



Municipal Workforce Development Task Force Report

Presented to the GMA Board of Directors

June 23, 2017



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GMA Board of Directors,

On behalf of the members of the Municipal Workforce Development Task Force, I'm pleased to present this report to the GMA Board of Directors. We trust that it meets the expectations set by GMA President Boyd Austin and provides a clear roadmap for GMA to follow as the association and city officials delve more deeply into the workforce development issues facing Georgia cities.



Appointed by President Austin in October 2016, the Task Force met in person twice and once via conference call. Three working groups comprised of Task Force members each met once via conference call. Task Force members enthusiastically delved into the issue, relaying both specific challenges their city faces as well as efforts to effectively address them.

This report is not a primer on workforce development issues, nor does it provide all-encompassing solutions to the workforce issues facing Georgia city governments. Rather, it focuses on recommendations on how GMA can assist cities address a variety of workforce issues. The report also contains background information on workforce development issues facing cities and the results of two GMA surveys.

I would like to thank Brian Wallace, GMA Director of Emerging Issues, for his work as staff coordinator for the Task Force. He was supported by Bill Thornton, Deputy Executive Director, Pam Helton, Director of Consulting Services, Holger Loewendorf, Research Analyst, and Korey Dickens, Manager of Content Development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Moore". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jan Moore, Task Force Chair

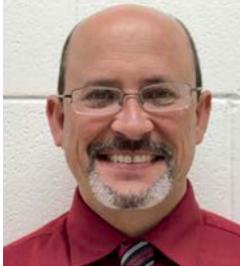
Mayor, Statesboro



Municipal Workforce Development Task Force

Georgia Municipal Association

Jan Moore, Chair
Mayor
Statesboro



Cameron Andrews
Mayor Pro Tem
Centerville



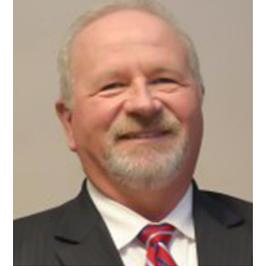
Ames Barnett
Mayor
Washington



Pete Bridges
Mayor
Tallapoosa



Stan Brown
City Manager
Oakwood



Jimmy Faircloth
Mayor
Perry



Cheryl Foster
City Administrator
Lithonia



John Gayle
Mayor
Valdosta



Marcia Hampton
City Manager
Douglasville



Isaiah Hugley
City Manager
Columbus



Terrell Jacobs
City Manager
Douglas



Michelle Cooper Kelly
Councilmember
Marietta



Pam Madison
City Manager
Adairsville



Craig McDaniel
Commissioner
Rome



Ed Moon
City Manager
West Point



Charles Schwabe
Mayor
Swainsboro



Gerald Smith
Councilmember
Dublin



Julie Smith
Mayor
Tifton



Stephen Tingen
Mayor
Gray



Keith Turman
Councilmember
Royston



Blaine Williams
Manager
Athens-Clarke County

During 2016, members of GMA's Member Services Advisory Council, along with other city officials, began to express their concerns to the Association about the difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified workers to fill a range of critical positions within their city government. With large numbers of baby boomers continuing to retire over the next ten to fifteen years, this problem will become even more acute unless appropriate strategies are identified and implemented.

To address these concerns, GMA President Boyd Austin appointed the Municipal Workforce Development Task Force in October 2016. Statesboro Mayor Jan Moore was asked to chair the Task Force which is comprised of 13 elected city officials and eight city managers. President Austin tasked the group to study this issue and prepare a report of findings and recommendations to be presented to the Board of Directors at the GMA Annual Convention in June 2017.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The GMA Municipal Workforce Development Task Force prepared this report based on feedback from members, interviews with representatives of professional organizations, and two surveys of GMA member cities. The recommendations generated through this process cover recruitment, retention, training, and succession planning as the basic stages of developing a productive workforce in Georgia's cities and are grouped into three clusters of activities: marketing, training, and developing a toolbox.

1) Marketing

Marketing emerged as an important theme because a majority of GMA member cities identified the recruitment of qualified personnel as a problem. In addition, survey data shows that employees in several municipal departments and throughout smaller cities in the state tend to skew older. Since local governments compete with other public organizations and the private sector for labor, there is a need to identify and promote the uniquely attractive characteristics of being a city employee. In monetary terms, this can be accomplished by demonstrating that a public-sector salary coupled with retirement and healthcare benefits can provide long-term financial stability. Emphasizing non-monetary benefits, such as job security and the opportunity to engage in meaningful work in a local community, is another marketing tool to attract potential employees. Finally, successful marketing efforts may require reaching out to new audiences. Cities should consider soliciting job applications beyond their immediate geographic boundaries, presenting themselves as model employers to younger residents, and engaging the public across a wide variety of media platforms.

2) Training

While more than three quarters of GMA survey respondents did not consider training to be a current issue for their cities, follow-up questions as well as other member feedback yielded a considerable list of training needs. The fact that virtually all members engage in some form of employee development suggests that training is a beneficial activity affecting all stages of workforce development. The recommendations for training in this report broadly distinguish between formal and informal practices and settings so that each member city can tailor programs according to its needs and (financial) abilities. Since training is one of GMA's core activities, the organization can leverage its connections and resources to expand opportunities for its members.

3) The Toolbox

Because of size and varying socio-economic conditions, cities differ in terms of staffing, capacity, and know-how. Developing a toolbox accessible to all members by using GMA as a central repository and conduit of information can help level this uneven playing field. As was the case with marketing and training, the toolbox also concerns all stages of workforce development. The data component of the toolbox could be used to determine living wage levels relevant for recruitment and retention. Inventories or databases of existing programs and best practices could be the appropriate tools for both training needs and succession planning. Most importantly, the toolbox allows GMA to build a knowledge base reflecting the current state of workforce development as well as innovative approaches in anticipation of future trends.

The GMA Workforce Development Task Force is pleased to present this report to the GMA Board of Directors. The following section lists all of the recommendations to the Board along with continuing efforts and next steps. In addition, the report provides more detailed background information on public-sector employment and workforce development trends as well as a discussion of the GMA workforce survey responses. The appendix includes meeting notes and references.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marketing

GMA should explore the feasibility of creating a statewide marketing initiative that promotes the unique selling points of pursuing careers in city government. Such an initiative could focus on, but not be limited to, the following:

- how a public sector salary in conjunction with retirement and healthcare benefits can provide long-term financial stability;
- how job security and engaging in meaningful work can contribute to individual job satisfaction;
- showcase the diversity of opportunity available in local government employment; and
- creation of materials for cities to use during job fairs, career days, and other job promotion materials.

