place for each activity. The levels include: 1) being aware, 2) gaining knowledge, 3) developing an understanding, or 4) being able to complete or perform new skills or tasks.

Supervisor Responsibilities with Learning Maps

- Review the Learning Map with the employee within the first week of employment or promotion

- Provide direction, support, and establish priorities
- Discuss and monitor progress at regularly scheduled meetings
- Provide clarification, feedback and guidance
- Ensure the employee learns needed skills and acquires necessary knowledge
- Celebrate progress throughout the orientation process

Employee Responsibilities Using Learning Maps

- Complete Learning Map activities based on suggested completion dates or the deadlines determined by supervisor
- Ask questions, as needed
- Seek clarification and guidance, as needed
- Seek to grow and be successful
- Meet regularly with the supervisor to monitor progress toward completing the Learning Map activities and meeting goals
- Take responsibility for own learning
- Monitor learning progress

In essence, Learning Maps provide a framework for quality supervisor/employee conversations and for employees to use to pursue specific issues with their supervisor to get the feedback they need (including the key question of “what is expected of me?”) Also, they help supervisors match the “right” level of learning to the knowledge and skills needed and to customize timeframes and sequence to fit the needs of their new employees.

B. Pulse Check

After an analysis of the current instruments and processes used to collect workforce data, the Pulse Check was introduced in lieu of the traditional “Exit Interview” process. As part of the strategic planning process described above, a workgroup proposed to expand the current exit interview to include a comprehensive DFS workforce pulse check which enables us to gain and track insight on workforce activity and utilize that data in order to develop organizational strategies to reduce preventable turnover and develop current employees.

How Pulse Check Works: rather than only collecting information when an employee leaves the organization (a “post-mortum” so to speak), we now take a preventative approach by collecting information when something can potentially be done to improve the situation, both for employees and the organization. So,



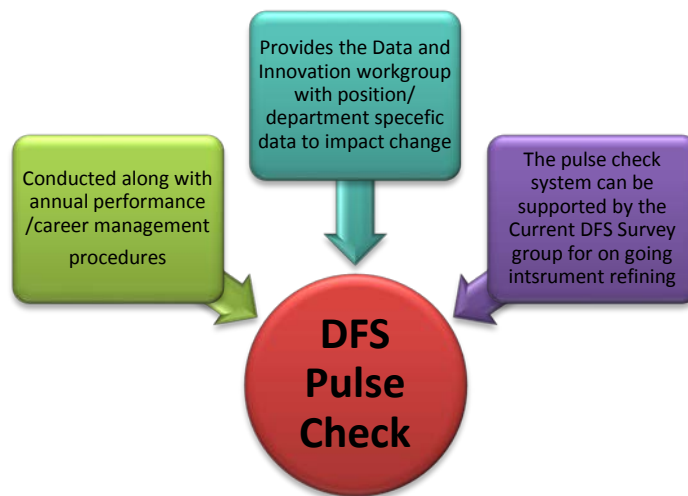
Pulse Check information is gathered at 4 points that human resources data has shown to be highly valuable:

- At the end of an employee’s 1st year (probation period)
- At year 4 (turnover peaks at year 5)
- When promoted/change jobs within the department
- When exiting the department (traditional “exit interview”)

Pulse Check fits in with our current workforce data, but specifically yields information that **supports retention, early issue intervention and preemptive retention**. Prior to the introduction of the Pulse Check system, DFS only collected employee demographics, data to assess employee satisfaction and gain feedback from exiting employees. Based on incoming Pulse Check data some trends are being identified which present opportunities for DFS to ACT on data that has been captured so that we can strategically impact our organizational practice and workforce.

By conducting the Pulse Check at strategic points in an employees' tenure we have begun to gain position specific data about when breakdowns occur and how to manage them.

