

MUNICIPAL RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND TRAINING



Suggestions based on Municipal Employment Sector Study 2019



Views expressed in this publication are the views of the Community Training and Development Centre and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province.

Funded by:



INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The need for recruitment, retention and training strategies will increase in the coming years as the job market continues to shift. As the Baby Boomer generation reaches retirement age and the Millennial generation enters the workforce there will be notable changes to job types, working requirements and expectations and workplace culture.

The ONWARD study, conducted in 2017, reported that by 2021 44% of all local government employees will be able to retire. When considering senior government employees 51% will be eligible for retirement. This will increase the need for recruitment of new employees and the training of current employees to fill more senior positions.

This booklet has been formulated based on a combination of virtual focus groups conducted in the areas of Peterborough, Northumberland and Hastings County and further research conducted through the Sector Partnership Planning Grant funded by MTCU.

Resources and ideas are identified in this booklet to help you to recruit, retain and train a new Municipal workforce. At the bottom of each page clickable links are available for more information and examples on each of the topics discussed.



EARLY EDUCATION FOR MUNICIPAL JOBS

Early Awareness Education

Awareness of jobs in the municipal sector will be critical for recruiting. This is particularly relevant in the smaller, more rural, municipalities. Bringing awareness to the types of jobs available in your municipal government at the high school level will ensure that the workforce of tomorrow is aware of local job opportunities that may exist. According to a joint study with The Community Training and Development Centre and Western University conducted in 2017 youth surveyed in Northumberland County reported that they “consider Northumberland home” and would like to return to the area after completing post secondary¹. However, they identified that their ability to do so was contingent on opportunities for employment and social engagement . Ensuring that youth at the high school level are aware of employment opportunities at the high school level will help them to make informed decisions about types of post-secondary education, as well as plans to return to live and work in their hometowns.

Strategies for Early Municipal Job Awareness Education:

- Informative posters/flyers given to local high school guidance offices
- Accepting high school co-op students/summer high school interns
- Doing comprehensive presentations about the many types of jobs that exist locally within the municipal sector at local high schools
- Information about all jobs in the municipal sector readily available on municipality website
- YouTube videos profiling different individuals in your organization (education, career trajectory, what they like about working for the municipality, what core skills they think are most important in their job, day-to-day tasks etc.)
- Hold information sessions about careers with the Municipality
- Host ‘Civics and Careers’ class field trips to tour and discuss types of careers within the municipality
- Have a volunteer youth member sit on committees

For more information follow these links:

https://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/resources/local_government_awareness_week/youth-engagement.html

<https://nhuron-pub.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=11687>

<http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/uploads/userfiles/files/Municipal%20Internship%20Program%20-%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions.pdf>

<http://guelph.ca/employment-careers/careers-jobs/job-profiles/>



RECRUITING, RETAINING & TRAINING MILLENNIALS

Attracting and retaining the millennial generation workforce will become increasingly important in the coming years. The millennial generation now makes up the largest portion of the workforce in Canada and are projected to represent over 70% by 2025. Research has been conducted on the differences in priorities and work habits of the millennial generation when compared to the previous workforce. It has been reported that the 4 most important features leading to job satisfaction for millennials include **positive company culture, trust, professional development opportunities** and **corporate social responsibility**. Millennials have been found to, more than any previous generation, value **high-trust** positions where they feel they can **'make a difference'**.

With this generational shift there will need to be some changes to recruitment and retention strategies. In order to attract millennials to work in municipalities you must engage young people in ways that will get them excited and interested in **how they can help to shape the future for their community**.

A 2015 survey conducted in the United States reported that the majority of millennials surveyed had a good opinion of local government and would pursue a career in this field. Those who would not, cited 'too much bureaucracy', 'constraints on what can be accomplished', 'not enough creative flexibility', and 'slow hiring processes' as reasons they would prefer to work in the private sector? Knowledge of what attracts millennials and how to engage this generation will be critical in recruiting and retaining the leaders of tomorrow.