Training

The Municipal Training Board should consider adding to, or enhancing courses in, the Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute that address workforce development issues. These could be special courses offered on a limited basis or courses that are integrated into the Institute's ongoing offerings. Potential courses could include, but not be limited to, the following subjects:

- cross-training of employees;
- hiring practices;
- leadership development;
- recruiting and retention;
- succession planning; and
- workplace culture.

GMA should incorporate sessions on workforce development issues and best practices into the association's Annual Convention.

GMA should explore the feasibility of offering webinars and/or regional workshops on workforce development issues and best practices. These webinars and workshops could include, but not be limited to, the following subjects:

- cross-training of employees;
- hiring practices;
- leadership development;
- recruiting and retention;
- succession planning; and
- workplace culture.

GMA should prepare an inventory of existing educational, leadership, customer service, team-building and certification programs and curricula available for city employees. The inventory should include information on the type of training available, course information, training sponsorship/affiliation, location, and costs.

GMA should explore the possibility of utilizing available state-level workforce and career initiatives and programs, as well as partnering with Georgia's technical college system, to implement apprenticeship programs for Georgia's cities.

GMA should consider the promotion of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government's (CVIOG) Management Development Program to cities.

GMA should explore the feasibility of creating employee cross-training resources in partnership with Georgia City-County Management Association (GCCMA), Georgia Local Government Personnel Association (GLGPA), or CVIOG.

Toolkit & Resources

GMA should identify and post on its website resources , case studies, articles, tutorials, webinars, and best practices on municipal workforce development issues to include, but not be limited to, the following subjects:

- how to increase the geographic reach of recruitment efforts (beyond the city and/or county);
- how to expand opportunities for work-based learning through apprenticeships;
- how to effectively implement youth programs in high schools (youth councils, youth police and fire academies, career academies, Great Promise Partnership);
- how to utilize flexible work arrangements (flex time, comp time);
- how to recruit and promote internally to retain employees with specific expertise;
- how to effectively utilize retirement plan indexing;
- how to effectively incorporate monetary and non-monetary compensation adjustments (career ladders, step increases, pay incentives based on qualifications, fringe benefits, shared sick leave, wellness program, parental leave, health clinic, mental health training for public safety employees);
- how to implement and improve training opportunities for city employees through cooperation with technical colleges, tuition assistance, leadership training, cross-training, and mentoring programs;
- how to effectively advertise open positions on private-sector marketing platforms;
- how to implement a “ban the box” policy; and
- how to implement strategies that commit public safety personnel (and other specialists) to work in the municipality that funded training and certification attainment.

GMA should identify and promote data tools to help cities understand and determine a local “living wage” for municipal employees.

GMA should identify career ladder resources for cities, potentially in partnership with GLGPA or CVIOG.

GMA should consider developing a Career Ladder Standard Model/Guide.

GMA should explore the feasibility of creating a template that would allow cities to document, in both physical and digital formats, institutional knowledge for critical positions.

GMA should consider developing standardized classification positions of government employees with level of criteria.

GMA should develop a database of cities willing to participate in a peer-to-peer mentoring program to assist new employees in key positions within city government.

GMA should develop a database of retirees willing to serve in interim positions in key management positions to assist cities during transition periods.

Moving Forward

The GMA Board of Directors should establish an advisory council to provide guidance and oversight to the Association's implementation of the recommendations found in this report. The council should be comprised of a mix of elected and appointed municipal officials.

GMA should convene a working group made up of city officials and representatives of professional organizations that represent city employees. The purpose of this group would be to keep each other informed as to what each group is doing in regards to workforce development issues and to determine if there are any areas in which the groups can collaborate.

GMA should continue to periodically survey cities on workforce related issues in order to track the progress and effectiveness of both GMA and cities' workforce related efforts.

BACKGROUND

Public-Sector Employment and Workforce Development Trends

The most recent statistics from the Georgia Department of Labor highlight the relevance of GMA's workforce development initiative. In 2015, there were 139,481 local government employees (excluding educational services and healthcare/social assistance) in the state. This makes local governments the 11th largest employer in Georgia, ranking above the information sector and below finance and insurance industries.

The Great Recession that began in 2008 still casts a shadow over the present, having led to a 4.3% decline in GDP, a peak unemployment rate of 10%, and a 30% reduction in home prices by 2009. In order to cope with lower tax revenue during and immediately following the most significant economic downturn since the early 1930s, state and local governments relied on hiring freezes, layoffs, and furloughs. These policies, among other developments, led to declining public-sector employment by 2% for state and 3% for local government from 2005-2014. Overall, younger people responded to diminished employment prospects by enrolling in higher education or delaying entry into the labor force by other means, while older individuals postponed retirement.

A stagnating labor market also affected the demographics of state and local workforces, with the average age of workers in these sectors rising from 41 years in 1994 to 45 years in 2014. During the same time, the percentage of employees aged 55 or older grew from 13% to 25%. Using slightly different age brackets, another study found that in 2013, 52.1% of local government employees were between the ages of 45 and 64, compared to 56.7% of federal workers and 49.7% of state employees. Since this age group—the baby boomer generation—is expected to retire within a relatively short period of time, researchers have labelled their impending exodus from public service the “silver tsunami” and warned of dire consequences for the workforce. There are several indicators that this wave of retirements has now begun in state and local government.

As the country's economic recovery proceeds, workforce challenges can become opportunities. For starters, local governments are hiring again. The Georgia Department of Labor projects local governments in the state to add 15,700 employees by 2024, which translates into an annual growth rate of 1.1%. Another positive sign is the growing interest in government careers among students in public administration programs and related departments. This is even better news when considering that first-time enrollment in public administration programs has increased by an annual average of 3.6% between 2008 and 2012 while outpacing enrollment growth in business degrees. Although the retirement of baby boomers implies a weakening of the public sector through the loss of institutional knowledge, millennials are waiting to be employed.

GMA WORKFORCE SURVEY RESULTS

1) Response Rates and Representativeness

GMA administered two surveys to 519 member cities between December 2016 and February 2018. The GMA Workforce Development Critical Issues Survey received 144 responses for a response rate of 27.7%, while 153 respondents returned the GMA Workforce Composition Survey for a response rate of 29.5%. As shown in Table 1, survey respondents match the population distribution across GMA cities in most population ranges, which correspond to survey categories used by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. In the Workforce Development Critical Issues Survey, cities are overrepresented in three population ranges and underrepresented in the smallest range (cities with fewer than 500 residents). In the Workforce Composition Survey, there is slight underrepresentation in the two largest population ranges and overrepresentation in two of the three smallest categories.