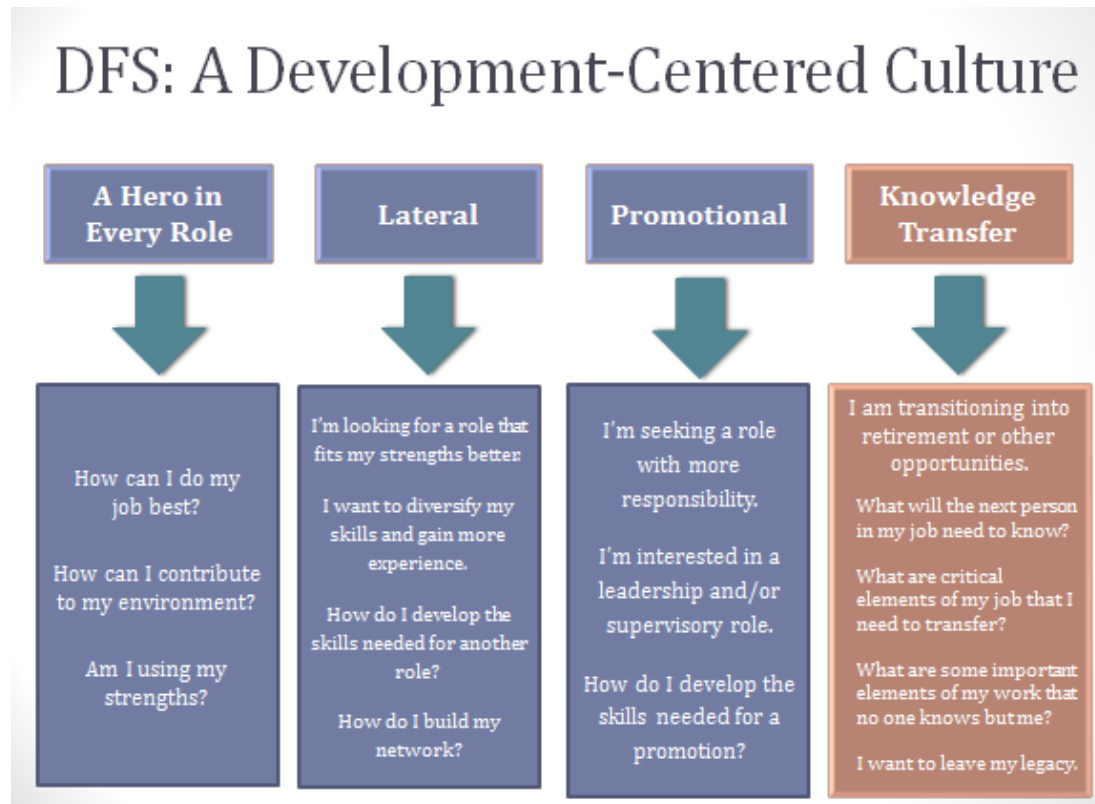
Pulse Check Links to Existing Processes



C. Career Management Planning

Career management planning was being developed by Fairfax County. However, our department took the notion of fostering a development-centered culture to a whole new level of direct integration. Following from the “First, Break All the Rule” philosophy we adopted, we first set out to adopt a clear strengths-based approach to career management. This meant supporting those who might be seeking promotional opportunities, but just as important was bolstering learning opportunities for those who simply wanted to

become more proficient in their current work or perhaps make lateral changes within the department. Our “heroes in every role” view of the career lifespan meant that we would be intentional in supporting the right fit for our employees in alignment with their strengths and talents.



We are aware that each employee is on their own path. While some employees are working towards a promotion, other employees are very happy where they are and are striving to be the best that they can be in their current job. Others are nearing the end of their career and are figuring out how they can leave their legacy and pass on information to those who will follow them. Everyone is at their own unique journey. The CMP must be tailored to fit each employee’s goals and path.

A Development-Centered Culture:

A Hero in Every Role: Some employees are content in their current roles. They are not looking to change jobs or seek promotional opportunities right now. However, that doesn't mean that there is no desire for continued professional development. Employees in this group are seeking out ways that they can be the best at what they do, contribute to their team and environment, and best use their strengths.

Lateral: Employees on the lateral path might be looking for a role that better fits their strengths. They might want to diversify their skills and gain more experience or develop skills needed for another role. They may also be looking for opportunities to network.