Strategies for Effective Recruitment and Retention of Millennials:

- HR Departments need to be flexible, creative, strategic and responsive
- Policies need to be revamped to meet the needs of the changing workforce (support work-life balance/integration, create broad outcome-based policies, expedite hiring process, phase out seniority driven systems)
- Municipal government needs to be branded as an employer of choice (great public service, flexibility etc.)
- Focus on leadership, management, succession planning and growing future leaders
- Create a culture that engages employees
- Leverage technology, data and automation

For more information follow these links:

<https://www.municipalworld.com/feature-story/municipality-ready-attract-retain-top-talent/>

<https://www.transformgov.org/documents/workforce-tomorrow>

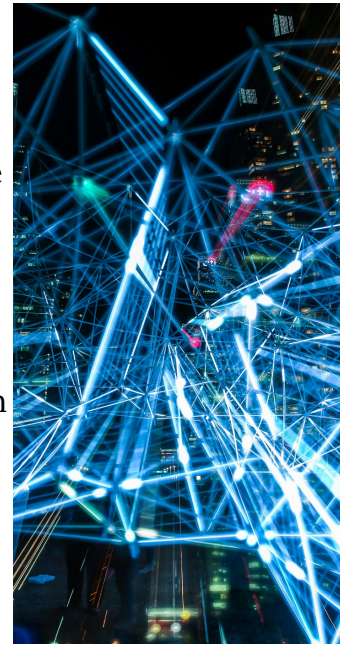
http://t.www.na-businesspress.com/JLAE/NolanLS_Web12_5_.pdf

https://www.greatplacetowork.com/images/media/2018_millennials_report_3.0.pdf

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/yec/2018/03/01/five-proven-tactics-for-hiring-and-retaining-millennial-employees/#706865e02deb>

<https://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/the-millennials-a-new-generation-of-employees-a-new-set-of-engagement-policies/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/change-job-market-2030-1.5086022>



UTILIZING THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

The creative economy is the most dynamic division in our global economy. Millennial youth stand out as **highly productive, independent, highly educated, and entrepreneurial individuals**. Adapting your organization to work in harmony with the creative economy is crucial for engaging and retaining. Integrating **simple upgrades** to your workspace will help to drive creativity and innovation.

Developing an unusual whimsical interior through architectural design or interior design and with workplace layout components will help to evoke employees creative mental state. Seek to target the human sensory system as a simple yet effect approach using, sight, smell, touch sound and taste.

Possibilities for Design Changes:

- Paint design on walls (murals etc.)
- Open concept space
- Fabric/texture walls
- Dynamic wall paper (forest, outdoor landscapes)
- Large windows
- Fresh air
- Images of clouds

Incorporate plants on desks, healthy snacks in the lunch room, art work pieces and creativity boosting colours on the walls. Also include spaces with calming colours, stimulating office music or individualized music for your employees to get their creative minds flowing. A creatively stimulating office culture is a productive and engaging space for employees.

For more information follow these links:

<https://www.officespacesoftware.com/blog/8-ways-to-make-your-office-feel-more-creative>

<https://www.salesforce.com/blog/2016/02/how-changing-your-workspace-can-boost-creativity.html>

<https://muskoka.civicweb.net/document/16625>



BRANDING MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT AS AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

Branding the Municipal Government as an employer of choice is critical in recruiting quality staff. Understanding what the municipality offers as an employer goes deeper than rates of pay and benefit packages. Though these are great incentives, properly marketing things like positive community culture, authentic leadership, flexibility and opportunities for career development/advancement could go a long way in ensuring that the municipal government is sought after as an employer.

Often when people hear the word ‘government’ they have a preconceived notion of what the work place would look like. Building a brand that highlights what the municipality stands for and the benefits of working there is important. Municipal government offers a career where individuals can serve the public, have an impact, work in a variety of changing jobs and have internal mobility. Properly marketed, these features serve to highlight the municipal government as a choice employer. For example the city of Edmonton markets themselves on Linked-in, Twitter and Indeed as a place to **“think outside the box, surround yourself with smart colleagues, and perform at your best”**².