Table 1: Survey Respondents by Population Range

Population Range	All GMA Cities	Percent	Workforce Development Critical Issues	Percent	Workforce Composition	Percent
50,000+	16	3%	6	4%	3	2%
25,000-49,999	22	4%	8	6%	4	3%
10,000-24,999	49	9%	12	8%	12	8%
5,000-9,999	44	8%	17	12%	10	7%
2,500-4,999	79	15%	22	15%	23	15%
1,000-2,499	91	18%	31	22%	32	21%
500-999	90	17%	23	16%	26	17%
less than 500	128	25%	25	17%	43	28%
Total	519		144		153	

2) GMA Workforce Development Critical Issues Survey

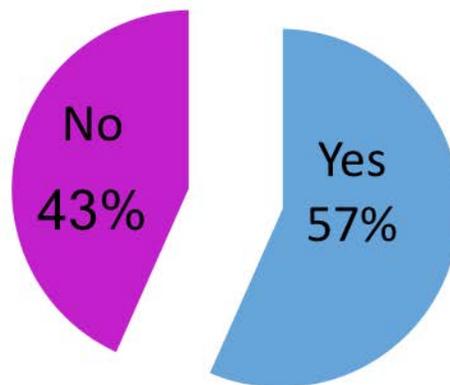
a) Recruitment

The key finding for the Critical Issues Survey is that “recruiting qualified applicants” was the only survey item identified as a problem by a majority of respondents for their city (57%, or 81 out of 143 respondents, as shown in Image 1). This finding suggests that cities are aware of the need to market themselves as viable employers and to frame public service at the local level as a viable career choice.

Image 1: Recruiting Qualified Applicants

Is recruiting qualified applicants
currently an issue for your city?

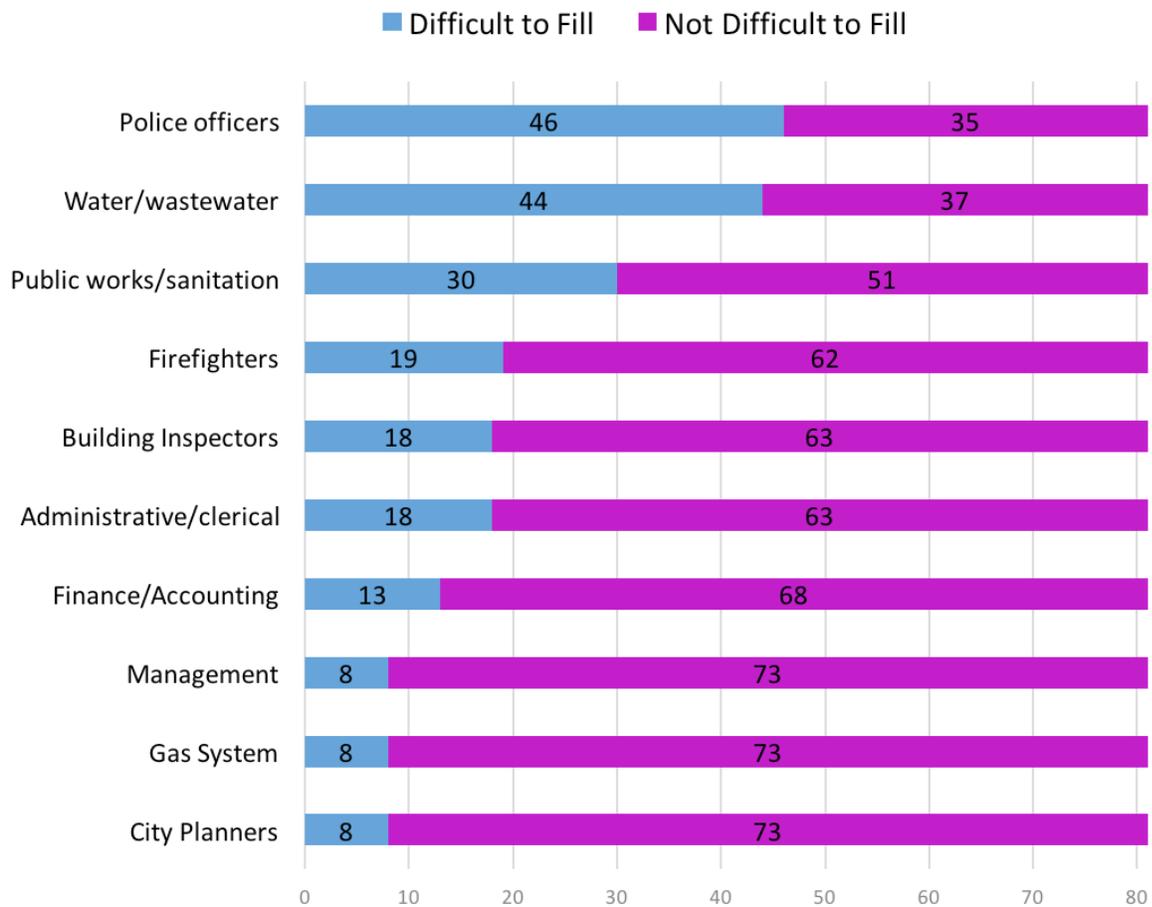
n=143



The first follow-up question on the topic of recruitment asked respondents which positions or jobs are challenging to fill with qualified applicants (respondents were allowed to name up to five positions). Image 2 lists the ten most frequent answer choices as given by 81 respondents. Other less frequently chosen options include electric system, skilled trades, mechanics, community development, engineers, information technology, dispatchers, and seasonal employees. Future recruitment efforts could focus on police officers and water/wastewater employees because a majority of respondents identified these positions as difficult to fill.

Image 2: Difficult Positions/Jobs to Fill with Qualified Applicants

Which of the following positions or jobs are most difficult to fill?



In a second follow-up question, GMA asked why cities have difficulties filling vacant positions. Table 2 lists the three most popular responses by a total of 74 respondents for each sector. Other less frequently chosen options include lack of education, conditions/work not seen as desirable, failure to pass drug test, perception/reputation of the city, and the city being an undesirable location. There are noticeably similar responses across the five sectors, which corresponds to the previously identified need for more effective marketing in addition to improved training opportunities to increase the skill levels and professionalism of potential applicants. The fact that “wages not seen as competitive” is an answer choice for all sectors points to the pervasiveness of perceptions that are detrimental to recruitment and retention.

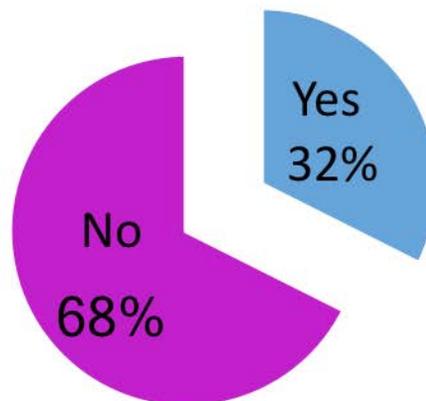
Table 2: Why do you have difficulties filling vacant positions?