Promotional: This employee is working towards a promotion. They may be seeking a role with more responsibility. They might be interested in a leadership and/or supervisory role, or they may be working towards developing specific skills or abilities needed for a promotion.

Knowledge Transfer: These employees are transitioning into retirements or other opportunities. This path has two components: capturing knowledge and information needed for their successor, and preparing for their future roles. This group is working towards capturing what the next person in their job will need to know, what the critical elements of their job are that need to be transferred and capturing important elements that no one knows but them. They may be working in their legacy. At the same time, they may also be building knowledge and skills to help them in future plans for their career after they leave the county. Workforce retention of our talented employees in mid-career was our second focus of our ELRP - we needed to develop standards, tools and processes for the development of employees throughout the entire lifecycle of their careers. As a result a workgroup established a specific career management plan template and process that was made mandatory for all employees to use in conjunction with their annual performance review. To launch this Career Management Plan initiative the following employee

engagement activities were conducted including : Mandatory training for all agency; implementation of a comprehensive CMP template or development “menu” for DFS – populated with development opportunities for staff to select and discuss with supervisor and developed a department website populated with opportunities, tools and resources for employees to apply in establishing their individual career development goals.

Use of Technology

Electronic Format for Learning Maps: Learning Maps are Microsoft Excel files that are to be used in an electronic format. When the date of hire is entered in the Learning Map, due dates for each learning activity are automatically calculated. Embedded in the Learning Maps are numerous links to documents, policies, procedures and other important resources.

New Employees Need: A clear process for learning. Learning Maps provide:

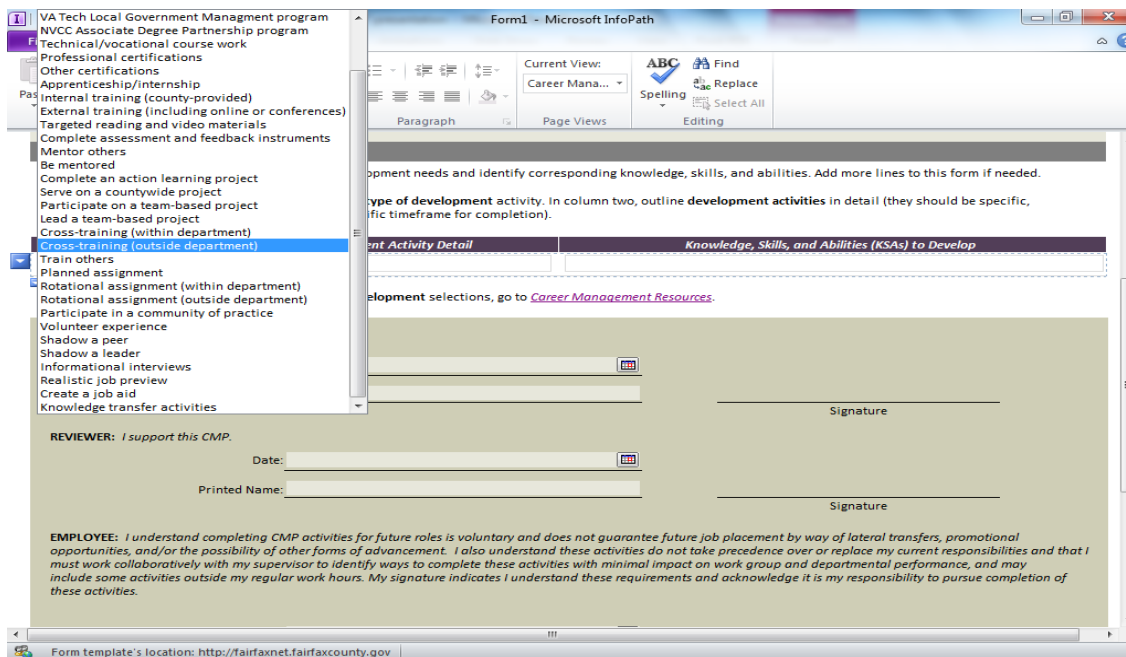
- A complete list of learning activities and expectations
- Links to Federal, State, County and department resources and information

To navigate learning maps in Excel: Items are grouped into categories. For example, “Welcome to DFS” includes a message from the Director of the Department of Family Services as well as basic information to help employees become acquainted with their new job.