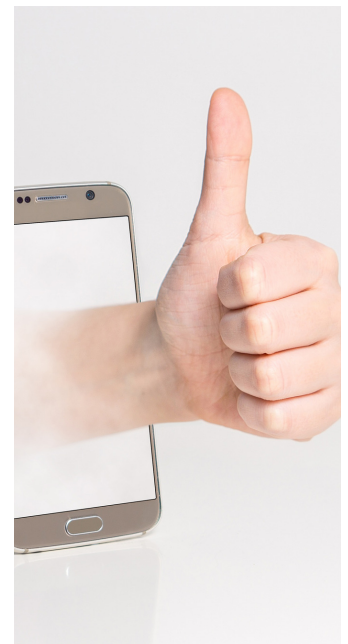
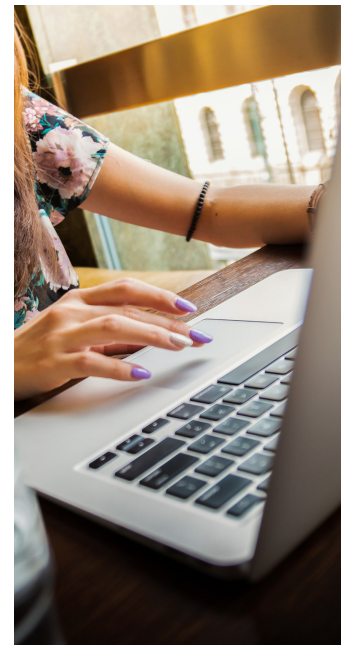
Ensuring that job postings are comprehensive, and express the values and culture of the organization, in a way that excites possible applicants rather than showing only simple job descriptions, is an excellent step towards branding the municipal government as an employer of choice. Ensure that you are marketing to different personality types and what drives different personas. In order to market to the type of employee who will be interested in what you are offering it is critical that you know exactly what the position has to offer.

Possible Branding Strategies

- Increase social media presence (ensure that you are expressing values, company culture, and relating your organization interest in social impact and its effect on your local community)
- Sponsor local teams/events
- Have company teams for employees and participate in local leagues or tournaments (baseball, volleyball, golf etc.)
- Promote self branding for your employees (demonstrating their skill base in the community)

For more information follow these links:

- https://www.kbrs.ca/sites/default/files/kbrs_viewpoint_employers_of_choice.pdf
- <https://www.bcjobs.ca/blog/benefits-of-employer-branding/>
- <https://www.theheadhunters.ca/blog/want-to-be-an-employer-of-choice/>
- <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/corporate-branding-right/96041/>



COMBINED RECRUITMENT/TRAINING TO BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

What is Social Capital?

Social Capital represents the connections you have to people in your life. Essentially it is all the relationships we presently have, both personally and professionally. These relationships have shared norms, values and understanding. Social resources exist within these relationship that can potentially help you to reach your objectives. These may include knowledge, information, contacts and experience ³.

Benefits to Municipalities When Building Social Capital & Networking:

- Exchange of knowledge
- Provide additional guidance and support for departments
- Create department solutions
- Generate strong teams by learning new business techniques
- Visibility of secondment opportunities within the network
- Stay abreast of the latest department developments
- Share services between the network to decrease costs and build a sense of community
- Share expertise between municipalities

Why Combined Recruitment and Training?

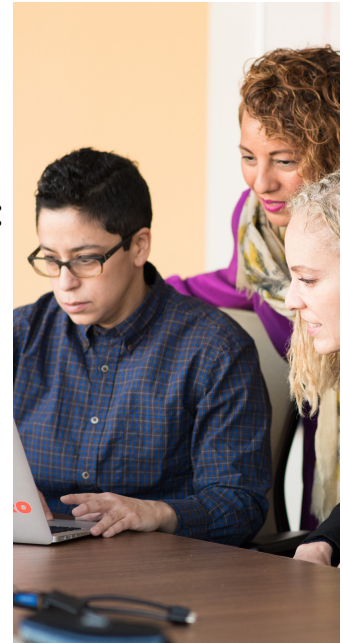
In order to build social capital particularly within smaller municipalities consider joint recruitment and training. By coming together to recruit and train staff you are encouraging employees to network, discuss success that they have had in a municipality, share solutions to common issues and provide suggestions for best practices. Because smaller municipalities often have few staff members, combined recruitment and training would increase the number of quality professional development opportunities and increase the applicant pool for hiring.

If potential candidates for job opportunities were able to upload their resumes to a shared hub, job applications could be processed and distributed to all municipalities. This hub would potentially increase the number of candidates who are aware of job opportunities and the number of qualified applicants.

For more information follow these links:

<https://www.oecd.org/insights/37966934.pdf>

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/73d0/659af763f1b1954a1d341d493c6f7376dd62.pdf>



STRATEGIC USE OF SABBATICALS

What is a Sabbatical?