Police	Fire	Public Works/ Sanitation	Utilities	General & Administrative
lack of applicants	lack of applicants	lack of skills/ experience	lack of skills/ experience	wages not seen as competitive
wages not seen as competitive	wages not seen as competitive	poor attitude/ presentation of applicants	wages not seen as competitive	lack of skills/ experience
failure to pass background check	licensing/ certification requirements	wages not seen as competitive	licensing/ certification requirements	lack of applicants

In addition to qualifications, the Critical Issues Survey also asked about recruiting diverse applicants. A majority, 92 out of 136 respondents, did not identify this topic as a critical issue for their cities, as seen in Image 3.

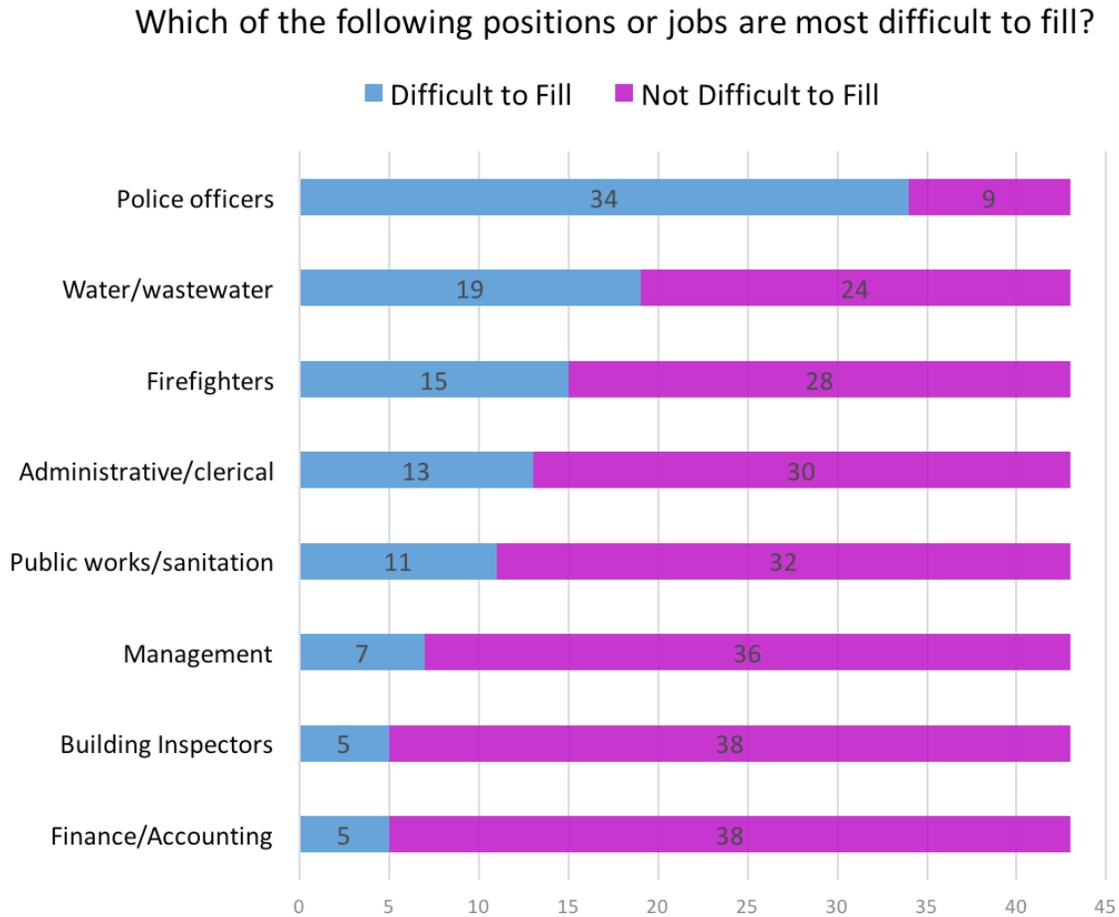
Image 3: Recruiting for Diversity

Is recruiting diverse applicants currently an issue for your city?
n = 136



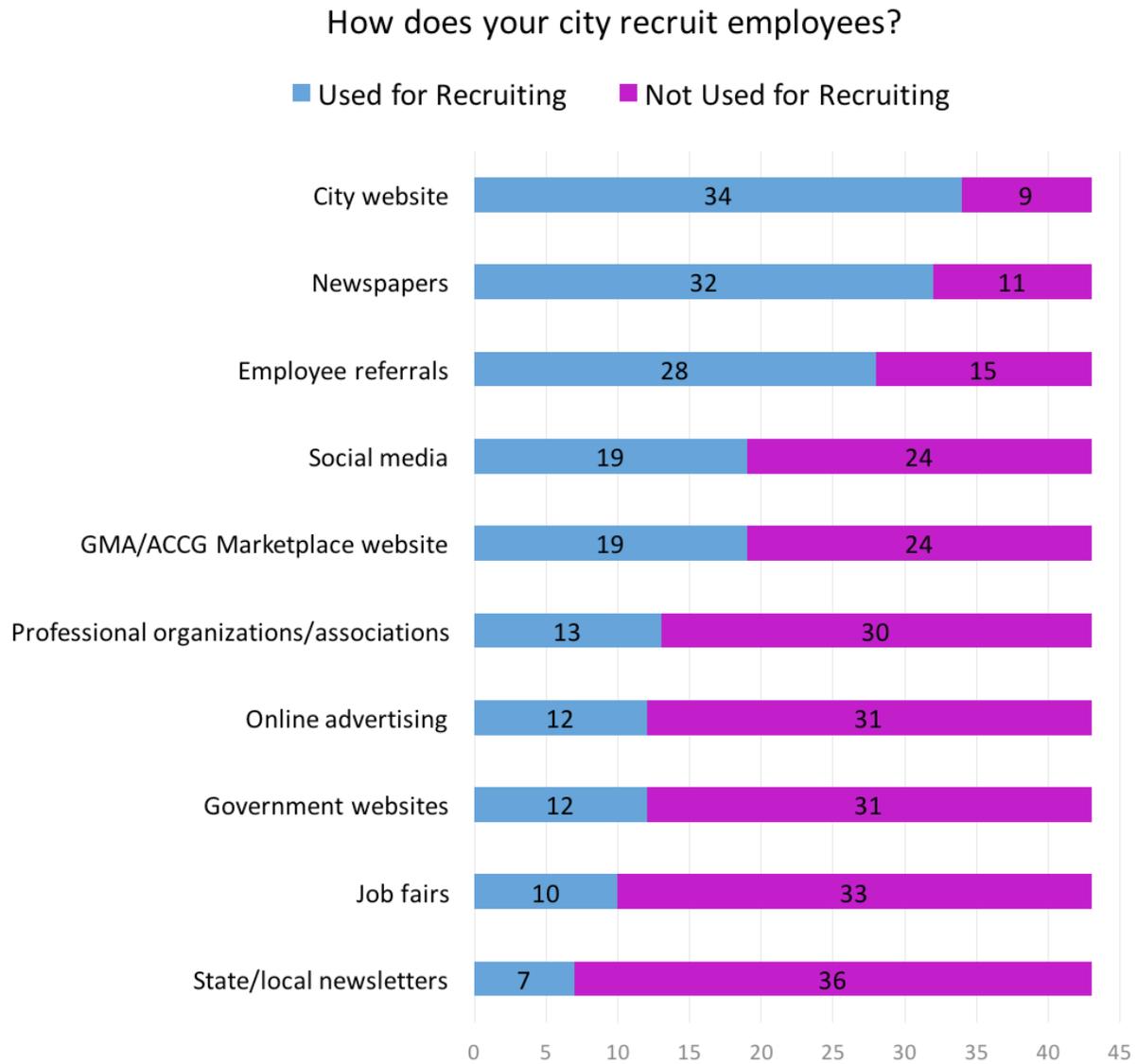
However, follow-up questions suggest that the issue of diversity presents challenges for certain jobs. First, as shown in Image 4, the vast majority of 43 respondents reported difficulties finding a diverse applicant pool of police officers, and slightly fewer than half of the responding cities said the same about water/wastewater positions.

