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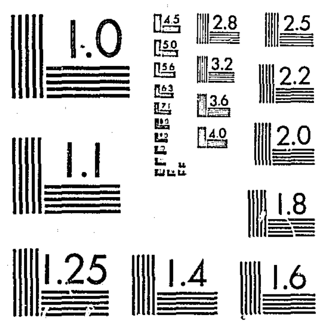

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A Handbook for Human-Resource Planning in Criminal Justice Agencies

Executive Summary and Index

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School of Criminal Justice
Michigan State University
August, 1982

A HANDBOOK FOR HUMAN-RESOURCE PLANNING IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INDEX

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ACQUISITIONS

PROJECT STAFF

Jack R. Greene
Vicki W. Schneider
David W. Hayeslip, Jr.

John K. Hudzik
Project Director

August, 1982

U.S. Department of Justice
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John K. Hudzik
Project Director
School of Criminal Justice
Michigan State University

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Criminal justice agencies usually allocate 80 percent or more of their resources to meeting personnel costs. Criminal justice is thus a labor-intensive field, with productivity vitally dependent on the efficient and effective employment of personnel. Human-resource planning can be an effective managerial tool for helping administrators reach decisions about how most efficiently and effectively to acquire and to employ personnel. Additionally, some aspects of human-resource planning are particularly useful in helping management to identify, to diagnose, and eventually to solve personnel problems.

This executive summary provides a brief overview of the contents and objectives of the Human-Resource Planning Handbook prepared by the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University. The Handbook describes numerous human-resource planning and analytical techniques useful in criminal justice agencies, gives directions for their use, and provides examples of their application in criminal justice agencies. Also, special techniques are provided to assist management in identifying, diagnosing, and eventually resolving personnel problems. The Handbook is designed to offer the criminal justice manager, personnel administrator, and planner a self-instruction guide on how to implement more effective means of planning for the agency's personnel component.

One way of visualizing the purposes and objectives behind the Human-Resource Planning Handbook is to consider the principal kinds of managerial questions that it attempts to provide answers for. A few of these questions are:

1. How can an agency examine what its personnel needs are? How can these needs be substantiated or documented?
2. How can an agency validly determine and define the jobs required to achieve missions, goals, and objectives? How can it determine whether job descriptions validly reflect the nature of work currently done in the agency?
3. How can an agency assess its current employees? How can it determine what kinds of employees should be hired (prior experience, education, training, skills, etc.)? How can employment qualifications be identified and substantiated or validated?
4. How can an agency assess its key personnel practices (for example, recruiting, selecting, training, and assigning personnel? What are the effects of these personnel practices on the agency's ability to maintain a stable supply of qualified personnel to fill the agency's jobs? What effects do current personnel practices have on employees' morale, employees' performance, and employees' attitudes?
5. How can an agency go about identifying and diagnosing personnel-related problems? What kinds of personnel problems confront the agency? What are the causes of these problems? What kinds of effects do these problems have on agency productivity (efficiency and effectiveness)?

6. What kinds of analytical techniques are available to agency managers and planners who wish to diagnose not only existing personnel problems but also want to anticipate future personnel problems?
7. How can an agency go about identifying the major constraints posed by budget and outside decision makers that circumscribe the agency's ability to acquire needed personnel? How can an agency go about determining whether any of these constraints are manipulable--removing them as constraints in acquiring and assigning needed personnel?

The Handbook variously deals with these and other prime questions facing administrators charged with managing personnel. However, the Handbook is not prescriptive in the sense that specific solutions are prescribed for specific kinds of human-resource problems facing the agency. For important reasons that are pointed out in Volume I and in the first part of Volume II, the choice of a solution to any given personnel problem is properly the responsibility of agency management. Identifying viable solutions for problems such as turnover, or insufficient staffing, or poor employee performance must be done by management working within the constraints faced by the agency.

Nonetheless, the Handbook, its techniques for problem diagnosis, and its explanations of other human-resource planning techniques, can help point personnel administrators and planners toward discovering a range of viable solutions for agency personnel problems.

Development of the planning handbook was supported with funds from the U.S. Department of Justice (LEAA) and was conducted in two phases. Phase I assessed criminal justice agencies' current capability and need of human-resource planning. Phase II, building on this assessment, focused on the development of an extensive handbook that would assist criminal justice agencies more fully to implement and to utilize human-resource planning techniques.