Each row in the map spreadsheet has an item number on the left. The Learning Map can be sorted by date and then returned to its original order by clicking on the “Learning Item Number” column. Items can also be sorted alphabetically and used like an index. Learning activities are described in the middle of the page. Items that are bolded and underlined contain links. Employee can access many important resources by clicking on the links in the learning activities.

To start, employees are directed to save their Learning Map to their employee drive on the county server. When basic information is entered, individual Learning Map will populate with the employee’s name, job title, division, program, supervisor’s name, and date of hire. Due dates will automatically generate based on each individual employee’s date of hire. This way, basic information only has to be entered once. Supervisors and staff can review learning map progress during supervision sessions.

Electronic Career Management “Menu”: While the standard county CMP form offers a drop down menu of development options, DFS’ CMP Menu provides expanded options, guidance for employees and supervisors to better assure that development activities fully align with developmental goals, and suggested practices and guidance for activity implementation and evaluation. This electronic spreadsheet accessible on our department Sharespace site goes far beyond a generic list and offers opportunities unique to our department setting. The document is structured to be easily updated and expanded to “grow” with or workforce and organization.



Economic/Cost

Corporate Stewardship is one of the county vision elements. County statistics recently cited the cost of employee turnover as approximately \$25,000 per position. Since much of that figure is salary for new employees as they learn their new job, improved processes such as the Learning Map support this vision. The return on investment (ROI) projected includes improved services to customers, improved satisfaction/retention, and a reduction in “learning” cost relative to dollars/time spent.

Results

Employee Lifecycle Retention Program (ELRP): Results Based Accountability Chart

Goal	How Much?	How Well?
Learning Maps		
Establish Learning Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department-wide core learning standards developed • Learning Map database created to embed standards • Automated learning map tool established (Excel) • 78 new employees used customized maps to learn 	Based on feedback to the Professional Development Unit, 90 % of program supervisors and managers reported that their new hires experienced accelerated learning of job duties, responsibilities and resources based on customized learning map with essential learning standards that contained job specific information, links, tools and activities.

	<p>their specific jobs (FY15)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created map templates for 96 classifications (social services specialist I, 2, and 3 etc...) 	
Career Management Plans		
<p>Improve Career Management</p>	<p>DFS trained it's 1,800 employees on how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write SMART goals Describe the four development-centered career paths Identify specific career development activities to support development List tools and resources to assist you in your career development process Complete the Career management Plan form <p>DFS developed County website</p>	<p>On track to have 100% CMP completion for every em0ployee by June 2015</p> <p>Survey for CMP training and feedback on website resources is very positive</p> <p>By June 2015, 100% DFS employee will complete a Career Management Plan as part of their annual performance evaluation</p>

	<p>populated with employees resources and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Development Portal • Career Management Plan Form • Employee Development Tool Kit on FairfaxNet (Sharespace) • Supervisor Tool Kit for Employee Development on FairfaxNet • Career Development Activities Menu • Website populated with career management tools, methods and resources. <p>Career fair held for all DFS employees</p>	
Pulse Check		

<p>Improve workforce development decision making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulse Check instrument (survey) created that was aligned with the Gallup poll research findings and based in 12 key employee engagement questions • Conduct data analysis with quarterly reports to senior management. • System developed to provide feedback from results to all supervisors and managers 	<p>40 % if 1st year, 4th year and exiting employees have provided feedback through the Pulse Check system</p> <p>In an analysis of cumulative Pulse Check data from all responses received July 1st, 2014 – April 3rd, 2015</p> <p>Responses to the question in these areas were a departmental strength-</p> <p>“Know what is expected of me in my job”</p> <p>“Able to access the materials/equipment for my job”</p> <p>“Have had opportunities to learn and grow professionally”</p> <p>“My work directly contributes to the vision, mission, and goals of DFS”</p> <p>Responses to the question in these areas were a departmental area of growth-</p> <p>“My workload was manageable for my work schedule.”</p> <p>“I regularly received praise or recognition.”</p>
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		<p>“I had an opportunity to share my opinions with senior management.”</p> <p>“I was given opportunities to collaborate with people in other divisions.”</p> <p>“My supervisor helped me develop my leadership or management skills.”</p>
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Worthiness for an Award