Image 4: Difficult Positions/Jobs to Fill with Diverse Applicants



Second, a follow-up question about recruiting methods (allowing respondents to check all options that apply) reveals that the majority of the 43 respondents primarily recruited applicants via a city website, newspapers, and employee referrals. Slightly fewer than half of the respondents indicated the use of social media and the GMA/ACCG marketplace website, followed by less popular answer choices, including those not displayed in Image 5 (conferences, university websites, presentations at schools, radio, and “other”). These results suggest many opportunities for cities to broaden their recruiting methods in order to appeal to a more dispersed and diverse audience.

Image 5: Recruiting Methods

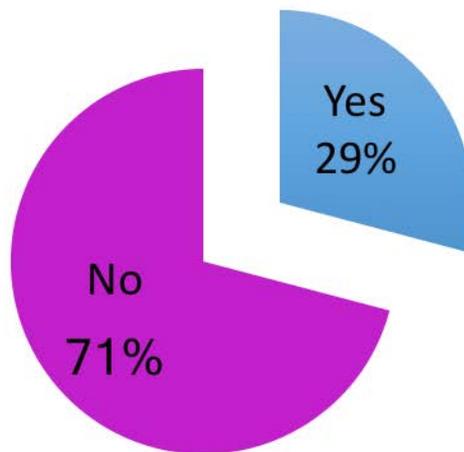


b) Retention

Retention was not identified as an issue for the majority of cities (95 out of 143 respondents, as shown in Image 6).

Image 6: Retention/Controlling Turnover

Is retention/controlling turnover currently an issue for your city?
n = 134



In a follow-up question, cities were asked to indicate their three most popular strategies for retaining employees. As summarized in Table 3, 38 respondents reveal very similar choices across sectors and indicate a preference for combining monetary and non-monetary approaches. This suggests that public employers recognize that they are competing with other public and private entities for employees. Using training for the purposes of retention also implies that there is value in providing employees with a sustainable career path. Other options not shown here are reward/recognition programs, increased flexibility in employment/leave arrangements, and providing more full-time employment.

Table 3: Which strategies are you using to retain employees?

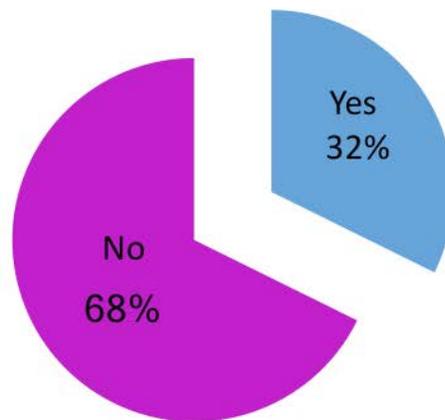
Police	Fire	Public Works/ Sanitation	Utilities	General & Administrative
increased salaries	increased salaries	increased salaries	increased salaries	changes to compensation structure
changes to compensation structure	increased salaries			
increased training/skill development				

c) Retirement/Succession Planning

A majority of respondents (90 out of 133) do not currently consider retirement to be an issue for their cities (see Image 7).

Image 7: Retirement/Succession Planning

Is retirement/succession planning currently an issue for your city?
n = 133



When asked how they plan to replace retirees, the 43 respondents who answered this follow-up question unanimously picked the same three choices in the same order, as shown in Table 4. The third response indicates an opportunity for GMA to develop a database for cities in need of consultants. Less frequent responses were to shrink the workforce and delay retirement.

Table 4: How do you plan to replace retirees?

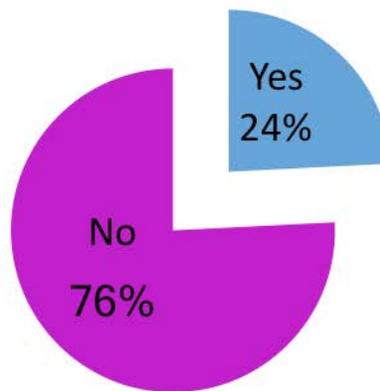
Police	Fire	Public Works/ Sanitation	Utilities	General & Administrative
hire new employees				
promote from within the organization				
retain retirees as consultants				

d) Employee Development/Training

Development/training received the highest share of responses answering “no” (100 out of 132) when asked whether it was currently an issue for a city (see Image 8).

Image 8: Employee Development/Training

Is employee development/training currently an issue for your city?
n = 132



Two follow-up questions reflect a wide range of training needs and practices. First, cities were asked to provide the top three types of training they provide, resulting in 29 respondents compiling the list shown in Table 5. Technical training is prioritized in public safety professions, whereas other municipal departments mainly rely on cross-training. Less popular answer choices include mobility opportunities, staff support, and assessment services.

Table 5: Which types of employee development/training do you provide?