A sabbatical is traditionally a period of time (paid or unpaid) where a full time employee is allowed an extended leave from work, typically ranging from 1 month to 1 year in length. Sabbaticals can be used to complete projects such as research or writing however, in a corporate sense the time off typically does not come with constraints on how it is spent. Sabbaticals are typically granted after a certain period of service, often 5 or 10 years.

The use of sabbaticals as a retention strategy could be very effective according to many HR experts. According to Maurice Mazerolle, Professor of HR at Ryerson University, “sabbaticals can greatly enhance an organization’s competitiveness” she advises that, “when people have enough money that satiates them to a point, then people want experience, they want to be able to have something that is different”⁴. Offering employees the time off to have experiences (something that is of particular value to the millennial generation) that they might otherwise be unable to have could be an excellent incentive to stay with your organization long-term.

Offering sabbaticals is an investment in your employees. It can reduce potential burnout, and reward employees for years of committed service in a job market where employee turnover is much shorter than it has been in the past.

Offering sabbaticals can also be seen as an opportunity for cross training and succession planning preparation. Offering opportunity for employees to fill a more senior positions while someone is on a sabbatical could make for a smoother transition when that person eventually leaves the company.

For more information follow these links:

<https://www.thehrdigest.com/what-is-sabbatical-leave/>

<https://hbr.org/2017/08/research-shows-that-organizations-benefit-when-employees-take-sabbaticals>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/sabbaticals-human-resources-1.5208559>



RECRUITING FOR COMPETENCIES

In a job market where finding potential employees who meet every expectation (education, experience, skills etc.) will continue to be more difficult, consider developing a model and procedure for hiring by competencies.

By breaking positions down into their component parts and determining the skills required, both skills that are mandatory and those that can be trained, one is able to come up with a matrix for hiring candidates with the best chance of success. It may also allow for continuous cross training and flexibility within a diverse workforce of varying skills, abilities and ages.

Developing a strategy for hiring by competencies may involve:

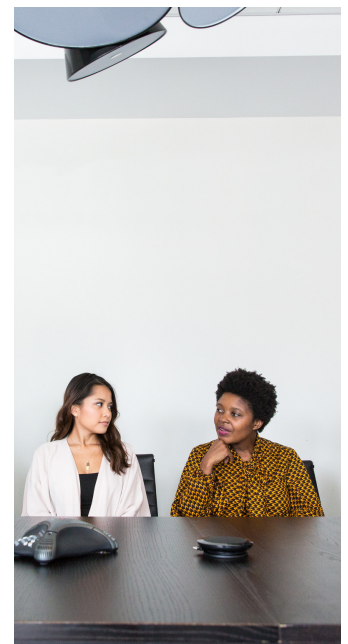
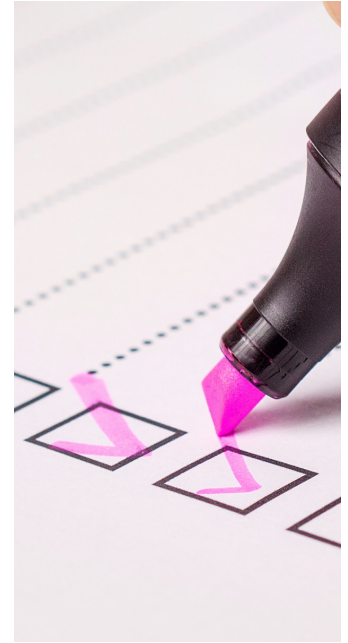
- Awareness of your strategic plan
- An understanding of the non-negotiable skills as well as trainable skills required for a position
- Considering alternate experiences (both work related experience and other private or carried experiences)
- Development of a competency training strategy
- An understanding of the value of creativity
- An understanding of the value of excellent soft/people skills

For more information follow these links:

<https://www.resolve recruit.com/what-is-competency-based-recruitment/>

<https://www.oakville.ca/assets/town%20hall%20-%20employee%20resources/ce-cd-CompetencyDictionary.pdf>

<http://workforceplanninghamilton.ca/publications/341>



SHARING OF STAFF

Considering the sharing of services and staff in smaller municipalities may offer the opportunity for both places to obtain a higher quality staff member. For a position where a full time employee is not necessary, sharing of staff between two municipalities in order to create a full time position would entice higher quality applicants. The highest prevalence of shared municipal services in Central Ontario are found in the areas of “purchasing” and “emergency management” however across the province municipalities have successful shared service arrangements in many diverse departments from “planning, building and by-law” to “economic development”⁵.