The 3 key initiatives that comprised the Employee Lifecycle Retention Program are truly unique and innovative solutions to the retention problems of our large and complex department. Driving all Fairfax County DFS initiatives is the question: *Is anyone TRULY better off as a result of our efforts?*

One of the primer challenges of local government programs is navigating the complex pathways of federal, state and local county government laws, mandates, and processes that are essential to perform specific jobs at the county level.

The learning maps created by the department streamlined this pathway with embedded electronic links to federal and state information needed to learn to perform county functions and tasks. This has improved our employee’s ability to learn federal and state mandates and requirements needed to be effective to do their jobs. In addition, it accelerates what used to take years to consolidate into one easily interactive Learning Map resource accessed by each employee on their computer desktop. Not only does this increase retention but it increases the quality of work performed in this complex environment.

In addition, retaining mid-career employees with explicit career planning approaches retains our most valuable staff that has formed effective professional federal and state working relationships and knowledge necessary to obtain peak performance within their respective disciplines and functions.

The 3 novel retention strategies created by the department to increase retention can be replicated by other local county and state government agencies. In fact, many other local county department's both within and outside Fairfax have sought us out to bench mark our innovative solutions developed to increase retention and productivity.

All three were developed independently by department staff and without the assistance or use of private vendors. And as a result cost nothing to develop except for the staff time involved. In addition, each strategy can be customized and adapted to any local government environment where there are complex functions and retention of employees is determined to be the most effective business strategy given the work involved.

Fairfax County - Department of Family Services Employee Lifecycle Retention Program

Short Program Overview

Effective talent management requires a strong onboarding program aimed at reducing the high cost of turnover and helping new hires get acculturated to their positions and responsibilities. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) reports that close to 25% of the general workforce will undergo some form of work transition during their careers. For the Fairfax County Department of Family Services, some programs were on the opposite side of this figure with turnover rates as low as 3%. However, for our more critical programs addressing matters of child welfare and poverty, turnover rates were up to 23% with some programs going months with vacancies in key areas. So, in 2011 the need to strengthen our employee retention strategy was deemed a departmental priority and Fairfax DFS welcomed innovations in how we welcome new employees through the “front door” of their DFS careers and support them throughout their career lifecycle. The result was the creation of an evidence-based, 3-pronged approach to comprehensive onboarding and retention.

As a result of strategic planning information and the analysis of workforce that included exit interviews and length of service data, we developed our **Employee Lifecycle Retention Program** focused on three core strategies 1. Develop a standard **Learning Map** for new employees that would accelerate their access to essential information and development essential to their success during their critical first 6 months; 2. Establish **Career Management Plans** with standards, tools and processes to engage employees throughout the lifecycle of their employment; and 3. Devise the **Pulse Check System** to regularly monitor of the state of the workforce at critical points before they are most likely to leave the department to allow time to intervene and improve retention. These 3 key initiatives that comprise the

Employee Lifecycle Retention Program are truly unique and innovative solutions to the retention problems of our large and complex department.

Fairfax County - Department of Family Services

Employee Lifecycle Retention Program

Press Summary

The Fairfax County Department of Family Services (DFS) has created an evidence-based, 3-pronged approach to comprehensive onboarding and retention of employees. This Employee Lifecycle Retention Program includes Learning Maps designed to accelerate new employees' access to essential information critical to success during their first 6 months of employee; Career Management Plans with standards, tools and processes to engage employees throughout the lifecycle of their employment and a Pulse Check System to regular monitor the state of the workforce. This program offers unique and innovate solutions to retention of employees in a large and complex department.