Police	Fire	Public Works/ Sanitation	Utilities	General & Administrative
training ("hard"/ technical skills)	training ("hard"/ technical skills)	introduction of staff to new roles (cross- training)	introduction of staff to new roles (cross- training)	introduction of staff to new roles (cross- training)
career development plan	introduction of staff to new roles (cross- training)	leadership/ management/ supervisory skills training	training ("hard"/ technical skills)	leadership/ management/ supervisory skills training
leadership/ management/ supervisory skills training	training ("soft" skills)	mentoring	mentoring	training ("hard"/ technical skills)

Second, the same respondents indicated their three most frequently utilized training providers. Professional development organizations and in-house training appear across all municipal departments, albeit differently ranked (see Table 6). Less popular answer choices were colleges/universities, commercial providers, and technical colleges.

Table 6: Where do you send employees for development/training?

Police	Fire	Public Works/ Sanitation	Utilities	General & Administrative
professional development organization	professional development organization	in-house	professional development organization	in-house
in-house	in-house	employee self-directed training	employee self-directed training	professional development organization
online	online	professional development organization	in-house	online

Taken together, these answers suggest that training is a ubiquitous activity. While not perceived as problematic, it is likely that cities do not have equal opportunities to access high-quality training and could benefit from developing common standards and best practices.

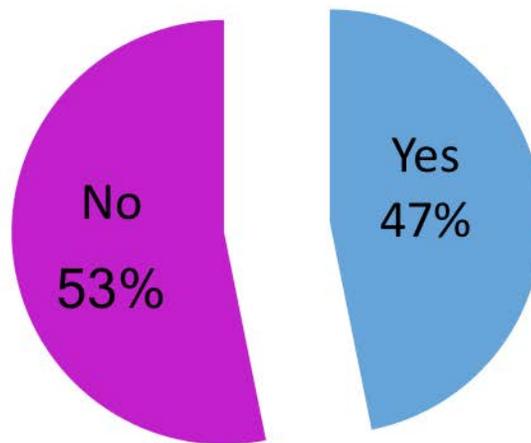
e) Workforce Costs

The final set of questions in the Critical Issues Survey concerns workforce cost control. This is not an issue for a majority of respondents, although by a small margin. As seen in Image 9, 68 out of 129 respondents answered “no”.

Image 9: Controlling Workforce Costs

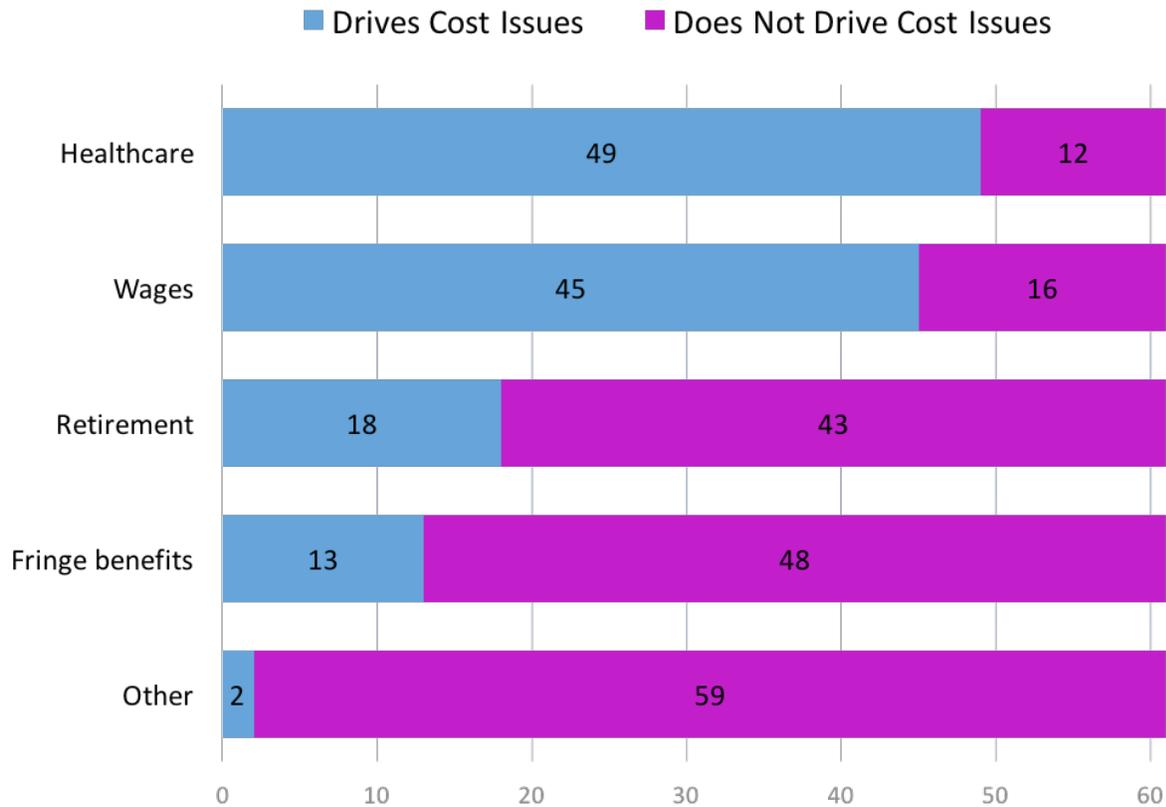
Is controlling workforce costs currently an issue for your city?

n = 129



A follow-up question reveals that the biggest cost factors associated with municipal workforces are healthcare (49 out of 61 respondents) and wages (45 out of 61 respondents). Image 10 also shows that retirement costs and fringe benefits rank far lower. Answer choices that were not considered among the top three cost factors include temporary employment or overtime, workers compensation, liability, and lawsuits.

Image 10: Workforce Cost Drivers



3) GMA Workforce Composition Survey

The second GMA survey sought to obtain detailed information on staffing levels and staff composition among departments in member cities. Cross tabulation of city size (by population) with staff levels (by age bracket) in municipal departments yielded the most useful information, as displayed in Tables 7 through 12. A department was coded as skewing younger if the number of full-time employees below 35 years of age was equal to or larger than the number of full-time employees in the next-highest age bracket (35-55 years) while also exceeding the number of full-time employees in the highest age bracket (older than 55). Similarly, a department is considered to skew older if the number of full-time employees in the highest age bracket is equal to or higher than the number of full-time employees in the middle age bracket while also exceeding the number of full-time employees in the youngest age bracket.

A department is described as having a normal age distribution when the middle age bracket contains the largest number of full-time employees compared to the other age brackets. Throughout this process, part-time employees were used as tiebreakers.

It is worth emphasizing that age skew in itself is not an indicator of effectiveness or any other measure of good governance. However, cities with older-skewing departments may experience problems if retired employees are not replaced by new hires or if succession planning is deficient. Likewise, younger-skewing departments could become dysfunctional if their relative lack of experience and know-how is not remedied by training.