For smaller municipalities the sharing of services and staff could provide the opportunity to offer higher quality services while reducing cost. Municipalities can maintain their autonomy through formal partnership agreements. For larger municipalities this type of shared service agreement can also be beneficial by increasing the effectiveness of municipal services at a regional level.

For more information follow these links:

http://www.carlingtownship.ca/media/Shared_service_case_studies.pdf

http://ryersontownship.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/MFOA-Guide_to_shared_services-Ontario.pdf



ONBOARDING

What is Onboarding

Onboarding is the process by which new hires become assimilated into the organizational culture and structure of a company. Onboarding can include formal orientations, mentorships, job shadowing, meetings with supervisors or management and new employee training. Onboarding is not to be confused with mandatory orientation which includes the completion of paperwork and other routine processes. Onboarding is an ongoing process which may last up to one year after initial hiring.

Why Onboarding?

It is important that new hires feel that they are valued and fully understand their role in the workplace. Good onboarding strategies have been found to reduce employee turnover, increase productivity and reduce stress.

Possible Onboarding Strategies:

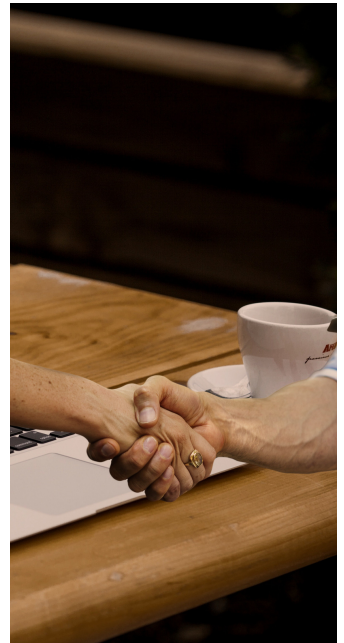
- Begin onboarding before hiring, build in information about the organizations goals and beliefs as well as culture into the interview process
- Pair a new hire with an existing employee to show them around, answer questions and tell them about the reality of working at the municipality
- Allow a new hire to job shadow
- Have a clear support system in place
- Focus on 'showing' rather than 'telling' when teaching a new employee new skills
- Have a system for in-house networking
- Ensure that a new employee clearly understands their role and where they fit within the organization

For more information follow these links:

<https://www.talentlyft.com/en/blog/article/181/employee-onboarding-ideas-examples-from-experts>

<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/pages/designing-and-implementing-an-effective-onboarding-strategy.aspx>

<https://peakon.com/de/blog/people-management/how-to-onboard-new-employees/>



INCENTIVES

In order to recruit and retain quality employees, offering incentives that improve work environment and encouraging them to stay with the company is important. It is reported that money is not typically one of the reasons for an employee to leave a municipality, often reasons such as office culture, lack of advancement opportunity and politics are cited as the primary reasons for departure⁶.

While incentives such as vacation time, pay increases and comprehensive benefit packages are effective there are many additional incentives that an organization can offer to attract and retain staff.

Possible Incentive Ideas:

- Monthly lunches
- Relaxed dress code/casual Fridays
- Flexible work schedules
- Tuition assistance
- Employee recognition events
- Health and wellness fairs
- In-house clinics and screenings
- Healthy eating seminars
- Free healthy food available
- Lunch and learns
- Up-to-date technology
- Free/discounted gym membership
- Allocated paid time off to volunteer in the community
- Flexible work spaces (standing desks, decorate your own space etc.)
- Opportunity to work remotely some of the time
- Local partner discounts (phone plans, wellness centers etc.)
- Free/discounted gym memberships
- Free entry to municipally owned venues (museums, parks, campgrounds, swimming pools boat launches etc.)
- Discounted rates on off prime rentals of arenas, ball fields and other recreational facilities
- Opportunities for professional development
- Provide specific feedback on work, talk face-to-face with superiors
- Sponsorship for company participation in events

For more information follow these links:

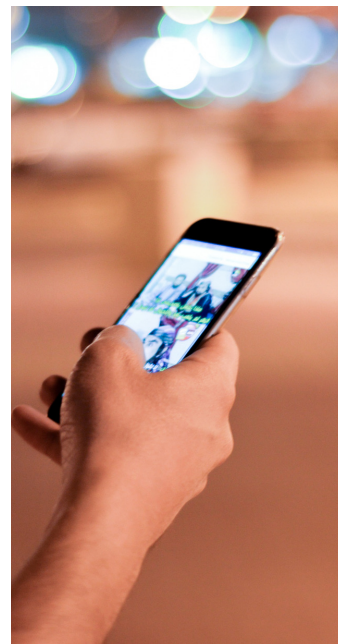
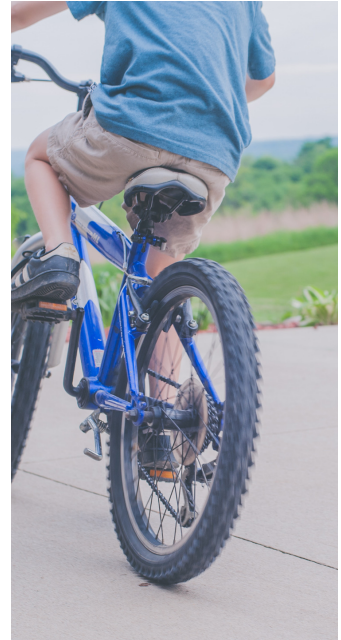
<https://www.amcto.com/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=21b9b593-755a-49ad-b23a-166be74a552e>

<https://www.caledon.ca/en/townhall/employment.asp>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5081153/>

<https://recruiterbox.com/business-guides/employee-and-office-management/create-an-employee-wellness-program-to-promote-workplace-health>

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-are-incentives-at-work-1917994>



ADAPTIVE LEARNING

What is Adaptive Learning?

Creating customized learning experiences for individuals which cater to their unique needs.

Adaptive learning is tailored to all types of individuals, whether they are beginners, intermediate, or advanced. This technology uses algorithms to familiarize itself to the employees needs based on tasks and responses. It emulates one-to-one instruction which is necessary in today's corporate world.

This platform collects data as the employee progresses through the modules. The data is then used to help personalize goals and create an effective learning path. The data is stored and helps to regulate the training and meet the needs of individual. Employees do not lose time studying topics they have mastered and do not under-study concepts they have not yet grasped. Adaptive learning in corporate training helps the employee focus on areas of weakness with efficient remediation.

This technology utilizes a 'confidence-based' assessment methodology to test the current understanding of the employee. The employee is asked to answer questions on content about which they claim to be confident. This approach is very useful in knowing what is consciously or unconsciously known and is an indirect method of providing personalized feedback and learning.

Adaptive learning also provides HR managers a scale of measurement of whether the employee is ready for a promotion or advancement. Use of Adaptive learning in corporate training helps learners advance more quickly, and assist in achieving their goals.

Benefits of Adaptive Learning:

- Increased employee engagement
- Greater course flexibility and access
- Greater opportunity for employee self-remediation
- Reduced variability between sections/instructors
- Reduced equity gaps
- Lower costs for instructional materials
- Increased course completion

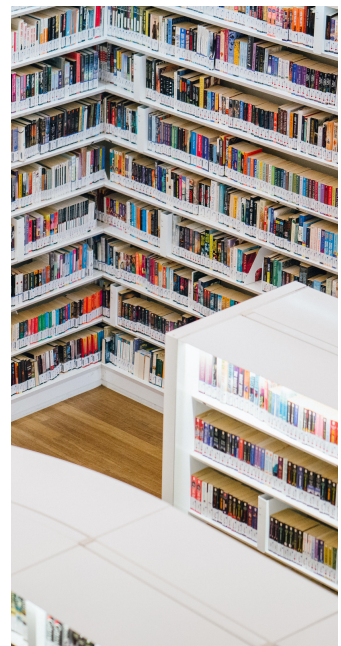
For more information follow these links:

<https://www.d2l.com/blog/what-is-adaptive-learning/>

<http://www.dreambox.com/adaptive-learning>

<https://elearningindustry.com/adaptive-learning-revolutionizes-corporate-training>

<https://area9lyceum.com/>



CROSS-TRAINING

Cross-Training for Succession:

Research has shown that when executive positions are hired from outside an organization failure rates are high (40-50%)⁷. On top of this there is cost associated with recruiting, hiring and training qualified outside staff, especially in rural municipalities. For these reasons cross-training could be considered as a viable strategy for succession planning. While recruiting, hiring and training new staff is estimated to cost 20-30% of annual salary, retraining current staff is estimated to cost less than 10%⁷.