THE HANDBOOK

The Handbook is presented in three volumes (bound in eight parts for convenience in handling and use). A comprehensive index to the contents of these three volumes follows the executive summary. Used in conjunction with the index, the Handbook has been designed to allow managers and planners to choose those portions that are of most interest or are most needed.

VOLUME I of the Handbook provides an introduction to human-resource planning in agencies--what it is, how it is carried out, and how it can help the agency manager. The material in this volume is written to be of interest alike to agency top management, to agency personnel administrators, and to agency planners. One principal objective of Volume I is for managers and planners to acquire a common overview about the definition, purposes, and uses of human-resource planning in agencies. When managers and planners do not share such a basic understanding, planning tends not to be fully or appropriately utilized.

VOLUME II is bound in four parts and presents a means for comprehensively identifying and diagnosing personnel problems. It is designed to be of primary interest to agency personnel administrators and planners. Problem diagnosis is a very crucial and very practical part of human-resource planning. It is crucial because without good diagnosis, solutions to personnel problems cannot be adequately planned. It is practical because it focuses on what every manager spends most of his or her time doing--identifying and dealing with conditions that negatively affect the agency's ability to meet its goals and objectives.

Practical tools are presented to help personnel administrators and planners conduct two types of diagnoses. The first type is an overall assessment of agency human resources--a general stocktaking whereby the agency takes an overall look at its organizational climate, its personnel practices, and its ability to acquire, to develop, and to employ personnel. Three ready-for-use diagnostic surveys are provided with directions: 1. an Organizational Climate Survey, 2. a Personnel Practices Survey, and 3. an Environmental Factors Questionnaire. Analysis of results from administering these surveys will provide administrators with an overview of the agency's strengths and weaknesses regarding its personnel processes and its ability to identify and to deal with internal and external factors that affect its acquisition and use of personnel. This becomes essential background information for later attempts to identify and to solve specific personnel-related problems.

The second type of diagnostic tool presented is a step-by-step procedure that can be followed to diagnose specific personnel problems more pointedly. For example, the agency may have identified turnover, or an inability to attract qualified personnel, or poor performance by employees as problems needing special attention. Comprehensive diagnoses of the causes and effects of problems such as these is crucial if effective solutions to them are to be found. The diagnostic model provided offers a way of marshalling key agency thinkers and key information for diagnosing problems and for eventually finding solutions.

VOLUME III is bound in two parts and is a resource guide intended primarily for use by agency personnel administrators and planners engaged in the more technical aspects of personnel administration and human-resource planning. Techniques such as job analysis, forecasting, selection validation, performance measurement (to name a few) are discussed. A common format is used throughout in presenting these techniques. First, the nature of the techniques and its prime uses are presented. This is followed by a consideration of the major technical and other supports required if the technique is to be used. Special attention is paid to factors that will limit an agency's ability to use a given technique, and alternatives are presented for these situations.

BASIC DESIGN-FEATURES OF THE HANDBOOK

A COMPREHENSIVE INDEX: Few users will have the time or the need to use all the material in these volumes and do everything that is recommended. A comprehensive index or catalogue of materials to be found in all of the volumes is provided. Agency administrators and planners may use this index or menu-system as a means of quickly finding the portions of the Handbook that will be of most help.

SELF-ADMINISTRATION: The materials have been written to optimize self-administration and self-learning, and to minimize the need for outside help. For example, the diagnostic surveys found in Volume II have been designed for administration and analysis in house. Of course, some concepts or techniques will remain difficult to grasp and will require additional reading or the use of consultants. For example, job analysis techniques discussed in Volume III are very complex and are generally out of the reach of most agencies to apply themselves without the help of outside experts. Nonetheless, the objective has been to maximize as much as possible an agency's ability to do human-resource planning using in-house resources.

PROBLEM-FOCUSED APPROACH TO PLANNING: With the exception of some of the sections of Volume I where many of the general concepts and ideas about human-resource planning are discussed, the Handbook is designed to help managers and planners identify and diagnose concrete personnel problems (e.g., turnover, poor employee performance, inability to attract qualified personnel, EEO and Affirmative Action suits, and so forth). The emphasis, therefore, is on dealing with specific problems as opposed to discussing human-resource planning from a conceptual point of view alone.