Table 7: Police Department - Age Distribution

Population Range	# of cities in sample	# of cities skewing younger	# of cities with normal distribution	# of cities skewing older
25,000+	7	3	4	0
10,000-24,999	11	5	6	0
5,000-9,999	8	1	7	0
2,500-4,999	18	2	16	0
1,000-2,499	26	9	14	3
500-999	14	3	11	0
less than 500	16	1	12	3

Table 8: Fire Department - Age Distribution

Population Range	# of cities in sample	# of cities skewing younger	# of cities with normal distribution	# of cities skewing older
25,000+	6	1	5	0
10,000-24,999	8	5	3	0
5,000-9,999	5	1	4	0
2,500-4,999	14	5	9	0
1,000-2,499	7	1	5	1
500-999	4	1	2	1
less than 500	5	0	4	1

Table 9: Public Works/Sanitation Department - Age Distribution

Population Range	# of cities in sample	# of cities skewing younger	# of cities with normal distribution	# of cities skewing older
25,000+	6	0	6	0
10,000-24,999	9	1	5	3
5,000-9,999	8	0	6	2
2,500-4,999	17	3	6	8
1,000-2,499	27	8	13	6
500-999	17	5	6	6
less than 500	17	2	12	3

Table 10: Utilities Department - Age Distribution

Population Range	# of cities in sample	# of cities skewing younger	# of cities with normal distribution	# of cities skewing older
25,000+	3	0	3	0
10,000-24,999	8	2	5	1
5,000-9,999	7	0	5	2
2,500-4,999	17	1	13	3
1,000-2,499	23	6	10	7
500-999	17	3	7	7
less than 500	5	0	4	1

Table 9: Public Works/Sanitation Department - Age Distribution

Population Range	# of cities in sample	# of cities skewing younger	# of cities with normal distribution	# of cities skewing older
25,000+	6	0	6	0
10,000-24,999	9	1	5	3
5,000-9,999	8	0	6	2
2,500-4,999	17	3	6	8
1,000-2,499	27	8	13	6
500-999	17	5	6	6
less than 500	17	2	12	3

Table 10: Utilities Department - Age Distribution

Population Range	# of cities in sample	# of cities skewing younger	# of cities with normal distribution	# of cities skewing older
25,000+	3	0	3	0
10,000-24,999	8	2	5	1
5,000-9,999	7	0	5	2
2,500-4,999	17	1	13	3
1,000-2,499	23	6	10	7
500-999	17	3	7	7
less than 500	22	4	10	8

Table 11: General & Administrative Department - Age Distribution

Population Range	# of cities in sample	# of cities skewing younger	# of cities with normal distribution	# of cities skewing older
25,000+	7	0	7	0
10,000-24,999	11	0	8	3
5,000-9,999	8	1	5	2
2,500-4,999	22	1	18	3
1,000-2,499	32	4	14	14
500-999	23	1	8	14
less than 500	39	3	14	22

Tables 7 through 11 show a clear pattern in terms of departmental age distributions correlated with city size (by population). For public safety professions (Table 7 and Table 8), only the three smallest population categories (cities with 2,500 residents or less) have departments that skew older, and the total number of cities with older-skewing departments is fairly low. For other departments, the total number of cities with older-skewing departments increases substantially. However, there are variations between older-skewing departments when it comes to the highest total number and percentage of cities in specific population categories. For instance, cities with a population between 2,500 and 4,999 have the largest total number and percentage of older-skewing public works and sanitation departments. The corresponding population categories for utilities as well as general and administrative departments are the two smallest ones (999 or fewer residents).

Table 12: Summary – All Departments

Department	# of cities in sample	# of cities skewing younger	# of cities with normal distribution	# of cities skewing older
Police	100	24	70	6
Fire	49	14	32	3
Public Works/ Sanitation	101	19	54	28
Utilities	97	16	53	28
General & Administrative	142	10	74	58

Table 12 provides a summary of all departments without considering population size. Again, there is a clear divide in terms of age distribution between public safety and other departments. Expressed in total numbers and as a percentage, general and administrative departments contain the oldest-skewing employees among survey respondents.

APPENDIX A:

**Summaries of Municipal Workforce
Task Force Meetings**

GMA MUNICIPAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

December 14, 2016

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Task Force Members in Attendance

Chairman Jan Moore

Craig McDaniel

Pete Bridges

Ed Moon

Stan Brown

Gerald Smith

Cheryl Foster

Julie Smith

John Gayle

Stephen Tingen

Terrell Jacobs

Keith Turman

Michelle Cooper Kelly

Blaine Williams

GMA Staff in Attendance

Brian Wallace

Pam Helton

Korey Dickens

Holger Loewendorf

Meeting Summary

Task Force Chair Jan Moore called the meeting to order, introduced herself and briefly reviewed the charge of the group which is to prepare a report of the group's findings and recommendations to present to the GMA Board of Directors at its June 2017 meeting in Savannah.

Task force members introduced themselves.

GMA staff gave a brief update on some initial conversations with other organizations that would likely have an interest in this subject. Pam Helton had spoken with the Georgia Rural Water Association, Georgia Association of Water Professionals and the Building Officials Association of Georgia, while Brian Wallace had been in contact with the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police and Electric Cities of Georgia. The key take-away from these conversations was that while there is a high degree of interest in workforce development issues, none of the organizations had any hard data to share with GMA about workforce development issues in their industry.

The assembled group then discussed the workforce issues they saw affecting their cities. A number of specific issues were identified:

- compensation
- losing institutional knowledge to retirements
- losing people to county government
- not hiring most qualified people
- the need for inducements other than compensation
- succession planning
- flexible work schedules
- internal culture (helping employees succeed)
- losing staff to consultants
- recruitment
- etc.

The draft survey was discussed next. It was suggested that the workforce composition questions be removed from the survey and included in a separate survey.

The Task Force then broke into four discussion groups to answer the following four questions:

- What has your city done to address your workforce issues?
- What would help your city, i.e., what tools/resources do you need?
- What other organizations should/could help?
- What can/should GMA do?

Each of the four groups reported back what they discussed. Please refer to Notes from Breakout Sessions for detailed information. Key themes emerged, particularly in regards to what GMA could do to help cities:

- Create a resource inventory of workforce development best practices, research and data.
- Succession planning
- Workforce assessment
- Incorporate workforce issues into sessions at meetings and training program
- Help with marketing cities as a good place to work
- Partnership with technical college system

Before adjourning the meeting, Chairman Moore indicated that the initial plan would be for the Task Force to meet again in March and May before she presents the final report to the GMA Board in June. Moore also indicated that she would be appointing three work groups - Succession Planning, Retention, and Training Needs - to delve into those specific issues. Moore also commented that she felt that the workforce issues with police are unique enough to deal with separately and that she will discuss this further with the Task Force.