By regularly identifying higher-level positions that are at risk of vacancy as well as identifying current employees who are interested and have future leadership potential a municipality could reduce the time that positions are vacant and reduce costs involved in hiring and training for the position. Individuals can be cross trained through strategies such as job shadowing and mentorship with the individual who currently holds the position and is planning to vacate in the coming years.

Possible Cross-Training Options:

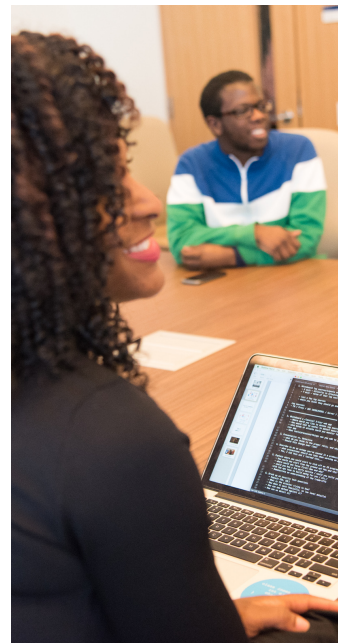
- PSW - Dietary Aide - Admin Staff in long-term care facility
- Garbage truck drivers - Snow plow operators
- Recreation staff - facilities/gardens

For more information follow these links:

<https://www.amcto.com/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=21b9b593-755a-49ad-b23a-166be74a552e>

<https://www.firesmartcanada.ca/what-is-firesmart/cross-training/>

<http://www.themunicipal.com/2018/01/columbus-public-works-pulls-together-with-cross-training/>



SECONDMENT

Why Secondment?

Secondments are typically used as a form of career development where an employee can develop new skills by working in an alternate environment. Secondments will develop the employee's knowledge and skills which can be shared when they return to their original position. Secondment agreements between larger and smaller municipalities could offer training opportunities for staff that would not be possible without such agreements.

Possible Secondment Structures Could Include:

- A trade of employees between larger and smaller municipalities
- A one-way secondment of an employee of a smaller municipality to a larger municipality
- A one-way secondment of an employee from a larger municipality or the region to a smaller municipality for training purposes

Considerations For Secondments:

- Have a clear secondment policy and agreement in place (this might include an agreement not to offer the secondee a permanent position, length of the secondment, arrangements for who is covering pay/benefits during this time etc.)
- Clearly understand the purpose and intended outcomes of the secondment
- Have a plan for evaluation of the effectiveness of the secondment (both throughout the secondment term and after its completion)

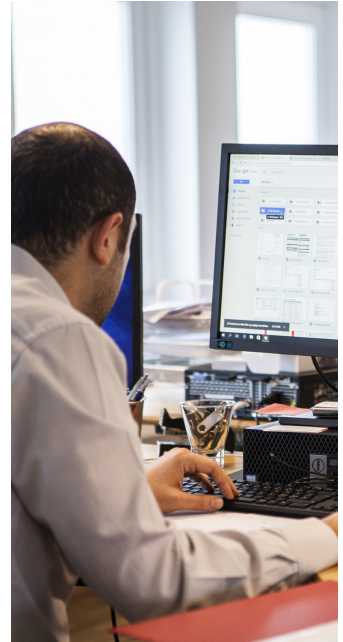
For more information follow these links:

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/eight-steps-to-a-successful-secondment/>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/staffing/public-service-workforce/secondments-assignments.html>

Sample Agreement:

<https://novascotia.ca/treasuryboard/manuals/PDF/500/50204.pdf>



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- 2** Local Government Research Collective. (Dec. 2015). Workforce of tomorrow. Retrieved from: <https://www.transformgov.org/documents/workforce-tomorrow>
- 3** Hatala, John-Paul. (2018). The Strategic Networker. Columbia, SC: Get into the Flow
- 4** Dunne, James. (2019). Need a longer holiday? In a tight labour market some companies offer sabbaticals. CBC News. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/sabbaticals-human-resources-1.5208559>
- 5** 2013 Study: "Sharing Municipal services in Ontario" Case studies and implications for Ontario municipalities.
- 6** N.A. (2016). Succession Planning: Local Government Careers and Rural Youth A Report to Municipal Council. Retrieved from: <http://www.townshipsofheadclaramaria.ca/download.php?dl=YToyOntzOjI6ImlkIjtzOjM6Im0MyI7czozaWJrZXkiO2k6MTY7fQ==>