VARYING LEVELS OF "BUY-IN": Agencies differ in their need for and their ability to undertake human-resource planning. Agency size, environmental constraints, money, technical expertise, and the nature of human-resource problems confronted by an agency all affect the level of planning needed and possible. Where possible, Handbook materials have been written to provide alternative levels and options in the use of planning-related analytical techniques. Thus, there are options presented--different levels and kinds of analytical activities possible. Managers and planners are free to buy in at the level deemed most feasible and valuable.

OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS: The handbook material, besides helping agencies become more informed about what can be done in-house, helps identify conditions under which outside help is needed, what should be expected of this outside help, and whom or what to look for. One central purpose has been to provide agencies with the information necessary to become more intelligent and critical consumers of work done by outside consultants. Sometimes, agencies have not been able to sufficiently direct consultants about what is needed or wanted. This has frequently been the case, for example, when agencies sought outside help in validating selection and promotional practices, or when conducting job analyses.

WHAT IS HUMAN-RESOURCE PLANNING?

In the most general terms possible, human-resource planning is the process of determining what an agency needs to do to ensure that it has the right number and kinds of people doing the right jobs, and doing those jobs well. To accomplish this, human-resource planning is composed of two distinct yet related activities. The first activity is called WORK FORCE PLANNING, while the second is labeled STAFFING-NEEDS PLANNING.

Workforce planning analyzes the agency's need for personnel--how many and what types of people. It also analyzes the required missions of the agency, determining the kinds of jobs that need to be done, and what qualifications people who hold these jobs need. Workforce planning is crucial, for without it agency management has little firm basis on which to justify the number and kinds of personnel hired or how they are hired, assigned, and employed.

Staffing-needs planning focuses on the various personnel administrative actions involved in acquiring, developing, and assigning agency personnel. The processes and policies associated with personnel administration (e.g., recruitment, selection, training, assignment, job design, compensation, and so forth) are closely tied to human-resource planning because personnel administrative actions put human-resource plans into operation. Just as there is a need to determine what kinds and how many people are needed (workforce planning), there is a need to determine and to plan the personnel actions required to acquire, to develop, and to employ personnel (staffing-needs planning).

Human-resource planning encourages and helps direct agency managers to take a "comprehensive" approach to personnel management and to the diagnosis of personnel problems. Factors affecting the need for and the availability of agency personnel are highly interrelated. So, too, the numerous steps in the personnel administrative process are interrelated and interdependent. Human-resource planning techniques help managers and personnel administrators to consider these factors in a more interrelated and systematic way.

WHY ENGAGE IN HUMAN-RESOURCE PLANNING?

Anticipating future requirements for manpower in the agency and forecasting future supplies of manpower are crucial to effective personnel management. Likewise, crime trends, budget forecasts, trends in the economy, population trends and the like greatly affect the need for personnel, and they also influence the availability of personnel. Thus, knowledge of current environmental conditions and impending changes in these conditions is vital to planning agency personnel policy. Current agency personnel policies in the areas of recruitment, selection, training, and so forth, produce certain kinds of results today that may or may not be appropriate or satisfactory in the future. Knowledge of both current results and likely future results produced by agency personnel administrative practice is, thus, also important. Planning-related analytical techniques provide the agency manager with powerful tools not only to analyze present conditions and effects, but also to anticipate future conditions and effects.

Besides making forecasts, human-resource planning also focuses on diagnosing personnel problems. A problem of poor agency performance or inadequate performance occasioned by insufficient, unqualified, or poorly utilized personnel requires agency managers first to diagnose the nature of and causes of the problem, and then to plan solutions. Several planning-related analytical techniques can help the manager in both of these endeavors. Additionally, human-resource planning not only helps to diagnose current personnel problems, but also to anticipate the emergence of personnel problems.

The kinds of personnel problems that will arise in an agency are numerous, and the combination of problems nearly infinite. So too, the causes of personnel problems will vary greatly from organization to organization. When we speak of personnel problems, we include conditions such as high turnover, poor employee performance, insufficient personnel, unqualified personnel, poorly trained employees, charges of discrimination in hiring and promotion, inability to attract qualified job applicants, constraints in assigning, reassigning, and promoting employees, and so forth. The numerous analytical techniques and tools described in the Handbook provide a basis for diagnosing the nature and causes of such problems and help identify and weigh potential solutions to them.

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