The meeting was adjourned.

GMA MUNICIPAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

January 31, 2017

Georgia Municipal Association

9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Task Force Members in Attendance

Chairman Jan Moore

Stan Brown

Stephen Tingen

GMA Staff in Attendance

Bill Thornton

Brian Wallace

Pam Helton

Becky Taylor

Korey Dickens

Holger Loewendorf

Interviewees

Charles Wasdin, Chief, Hazlehurst/Jefferson Davis County Fire & Rescue
Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs

Frank Rotondo, Executive Director,
Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police

Mark Rice, Chief Building Official, City of Marietta
Building Officials Association of Georgia

Suzanne Powell, Manager, Education & Development
Electric Cities of Georgia

Mike Jewell, Regulatory Compliance Coordinator, City of Lawrenceville,
GMA Gas Section

Stan Brown, City Manager, City of Oakwood,
Georgia Chapter of the American Public Works Association

Meeting Summary

Task Force Chair Jan Moore called the meeting to order. After attendees introduced themselves, the meeting consisted of six interviews with representatives of professional organizations scheduled at hourly intervals.

The main focus throughout the interviews was on recruitment and retention. Training was also identified as a significant and closely related problem, while attendees spent less time discussing succession planning.

A common theme during the meeting was that recruitment and retention issues share an underlying but not always feasible solution: some cities would have to spend more money on salaries in order to compete with the private sector as well as other jurisdictions. If cities are unable or unwilling to allocate this type of funding, they may need to emphasize other (non-monetary) benefits of public employment, such as fringe benefits, job security, and public service that combines meaningful work with community values. Beyond money, recruitment and retention problems diverge: recruitment is mainly a communications issue of how to sell the public sector (and specific jobs within it) as viable employment. Retention is highly dependent on sound and innovative management.

While interviewees framed recruitment mainly in terms of finding qualified rather than diverse candidates, potential solutions can address both problems simultaneously. Beginning recruitment earlier (i.e., via work-based learning in high schools and technical colleges) and broadening the geographical horizon along with regional cooperation emerged as likely recommendations. The Georgia Energy and Industrial Construction Consortium (GEICC) website and other elements of Suzanne Powell's presentation could be used as a model for other sectors.

All interviewees identified retention as a problem in light of a mobile workforce. Employees leave for better pay, better working conditions, or because of limited career opportunities. Some of these factors are structural: there may be a built-in ceiling for an ambitious and high-performing employee, especially in a small city. Other factors can be controlled by the employer and could be the focus for recommendations related to management techniques (e.g., a more uniform pay-grade scale, career ladders, motivational tools) as well as fringe benefits. The other side of retention is the ability to manage or even dismiss poorly performing employees, which appears to be a problem specifically in public safety with its "revolving door".

Training was mainly discussed in connection with recruitment and retention. Regarding recruitment, interviewees emphasized several initiatives to familiarize high-school students with all of the jobs that cities have to offer. Training has a more direct impact on retention, which could be improved via internships, apprenticeships, and mentoring in addition to traditional training and licensing institutions. The GEICC's "Get into Energy Georgia" campaign could provide a template for these efforts in other fields.

Overall, the interviews were a useful addition to the data gathered in the GMA workforce surveys and provided a lot more specific (if occasionally anecdotal) information. GMA was grateful for the opportunity to hear directly from representatives of professional organizations. Staff members used this feedback to help the Task Force identify the most urgent problems for municipal workforces and develop recommendations accordingly.

GMA MUNICIPAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

March 29, 2017

MEAG Training Facility, Forsyth

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Task Force Members in Attendance

Chairman Jan Moore

Cameron Andrews

Pete Bridges

Keith Turman

Stan Brown

Isaiah Hugley

Cheryl Foster

Marcia Hampton

John Gayle

Terrell Jacobs

GMA Staff in Attendance

Brian Wallace

Pam Helton

Korey Dickens

Holger Loewendorf

Bill Thornton

Meeting Summary

Task Force Chair Jan Moore called the meeting to order and had everyone introduce themselves.

Brian Wallace gave a brief update on the January 31 interviews at the GMA offices with representatives from various local government professional organizations. Chairman Moore, Gray Mayor Stephen Tingen, and Oakwood City Manager Stan Brown attended the meeting along with GMA staff. Representatives from the following organizations spoke with GMA about workforce issues:

- Georgia Fire Chiefs Association
- Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police

- Electric Cities of Georgia
- GMA Gas Section
- Building Officials Association of Georgia
- Georgia Chapter of the American Public Works Association (Stan Brown addressed this group's issues)

Representatives from the water/wastewater profession were unable to attend the January 31 meeting. Brian Wallace will touch base with them to get their feedback on this issue and to update them on what GMA has done so far.

See the insights provided by Holger Loewendorf for a review of the January 31 meeting.

Pam Helton then spoke briefly about The Local Government Workforce of Tomorrow session held during the Georgia City-County Management Association's meeting in Athens on March 24. Pam, as well as the city managers on the Task Force that attended the session, felt it was a very good session and that something similar should be done during GMA's Annual Convention in Savannah in June.

Holger Loewendorf then presented the results of the two GMA workforce development surveys (see Powerpoint slides).

- The recommendations of the three work groups were then discussed. Stan Brown presented the recommendations of the Training Needs work group, Terrell Jacobs presented the Succession Planning work group recommendations, and Holger Loewendorf presented the Recruiting & Retention work group recommendations on behalf of Stephen Tingen who was unable to attend the meeting.

See Municipal Workforce Development Task Force Working Group Draft Recommendations for a list of the recommendations as presented.

All of the reports were accepted as is with the addition of a recommendation to include a mention of succession planning in newly elected training.

Task Force members agreed that the recommendations broke out into three main categories: marketing, training needs, and workforce development toolbox.

Chairman Moore made a motion that two other recommendations be approved:

- For the GMA board to continue to have a dedicated group of city officials working on this issue over the next one to two years; and
- GMA should convene a working group made up of city officials and representatives of professional organizations that represent city employees. The purpose of this group would be to keep each other informed as to what each group is doing in regards to workforce development issues and to determine if there are any areas in which the groups can collaborate on workforce issues.

The Task Force approved Moore's motion.

GMA staff indicated that a draft report to the GMA board would be sent to the Task Force by the middle of May. The Task Force members agreed that the next meeting could be done via conference call, that it would be scheduled the week before Memorial Day and that its primary purpose would be to review the draft report. The Task Force also agreed to allow GMA staff to re-write and organize the draft recommendations as needed.

The meeting was adjourned.



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