



Strategic Workforce Planning Guiding Questions

This checklist introduces the Department of Commerce Strategic Workforce Planning (WFP) process and provides a structured, practical approach for bureaus to assess workforce needs, plan for the future, and take action. It is organized around the Department's Strategic Workforce Planning Framework and is designed to support leadership engagement, consistent decision making, and alignment with OHRM workforce planning services and tools.

1) Determine Strategic Direction

Purpose: Align workforce planning with Commerce and bureau mission priorities, operating context, and leadership intent.

Mission Alignment

- What are the bureau's near- and long-term mission priorities and performance goals?
- Which programs, services, or initiatives are most critical to mission success?
- What workforce-related risks could hinder mission delivery?

Operating Environment

- What internal or external factors (policy, funding, technology, labor market, organizational changes) are influencing our workforce?
- How might emerging trends affect how work is performed or skills required?
- Where do we anticipate the greatest uncertainty or volatility?

Current Workforce Snapshot

- What does our current workforce look like by occupation, grade, location, and employment type?
- What trends are we seeing in hiring, attrition, retirements, and mobility?
- Which roles, skills, or positions are mission-critical or hard to fill?

Leadership Intent & Planning Scope

- What is leadership's vision for the future workforce?
- What timeframe will this workforce plan address (e.g., 1–3 years, 3–5 years)?
- What level of detail and rigor is appropriate given bureau capacity and data availability?



2) Plan for Desired State

Purpose: Define the future workforce needed to deliver mission outcomes and identify gaps between current and desired states.

Future Mission & Work

- How will the bureau's mission, programs, or services evolve over the planning horizon?
- What work will increase, decrease, or change in nature?
- What new capabilities or ways of working will be required?

Desired Workforce Characteristics

- What occupations, skills, competencies, and leadership capabilities will be critical?
- How should workforce size, structure, or deployment change?
- What balance of internal staff, contractors, and shared services is needed?

Workforce Gaps & Risks

- Where are the most significant gaps between current workforce supply and future demand?
- Are gaps driven by staffing levels, skills, succession, or readiness?
- Which gaps pose the highest risk to mission delivery if not addressed?

Prioritization

- Which workforce gaps require immediate action versus longer-term planning?
- Where can targeted investments yield the greatest mission impact?

3) Execute Strategies and Monitor Progress

Purpose: Implement targeted workforce strategies, track progress, and adapt as conditions change.

Strategy Development

- What workforce strategies will best close identified gaps (e.g., hiring, reskilling, succession planning, retention, organizational design)?
- Can existing talent be developed to meet future needs?
- How can we leverage OHRM services, enterprise tools, or cross-bureau solutions?



Action Planning

- What specific actions will be taken, by whom, and by when?
- What resources, approvals, or policy flexibilities are required?
- How will risks and dependencies be managed?

Change Management & Communication

- How will leaders and employees be engaged throughout implementation?
- What training, guidance, or support is needed to enable success?
- How will we sustain momentum and accountability?

Monitoring & Continuous Improvement

- What metrics or indicators will be used to measure progress and outcomes?
- How often will workforce strategies be reviewed and updated?
- How will lessons learned inform future workforce planning cycles?

Outcome: A mission aligned, actionable workforce plan that supports informed decision-making, workforce readiness, and sustained mission delivery across the Department of Commerce.